

SHAPING RESILIENCY:

A SUMMIT ON RESILIENCE AND
VANCOUVER'S FUTURE

REPORT | APRIL 2018



Convened by the **Vancouver City Planning Commission** in
partnership with the **City of Vancouver**, **SFU Public Square**, and
100 Resilient Cities – Pioneered by The Rockefeller Foundation.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We would like to express our gratitude to all the speakers, facilitators, participants and volunteers who made this event a success.

VANCOUVER CITY PLANNING COMMISSION

Dr. Nola Kate Seymoar, Yuri Artibise, Daniella Fergusson, Jennifer Marshall, Amelia Huang, David Crossley, Robert Matas, Karenn Krangle

SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY PUBLIC SQUARE

Janet Webber, Christine Dyson, Kady Wong, Kevin Cherney, Renee McMillen

CITY OF VANCOUVER

Katie McPherson, Dhaneva Panday. The City of Vancouver decision makers who participated in the closing session (see page 15)

100 RESILIENT CITIES - PIONEERED BY THE ROCKEFELLER FOUNDATION

Jeb Brugmann, Olivia Stinson, Hannah Glosser

George Benson, Rapporteur

VOLUNTEERS

A special thank-you to all our table facilitators, note-takers and other volunteers. This event would not have been possible without their participation.

A full list of volunteers is included at the end of this report, and on the Vancouver City Planning Commission's website (vancouverplanning.ca).

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RESILIENCY & VANCOUVER’S FUTURE

The 100 Resilient Cities program (100RC), of which Vancouver is a new member, defines resilience as: “the capacity of individuals, communities, institutions, businesses and systems within a city to survive, adapt and grow, no matter what kinds of chronic stresses and acute shocks they experience.

INTRODUCTION

On October 24 and 25, 2017, the Vancouver City Planning Commission (VCPC), in collaboration with the City of Vancouver, 100 Resilient Cities, pioneered by the Rockefeller Foundation (100RC), and Simon Fraser University’s Public Square, hosted two events: a Community Dialogue, and an invitational Summit on the topic of Resiliency and Vancouver’s Future. The community dialogue (Sharing Our Stories) was aimed at elevating and learning from stories of resilience from within our own community. The summit (Shaping Resiliency: A Summit on Resilience and Vancouver’s Future) was an invitational event to encourage dialogue among thought leaders, experts and influencers from the public, private, non-profit and academic sectors. Both sessions were an opportunity to inform Vancouver’s Preliminary Resilience Assessment and set the foundation for its’ ensuing strategy. Both events were oversubscribed, reflecting strong interest among Vancouverites.

The public Community Dialogue was held on the evening of October 24th at SFU’s downtown campus. “Sharing our Stories – Building Community Resilience in Vancouver” attracted over 150 participants, including many youth and community leaders. Highpoints and posters from the event were brought forward to the next day’s Summit.

The full day Summit was attended by 140+ participants, of whom 60% were women.

Attendees represented a wide range of interests with urbanists, planners, service providers and advocates heavily represented. The day concluded with presentations to elected officials and key managers from the City and the Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation. Facilitated dialogues operated under Chatham House Rule, thus this report summarizes general points without attributing them to individuals.

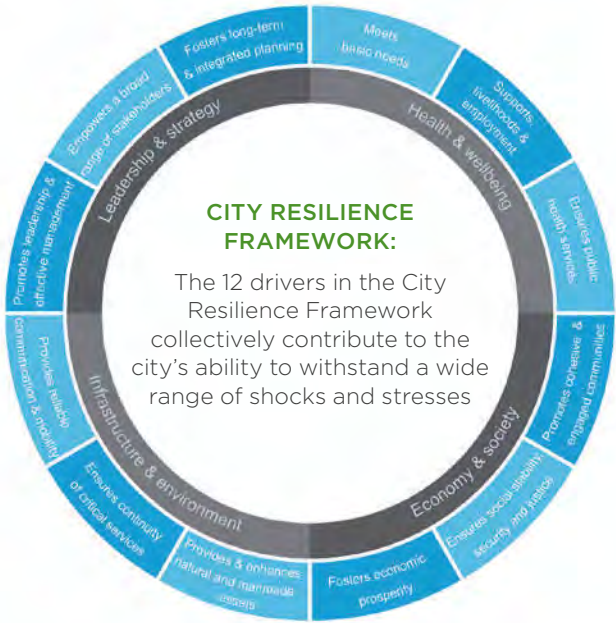
WHY A SUMMIT ON RESILIENCE?

Inspired by the New Urban Agenda adopted in 2016 at Habitat III—the United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development, VCPC saw resiliency as a “top of the mind’ issue in light of recent earthquakes, hurricanes, nuclear threats, mass atrocities and refugee crises that had direct relevance to Vancouver’s future.



Thus the VCPC was enthusiastic when the City of Vancouver joined the 100 Resilient Cities network (100 RC) an initiative founded by the Rockefeller Foundation to establish a network of cities from all over the world sharing their experiences in becoming more resilient. The 100RC network now includes four Canadian cities: Montreal, Toronto, Calgary and Vancouver. Network members have joined in three phases so some are farther along in the process and have completed their initial risk assessments, developed strategies and are on the road to implementation. Others, like Vancouver, that joined recently are in the initial phases. In addition to sharing city-to-city learning, membership in the network provides two years of support for the position of Chief Resilience Officer; access to 109 curated partners, 140 services and 221 subject matter specialists from the private sector and academia; as well as tools to guide the city’s resilience evaluation, decision making and investments. Each city strategy is unique as are their various challenges.

In international comparisons, Vancouver is often viewed as being exceptionally endowed with social, environmental, cultural and economic assets. Current initiatives—the Greenest City Action Plan, the Healthy City Strategy, and a City of Reconciliation among others—have placed it in a high profile leadership position in many fields. At the same time, Vancouver is challenged by the need to integrate and harmonize its’ different approaches to address not just current problems such as affordability, equity, and the opiate crisis but longer-term issues such as climate change, migration, declining resources and the threat of natural and man-made disasters.



OPENING SPEAKERS

INDIGENOUS WELCOME

Chief Janice George | Chepximiya Siyam’

Hereditary Chief Janice George (Chepximiya Siyam’) of the Squamish Nation welcomed participants at both events to the traditional lands of the Musqueam, Squamish and Tsleil-Waututh First Nations. Her welcome set the stage. She spoke of a time when her people, the Squamish, and settlers in Vancouver responded to a disaster. On June 13, 1886 the Great Vancouver Fire decimated almost all of Vancouver’s buildings. So huge and intense was the heat and smoke that people were throwing themselves into the waters of the Burrard Inlet. The Squamish people raced to their canoes and rescued the settlers, bringing them safely to the Squamish community on the north shore. Her story reminded attendees of our interdependence and the need for mutual respect in any deliberations about resiliency in our region.

FROM RISK TO PERFORMANCE: PUTTING RESILIENCE IN PERSPECTIVE

Jeb Brugmann

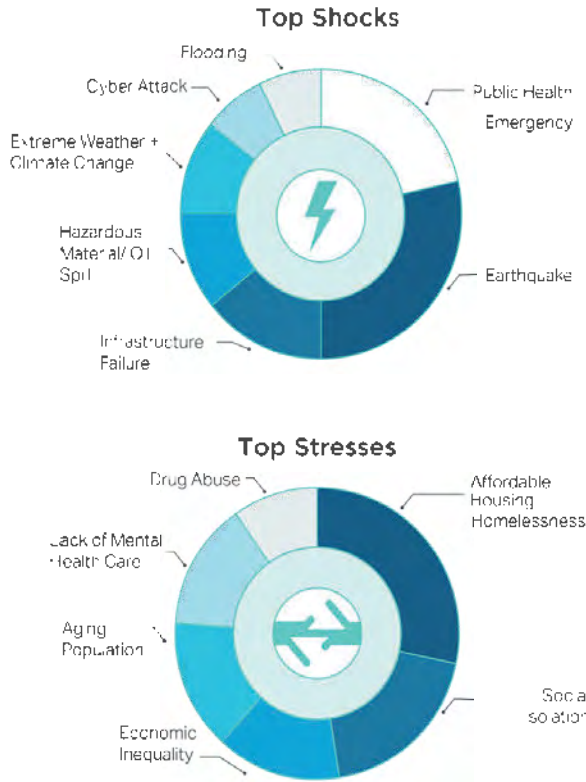
Jeb Brugmann, Director of Solutions Development & Innovation at 100 Resilient Cities – pioneered by The Rockefeller Foundation – gave an overview of the 100 Resilient Cities network and outlined the challenges that face practitioners. Jeb’s presentation, “ From Risk to Performance: Putting Resilience into Practice” stressed that what matters is not the elegance of the framework and strategy but putting resilience into everyday practice, all along the scale from assessing risks to performance and implementation. Jeb used different examples from San Francisco, New York, Boston and New Zealand to demonstrate that responses and recovery from shocks are affected by the cities’ ability to plan for and take into account underlying stresses such as the cumulative interactive effects of declining wages, increased operating costs, turning housing into an investment commodity, and deteriorating urban infrastructure.

He stressed that applying a resilience lens requires a holistic approach and the integration of plans, policies and initiatives. The objective is to not just understand risk, but to make risk assessment and strategizing part of everyday professional practice.

BUILDING A RESILIENCE STRATEGY FOR VANCOUVER

Katie McPherson

After joining the 100 Resilient Cities network in 2017, the City of Vancouver hired Katie McPherson as Chief Resilience Officer, reporting to the Deputy City Manager. In May 2017, 100 Resilient Cities worked with the City to deliver a pre-strategy Agenda



Setting Workshop with key community leaders and stakeholders. The workshop helped to frame key shocks and stresses affecting our community as a whole. The overwhelming consensus at the workshop was that earthquakes and affordability are the top 2 critical threats to Vancouver’s resilience. Beyond this, though, there was wide variance in the shocks and stresses identified, and in the perception of the community’s capacity to cope with them.

In order to complete a Preliminary Resilience Assessment (PRA) the Resilience Office is listening and gathering input from a broad range of stakeholders about what resilience means to them, and the trends and factors

that impact their ability to thrive in a turbulent future. The VCPC Summit represented the first in a series of events, interviews and focus groups to hear from the public and external stakeholders about resilience priorities, challenges, and opportunities. The feedback and outputs of this event will be incorporated into the PRA, and will serve to inform future engagement and consultations, and the direction of the Resilience Strategy itself. Through the PRA process, community and expert input will inform a set of 3-5 focus areas that will form the backbone of the Resilience Strategy, to be released early in 2019.

Summit participants were invited to reflect over the course of the day on three questions:

- Are there different shocks and stresses to consider?
- What trends or issues will affect the future of our city?
- What are the factors that will enable us to thrive in a turbulent and uncertain future?

ENVISIONING A MORE RESILIENT FUTURE

Nola Kate Seymoar

Participants were asked to think about Vancouver in 40+ years – well beyond election cycles and current development proposals, and yet close enough to be relevant to the way projects and strategies are designed for the city today.

Nola Kate Seymoar, chair of the VCPC, facilitated a dialogue with participants to identify times in the past when Vancouver was at its best in responding to shocks or stressors. The resulting list included:

- the successful fight by Chinatown and Strathcona to stop the freeway;

- the responses by community groups to refugee crises;
- the establishment of Insite and other safe injection services;
- responses to poor air quality in the 60’s and 70’s;
- learning to increase density; and
- the embrace of LGBTQ2+ human rights.

As well, it was noted that the positive collective memories of Expo 86 and the 2010 Winter Olympics were a source of energy and strength in the face of future shocks.

When asked to look forward forty years and imagine a more resilient city, participants’ visions clustered around several themes. Examples included:

Social resiliency and equity:

- a place where newcomers are welcome;
- affordable places to live;
- meaningful livelihoods and a universal basic income;
- a place where people across the economic spectrum can raise families and thrive;



- intergenerational care systems;
- a sharing economy;
- universal design incorporated in all buildings and mobility options
- a city that creates social connections and builds trust, including with youth;
- free decolonization education and indigenous reconciliation a reality;
- healthy city strategy implemented; and
- greater cooperation among all orders of governments and First Nations.

Governance:

- local First Nations recognized as equal in terms of governance of the region;
- state and business interests are separated;
- electoral reform has resulted in the removal of big money from local elections;
- a different and more inclusive electoral system is operating; and
- governance and finance tools are embedded at the neighbourhood level (e.g. Resource Boards).

Urban design:

- many more housing options exist including land trusts, coops;
- systems for self-sustaining food production exist;
- urban agriculture builds community;
- green areas and ecosystems are preserved;
- more public spaces have been created;
- front yards are often shared;
- coordinated and disaster prepared transportation systems with many mobility options, are accessed by one card;

- free, efficient and integrated public transit;
- majority of lands are commonly held for community benefit and good;
- shared use of facilities;
- vertical buildings designed to encourage development of communities; and
- development and densification support neighbourhood character.

Finances:

- no longer at the mercy of international capital and real estate speculation, yet able to access capital when desired
- variety of robust financial tools available to the City;
- taxation system rethought;
- financial tools encourage neighbourhood engagement in decision making;
- small and large businesses are locally owned; and
- people are able to age in place affordably.



Two other visions were suggested:

- Vancouver’s future would be shaped by a closer relationship between its universities, its international students and the rest of the community; and
- Vancouver’s future will depend upon its’ ability to harness emerging and disruptive technologies to foster social connection and support a sharing economy.

THEMES FOR A RESILIENT CITY

The Summit explored four themes from the New Urban Agenda using a resilience lens and each participant chose one to pursue in a discussion group. Although it was intended to apply the 10ORC framework to these themes, there was insufficient time and familiarity with the framework for this objective to be realized.

A background paper had been written on each of the four themes and was available on the website and distributed in each group. Copies of the papers are included in the Appendix. The themes were described in the program and the invitations, as:

- **A City for All:** Addressing the issues of inclusion, reconciliation, diversity, and affordability is fundamental to a resilient future.
- **Engagement for Real:** A resilient city needs to harness the wisdom and skills of its residents - empowering communities to act together to address challenges. There is need to bridge gaps in expectations and to further trust in the engagement process.
- **Financing the Public Good and Public Spaces:** Resilience requires that we reconsider how the public good, including

investments in infrastructure and public spaces, in prevention and/or restoration, are financed. Are our current financing instruments sustainable and will they be appropriate in the future?

- **Communities and Corridors:** Resilience requires strong communities that are connected well to one another. Balancing the development of “place” and “passage” when done well, can support a vibrant civic community. Resilience requires creating community within a variety of built environments, including high rises.

There were over 125 participants in the working groups including representation from many professions with urbanists, planners, service providers, and advocates heavily represented. Attendees expressed a desire in future summits to see more cultural diversity across participants, and a stronger representation of young people, seniors, and developers.

TABLE AND ROOM DISCUSSIONS

Each participant had chosen one theme to discuss during breakout sessions and each theme was assigned to a large room. The process began with small table discussions that were then shared with others in the room. Each room was then challenged to summarize and prioritize one promising action that could be taken in the short term, one in the medium term and one for the long term. At the end of the day, these potential actions were then presented to City of Vancouver decision makers for consideration.

The following priority ideas were presented on each of the themes.



A CITY FOR ALL

Facilitator: Amelia Huang

Participants in these working groups created a holistic, overarching sense of unfettered access that involved: access to services (government and non-profit agencies); access to the landscape and spaces; access to cultural amenities and the ability of distinct cultural areas to continue and thrive even as they change; access rooted in a historic responsibility toward decolonization and reconciliation; and access to financial equity.

In the short term the priority to improve access and inclusion would be to secure funding and a commitment to develop connections – either real or virtual to break down silos (in and between City Hall, community and advisory groups) and promote greater collective problem solving.

Promising ideas included:

- fostering social connections in new ways through: technology, building design, new social/affiliation groups (including children and youth);

- shared spaces including indigenous spaces and urban agriculture;
- a ‘Vancouver Agreement’ to develop Resource Boards engaging local residents; mobile social worker units; and
- community-led resiliency strategies.

In the medium term there was strong support for political reform at the municipal level that, it was believed, could lead towards evidence based rather than politically based decisions.

Promising ideas included:

- using an intersectional lens to promote accessible and affordable housing;
- decreasing the economic and social gaps between vulnerable and not so vulnerable groups;
- encouraging diverse housing types with different unit types and tenures within one development; and
- spaces and housing for cross generational connections such as students living in senior’s homes for free in exchange for spending time together.

In the long term the vision was to achieve true engagement at the systemic level to build resilient communities.

Promising ideas included:

- providing more affordable space to the arts and cultural sectors;
- encouraging safe houses for families under stress, particularly spaces for women and children in the Downtown East Side (DTES);
- establishing a proportional representative ward system with some people at large; and
- shifting the focus of funding from programs to local area planning.

The idea of establishing Vancouver Resource Boards with a framework to align with resilience strategies was discussed and put forward by a number of tables.

ENGAGEMENT FOR REAL

Facilitator: Janet Webber

Discussions around the theme of Engagement for Real stressed Vancouver’s relative strengths in this field - from opportunities like Talk Vancouver and VanConnect, to advisory committees and Local Area Planning in the Downtown East Side (DTES), to mural festivals, neighbourhood small grants, pop-up-parks and the activation of public spaces. At the same time there was recognition that residents need a certain level of skill, information, support (including financial) and preparation to access the opportunities available.

An overall critique of engagement processes (including those used in this summit) was that the desire to summarize, reach consensus or prioritize suggestions or actions, by its very nature, leads to some brilliant, fresh or unusual ideas being lost in reporting back. Time constraints, as well as the lack

of feedback about how the results have been acted upon (or not) and why, lead to frustration with the engagement process. There was a general desire for more creative, fun and wacky approaches, and the use of an intersectional lens.

The group identified many priority actions.

In the short term they suggested focusing on capacity building using existing infrastructure and resources and ensuring that the process is ongoing and happens in different language groups.

Promising ideas included:

- a city-wide mapping process identifying and enhancing public spaces that are functioning well for engagement; including informal spaces such as businesses and community centres, and filling the gaps where they are not happening;
- sharing power with the community through processes enabling the community to set the agenda;
- using co-design and crowd funding;
- expanding partnerships;
- going out to where groups are already engaged; and
- having a wider variety of forms of engagement so that it is part of the culture of the city.

Specifically related to resiliency, participants identified the need to be proactive and focus on risk communication.

In the medium term, participants focused on projects (or pilot projects) that devolved power to the community level.



Promising ideas included:

- local community engagement in resiliency planning at the neighbourhood level; protocols to identify and support vulnerable populations (i.e. seniors, people with disabilities) in case of shocks or disasters;
- seismic community designs, and coalitions of governments, private sector, co-ops, philanthropic, non-profit and faith groups, to fund seismic upgrades in schools, community centres, churches and other existing shared facilities, and
- building new earthquake resistant community centres where they are needed.

The long-term discussions coalesced around structural and financial reforms. This was an extension of the common theme of engagement for real being related to sharing power and resources, and separating business interests and government. Thus the need for :

- new (more) forms of funding and capacity building of community groups;
- tax redistribution among the federal, provincial, municipal and First Nations governments;
- new sources of funding related to emergency preparedness and prevention; mandating universal design and resilience for all future buildings; and
- electoral reforms, including mandatory voting and proportional representation, to raise participation rates.

Promising ideas included:

- putting civic education into the education curriculum at all levels;
- stressing food security as part of resiliency;
- adopting design standards that support interaction and multiple uses;

- greater integration of arts and culture in the built environment; and
- the development of multi-party neighbourhood or area councils with power over certain kinds of decisions affecting their neighbourhoods (participatory budgeting) and resources, capacity building and facilitation support.

FINANCING THE PUBLIC GOOD AND PUBLIC SPACES

Facilitator Daniella Ferguson

Groups addressing this theme saw the necessity of financial transparency and publicly decided upon trade-offs to inform decision-making and create benefits for the whole society. There was concern to ensure that the overall health and success of the city translate into affordability and equity for families and people. With regard to resiliency in particular, financing needs to be future looking, encompass potential shocks and stressors and include social factors that build community stability as well as economic well-being (not necessarily growth).



Priority actions in the short term included:

- implementing variable tax rates (not mill rates);
- raising property taxes to pay for the public good;
- aggregating retrofit projects to secure financing;
- extracting development values from investments in public transit (land lift);
- empowering BIAs to own/run local infrastructure; and
- using P3's with community oversight to finance resilience retrofits and new projects.

Promising ideas included:

- using current and future resiliency planning to improve regional cooperation and sharing of economic and strategic plans so as to improve both efficiency and effectiveness of individual plans; and
- engagement of the insurance industry in resiliency and risk assessment and management is both a short and long-term need.

Most of the ideas for financing involved medium and long-term reforms and new funding mechanisms that will likely take 5 to 10 years to implement but on which preparatory planning and action should be taken now, including making the building code resilient (recovery ready).

Other promising ideas included:

- modifying the Vancouver Charter and federal, provincial funding mechanisms to increase access to available capital, including global capital;
- issuing municipal bonds aimed at resilience such as green bonds, social housing bonds and catastrophic bonds (aka cat bonds);

- reforming land tax values to assess property values not just for best or highest use but for their contribution to other public goods such as resiliency; and
- enabling a wider range of financing mechanisms.

Promising ideas related to housing include:

- acquiring land for public purposes and land banking;
- community land trusts;
- focusing on public housing not commodity housing; and
- ultimately ensuring that 80% of all public infrastructure is certified as earthquake prepared.

The concern that public financing may be affected by changes in governments or priorities might be alleviated by multi-party agreements.

COMMUNITIES AND CORRIDORS

Facilitator Jennifer Marshall

Participants in discussion of this theme envisioned a city of diverse and connected nodes, existing amidst interconnected and sometimes overlapping habitats and biomes. Places generated through the planning of landscapes and transportation, with culturally relevant spaces that are accessible and enable public interaction and openness. Their analysis of strengths, gaps and opportunities looked at particular neighborhoods, policies and programs, identifying characteristics of what did or did not work.

In the short term the groups saw the greatest benefits to community and corridor connections to be gained from providing a broader mix and diversity of housing typologies (family housing, elders affordable



housing and rentals) within connected neighbourhoods and developments. Financial innovation was seen as a key to enable such mixed-use communities.

Promising ideas included:

- regional partnerships for tech-enabled public and private mobility with a single payment system for all non-private vehicle options;
- pedestrian friendly streets and more weekend closures;
- understanding, identifying, assessing and activating underutilized spaces and corridors (marine corridors, passenger ferries, beaches, alleys, boulevards); connecting and enhancing green spaces with emergency response and other purposes (pollinator and wildlife corridors) in mind;
- connecting indigenous knowledge of places and history;
- making more pet friendly housing, green spaces and transit; and

- developing fun corridor-based scavenger hunt apps, such as finding local businesses, heritage sites or art pieces etc.

In the medium term participants advocated more community infrastructure that supports grassroots engagement, both public open spaces and community facilities (places to meet, gather, advocate and educate) backed by financial partnerships.

Promising ideas included:

- extend and connect transit to the University of British Columbia (UBC);
- encourage services around transit stops, such as pubs, small groceries and other local businesses;
- provide more transit connections and underground parking (with fewer parking requirements) to help make achievable a long time Vancouver aspiration of ‘complete communities’;
- starting a pedestrian ferry from downtown to the big ferry terminals;
- funding community liaison officers in all neighbourhoods;
- streamlining approval process for development projects that include resiliency in their plans;
- introducing mobility pricing;
- speeding up the requirement to build community amenities before the total development is complete; and
- enhancing ceremonial streets (Hastings, Granville and Georgia).

In the long term the group prioritized a focus on expanding complete streets, with pedestrian priorities, support to local

businesses and greater multi-purpose use of public spaces and facilities (for emergencies, events, and community gatherings). There was recognition of the need to connect regionally and also to do more bioregional planning for food, water, waste, and energy security.

Promising ideas included:

- a need to restructure the political and financial funding system to municipalities, with some proposing devolution of powers from the provincial to regional level;
- co-operative and co-housing; and
- community land trusts and other forms of home ownership or leasing.

REPORTING BACK AND REFLECTIONS BY CITY OF VANCOUVER DECISION MAKERS

The final session of the Summit was devoted to short presentations on the four themes and their short, medium and long-term priorities to City of Vancouver decision makers. The priorities presented reflected the report of the breakout groups outlined above. Although many of the ideas were familiar to the decision makers, it was significant that they were coming forward in response to an integrated dialogue on resiliency, rather than more familiar consultations through more traditional channels. In order to facilitate the

responses Chatham House Rule was applied and confidentiality was encouraged. A rather free flowing dialogue followed. Several participants expressed appreciation regarding the politicians’ and staff’s willingness to listen and the candidness of their responses. The overall tone of the session was one of respect for, and interest in one another’s ideas.

CLOSING REMARKS

Katie McPherson, the City of Vancouver’s Chief Resilience Officer, concluded the discussions by thanking participants and the panel of decision makers for their whole-hearted participation. She pledged to share these outputs with other departments and to support their work across departments. She will be incorporating the substantive ideas into the Preliminary Resilience Assessment that will be the basis for developing the city’s resilience strategy.

Jeb Brugmann reiterated the 100 Resilient Cities – pioneered by The Rockefeller Foundation’s commitment to providing resources to support the City of Vancouver’s strategy development and noted that unlike other assessments that he has observed, Vancouver was focused more on social and community resilience, than on technical matters.

Nola Kate Seymoar, the Chair of the Vancouver City Planning Commission (VCPC), thanked the partners and participants and noted that the Planning Commission would produce a report of the discussions that will be sent to participants and posted on the VCPC website.

IN CONCLUSION

The success of the Summit reflects the expertise and knowledge that arises from lived experience in community. While the two events “*Sharing our Stories*” and “*Shaping Resiliency: A Summit on Resilience and Vancouver’s Future*” had different target audiences, the response to both indicates a high interest across a diverse group of community stakeholders. Both events were over-subscribed and attendance exceeded the expectations of the organizers. The overall evaluations of the content after the events, both formal and anecdotal were highly positive. This enthusiasm bodes well for the future of the city.

As of April 2018, the Chief Resilience Officer has already taken steps to implement ideas generated by the public event and invitational summit. The resilience team has worked to engage with many groups and people who were not represented at the summit through one-on-one interviews in the places where they live and work, and also by attending community meetings and events to learn and listen. Recommendations around engagement and inclusion will inform the development of the engagement strategy for the next phase of the resilience work. Further recommendations and ideas generated at the summit are being used to frame the launch and development of two core resilience initiatives (1) a project to evaluate seismic risk and identify mitigation options, and (2) the Resilient Neighbourhoods Program, a joint initiative with 4 community based organizations to support the co-creation of tools and the development of place-based strategies to enhance community capacity to

prepare, respond and recover from disasters based on their unique needs, knowledge, and capacities.

Other key observations include:

The partnership between the City of Vancouver, 100 Resilient Cities, the VCPC and SFU Public Square was extremely valuable and worthy of continuing in some manner in the future. Each organization contributed a particular focus and skill set. Together the partnership was greater than the sum of the parts. The partners are continuing in discussions of future collaboration.

- Access to the resources of the 100 Resilient Cities network was a key factor in the program’s success. Jeb Brugmann’s contribution as a keynote speaker and commentator brought to the discussions a national and international context, and a focus on professional practice. 100 Resilient Cities also contributed invaluable assistance in funding and evaluating the events. There is great advantage to the City of Vancouver’s continuing involvement with the network and continued collaboration with Jeb Brugmann.
- The Vancouver City Planning Commission’s (VCPC) focus on resiliency as an overarching theme is highly relevant and will provide a useful integrating framework to guide VCPC’s activities over the next four years and beyond. The theme of “A City for All” coincides with the Ninth session of the World Urban Forum (WUF9) held in Malaysia in February 2018. In the follow up to the Summit, this theme has been incorporated into VCPC’s work plan for 2018-19.

- SFU Public Square’s contribution of Janet Webber’s expertise, table facilitators , note takers and administrative support, as well as their contribution to the cost of the facilities of the Morris J. Wosk Centre for Dialogue were essential to the Summit’s success.

In short, thanks largely to the process design and event support contributed by SFU Public Square, and the participation of a diverse group of people, the summit has already affected the activities and decisions of the City of Vancouver and the Vancouver City Planning Commission (VCPC). We look forward to continuing on this shared journey to shape resiliency in Vancouver’s future.

Nola Kate Seymoar,

Chair, Vancouver City Planning Commission

April 2018

BACKGROUND PAPER: A CITY FOR ALL

OCTOBER 25, 2017

Biodiversity is one of the most significant contributing factors to resilience within an ecosystem. The diversity of a system reflects the complex interdependent relationships between organisms and constant feedback mechanisms as well as a safeguard against single shocks that might otherwise cause collapse.

In the future, the resilience of human systems will be tested by climate change, population shifts, growing inequality and other shocks unknown to many of us. In response, many sectors have rallied together behind initiatives to facilitate economic development in tandem with environmental protection. We have developed a great deal of technical expertise in matters such as carbon sequestration, energy generation and increasingly climate risk management.

Yet the social pillar of our urban sustainability discourse has been, by far, the most elusive and least emphasized.

CONTEXT

The role of civil discourse has been linked to measures to promote a society resilient enough to cope with rising tensions that result from growing diversity, increasing population and changing climate. On the international level, both the United Nation’s 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the recent Habitat III New Urban Agenda pledge that, in the pursuit of a sustainable and resilient world, “no one will be left behind.” At the local level, this principle requires that cities

be designed and built to allow safe and equal access by all. Furthermore, that cities seek to actively promote inclusive and non-discriminatory policies and planning practices.

Cultural heritage and connection, in its tangible and intangible forms, are increasingly recognized as key aspects of resilience that can support efforts to reduce disaster risks and vulnerabilities. In the same way that biological diversity increases the resilience of natural ecosystems, cultural and social capital has the capacity to increase the resilience of human systems.

ISSUES

Before embarking on building resilient cities, acknowledgement and reconciliation is necessary with past injustices and with those who currently experience trauma, often intergenerational. Current governance and city-building processes are insufficient to accomplish reconciliation. They continue to exclude certain community voices. In some communities, this exclusion can result in inadequate access to basic necessities such as healthcare, education and even clean water. These injustices translate into vulnerabilities and, coupled with isolation, they become the antithesis of resilience.

Vancouver’s commitment to become a City of Reconciliation is not limited to indigenous communities. Non-indigenous groups, such as early Chinese and Japanese immigrants, were subject to discriminatory public policies, exclusionary land-use practices and unjustified incarceration. These communities have persevered and contributed an immeasurable amount to the history of the region.

Without reconciliation, Vancouver continues to ignore the lived experiences of marginalized peoples and deny them

their rightful place at the table. The road to resilient cities can be better served through people who openly tell their stories and lived experiences, to ultimately gain an understanding of how people arrived at their current destination and how we can move forward together.

KEY DRIVERS FOR ACTION

A City For All is about the breadth of participation and applicability to all of those who refer to this region as home, as well as those who have yet to come.

Leading up to Habitat III, leaders and representatives of local governments clamoured for a seat at the global table, signaling the need for integrating on-the-ground knowledge and innovation into global governance. The importance of local governments to participate at the international scale is akin to bringing the unheard individuals or community groups to the local planning table.

Vernacular narratives grounded in the lived experiences of members in our communities are key for informing resilient strategies. So, when we consider our roundtables, committees and engagement processes, we must consider who is missing. Considerations of culture, gender, age, class, ability and sexual orientation can certainly serve as starting points, diversifying the approach to planning for resilience. However, communities are far more complex and require a deeper awareness of intersectionality.¹

We are also considering the future members of our community when we propose strategies such as Sanctuary City, especially key in a time when climate refugees are going to be very much real.

We are beginning to plan not for, but with the people. An empowered community is key to a resilient one. We may begin by removing some logistical barriers to public participation, such as providing childcare, a stipend, translation services and meals, but there are more socially imbued barriers at play as well.

Natural systems demonstrate that changes in parts of the system affect all of the other parts. Resilience derives from those changes working together to adapt better to new situations. In human systems, too, we need to consciously look to the relationships between interventions. Inclusion is necessary to diversity and diversity is necessary to resiliency.

QUESTIONS

- What does a ‘City for All’ look like in the context of Vancouver and the region?
- Who is being left behind and what facilitates the ability of individuals to be resilient citizens in an environment of growing inequality and polarization?
- How can intersectionality (the overlap of different social identities) and its cumulative effects be turned to advantage rather than disadvantage residents?
- How can we better diversify our existing structures, such as VCPC and other advisory groups?

The City for All is one in a series of background issue papers prepared for Shaping Resilience: A Summit on Resilience and Vancouver’s Future. City for All was prepared by Amelia Huang, a Commissioner on the Vancouver City Planning Commission.

1. Intersectionality is the idea that the overlap of various social identities, such as race, gender, sexuality and class, contributes to the cumulative systemic oppression and discrimination or advantage experienced by an individual or group.

BACKGROUND PAPER: ENGAGEMENT FOR REAL

OCTOBER 25, 2017

A resilient city needs to harness the wisdom and skills of its residents. By empowering our community members, they will be ready to act together to address slowly building challenges such as climate change or acute crises such as floods or wild fires. Engagement can build social capital by giving community members the tools, power and confidence to form and lead organizations, direct activities, share information and build relationships. Supporting a civil society with these skills gives Vancouver a better chance at resiliency to face challenges that city government cannot tackle alone.

CONTEXT

In *A Paradise Built in Hell: The Extraordinary Communities that Arise in Disaster*, Rebecca Solnit examines how people in five communities over the past century have responded to disaster and worked together in post-disaster recovery. The case studies and “disaster sociology” show people self-organizing effective interventions, before top-down governments and institutions step in.

Solnit researched the 1906 San Francisco earthquake, 1917 Halifax harbour explosion, 1985 Mexico City earthquake, 9/11 terrorist attacks in Lower Manhattan; and the 2005 deluge of New Orleans from Hurricane Katrina. This year’s hurricane season in Texas and Puerto Rico and the most recent earthquake in Mexico show how important civil society is for post-disaster recovery.

Her findings paint a picture of neighbours working together with common purpose. Disaster survivors, Solnit notes, often share “a feeling of belonging and a sense of unity rarely achieved under normal circumstances.” As strangers become friends, social isolation, alienation, and restrictions disappear. Solnit says that these responses to disasters show social possibilities and provide “a glimpse of who else we ourselves may be and what else our society could become.”

A Paradise Built in Hell ends by musing on how our societies can create the shared purpose and social closeness that has been observed after disasters, but without an acute crisis or pressure to necessitate this mutual aid. This is the opportunity of Engagement for Real and the necessary condition for building a civil society prepared to address non-acute crises, like affordability, equity, climate change, migration, declining natural resources, and the threat of natural disasters.

As Solnit writes, “the ability to act on one’s own behalf, to enter a community of mutual aid rather than become a cast-out or a recipient of charity, matters immensely.” Generally, public engagement is premised on the belief that people should be involved in decisions that affect them individually or as a community member.

ISSUES

The International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) Spectrum of Engagement provides a clear framework on power. It defines five levels of engagement, depending on the impact and complexity of the issues. The five levels for public participation goals extend from inform (providing information) to consult (obtain feedback), involve (work with public to understand their concerns), collaborate (partner with public to develop alternatives) and empower (place final

decision-making in the hands of the public.). Promises to the public likewise fall somewhere on the spectrum of inform, consult, involve, collaborate or empower.

Most local governments in the Metro region operate somewhere in the range between “inform” and “involve,” such as sharing public notices, offering a survey or hosting an open house. The city’s use of advisory boards, development of neighbourhood plans, and architects’ use of charrettes are examples in the “collaborate” level. The “empower” level requires delegating decision-making power to the public with a promise to implement what the public decides. Referendums and elections fall to this level of the spectrum.

The collaborate-and-empower models of engagement offer community members a chance to act in mutual aid, rather than being provided or planned for. The collaborate and empower levels of the IAP2 Spectrum offer the most potential for building community member capacity in communication, organization and advocacy skills for resilient action.

Paul Hersey and Ken Blanchard’s Situational Leadership Model notes that effective leadership needs to be flexible to address the circumstances and the people involved. Effective leadership requires the ability to direct (share information on what is happening when/where and why), coach (two-way communications), support (shared decision-making on how to accomplish an action), and delegate (passing along responsibility). Different situations (emergencies versus long standing problems) are best suited to different leadership styles.

To strengthen resilience in the face of chronic stresses or the anticipation of crises, communities and local governments need to share power. Community members can

be involved in creating communications materials, designing processes and events, hosting their own events and setting up framework decisions. The more that shared information and social capital (i.e. acquaintances and social trust) exist before a crisis, the easier it is for communities, organizations and local governments to respond effectively.

Collaboration often needs support and resources to enable meaningful engagement. In short, engagement for real means that, if we can give people more power over their own and their communities’ futures, then we are building capacity for community members to step up in times of crisis and not wait for government intervention.

QUESTIONS

- What could engagement at the “collaborate” or “empower” level look like in Vancouver over the long term?
- What steps can we take within our own spheres of influence to provide engagement opportunities where participants become the agents of neighbourhood economic, social, cultural and environmental well-being?
- How can we better design and resource our engagement efforts to meaningfully include and respect our diverse communities? That is how do we combine ‘Engagement for Real’ with ‘A City for All’?

Engagement for Real is one of a series of background papers prepared for Shaping Resilience: A Summit on Resilience and Vancouver’s Future. This paper was prepared by Daniella Fergusson, a Vancouver City Planning Commissioner.

BACKGROUND PAPER: FINANCING THE PUBLIC GOOD

OCTOBER 25, 2017

This session seeks to tackle how the City currently finances its community improvements, including resiliency measures and public space, and looks to ways to create a more sustainable and unfettered source of revenue. A large portion of City revenue is currently coming from developers on spot rezoning. Being dependent upon market forces for the economic health of our communities is not a sustainable model. We want to look at how we finance the creation of community places, disaster planning, prevention, adaptation and recovery, as well as tackle issues of social justice related to such financing decisions.

CONTEXT

- Vancouver’s operating budget in 2017 is \$1.3-billion with 57% from property taxes and 19% from utility fees. The capital budget is \$485-million.
- Vancouver property taxes and utility fees are one of the lowest in the region. The combined property tax/utility fee for a median single family home in Vancouver is \$3,222. Across the region, the average is \$3,500. In New Westminster it is \$4,070.
- Over a five-year average, the tax increase in Vancouver has been near the bottom, according to City of Vancouver budget documents. Only Port Coquitlam and White Rock have enjoyed a lower tax increase in the region.
- DCLs – paid on all developments - have brought in \$400-million over the past 25

years to cover engineering infrastructure, day cares, libraries and land acquisition for housing.

- CACs - levied on rezoning - and density bonuses have brought in roughly \$800-million from 2010 to 2016 for capital projects such as social housing, day care, and cultural and community centres. The CACs in downtown are much higher than in East Vancouver, raising the issue of equity.
- Rezoning and negotiated agreements enable the City to do things that it is not otherwise able to do.
- Value-capture measures account for 34% of the capital budget.

ISSUES

- While capitalizing on real estate value gains has been very lucrative in the past five years, there are issues about how reliance on development charges is affecting affordability, equity, the provision of a spectrum of development scales and housing types, and the survival of small and medium sized developers.
- The model is vulnerable to changing real estate economics and there may be a potential conflict between the priorities of the developer and the City.
- The absence of a city-wide cohesive planning and development strategy, gives rise to claims that financing, rather than urban planning, drives growth.
- Looking ahead 40 years, in the context of resilience, Vancouver does not have a large enough tax base to deliver the services that could be required to address chronic stresses (homelessness, lack of affordable housing, drug addiction epidemic, sea level rise, etc.) or acute stresses (an earthquake, drought, wild fires). Any combination of these challenges would further threaten the city’s resilience, including its economic resilience.

Neither current property taxes nor development charges are sufficient to implement significant measures in the short term. Long term strategic use of traditional planning processes and financial instruments of municipal government, combined with innovative approaches to measurement and management as well as new sources of directed funding will be needed. Vancouver is already working with FCM and UBCM on rethinking municipal financing. Putting this in the context of security and resiliency of citizens and infrastructure puts it in a new framework. Increasing property taxes, a municipal income tax or a municipal sales tax are some of the alternatives that could be considered.

Funding is needed in Vancouver for public space as gathering places, as buffer zones for climate adaptation and for strengthening community bonds. Restrictions are needed to prevent new developments in inundation and flood prone areas. Initiatives are needed to support research and foster an economic hub for resilience technologies such warning systems and structural upgrading for earthquakes and sea-level rise, and to implement measures to mitigate climate change (drought, heat, water shortages, etc.).

Implementing resilience measures that reduce municipal vulnerability will help ensure financial robustness by maintaining property values, credit ratings, investor confidence and citizen security. Robust planning for adaptation and adaptation finance will position Vancouver and Metro as forward-thinking and prepared, which will attract investment and in-migration (or at least forestall the out-migration of workers and investment dollars) in a world increasingly competing in terms of risk preparedness.

A change of planning focus from growth to resilience is essential for the future prosperity of our city.

OPPORTUNITIES

- Alternative tools of financing outside traditional banking model – cooperative banks.
- Eco-asset accounting: determining the value and the vulnerability of ecosystem services to account for the combined financial and ecological benefits of adaptation measures.
- Alternate land tenure models that put community before profit.
- Increase transparency and possibly revenue by auctioning off additional density rather than negotiating CACs behind closed doors.
- Build capacity of bottom-up planning processes to identify vulnerabilities and risks, and link risk mitigation solutions with priority performance enhancements in relevant areas or systems.
- Research + Investment: Enhance technical and institutional capacity for designing comprehensive resilience upgrading projects; for preparing different investment propositions and for managing and staging complex projects.

QUESTIONS

- What is the difference between financing for growth versus financing for resilience?
- What are the forces that need to be overcome to finance the public good - in particular resiliency?
- What models or tools could be called into service to finance resilience?

Financing the Public Good is one in a series of issue papers prepared for Shaping Resilience: A Summit on Resilience and Vancouver’s Future. Jennifer Marshall, a Commissioner on the Vancouver City Planning Commission, prepared this paper.

BACKGROUND PAPER: COMMUNITIES AND CORRIDORS

OCTOBER 25, 2017

The New Urban Agenda adopted last fall at Habitat III in Quito, Ecuador sets out a new standard for sustainable urban development. In the Agenda, cities are envisioned as complete - in terms of the environment, the economy, inclusivity, equality and equity - and with opportunities for residents to easily and affordably connect to people, places, goods, services and different economic opportunities.

Creating spaces that allow for all of these things simultaneously is a challenge for many cities. Affordable mobility (passage) can often come at the price of complete communities (place).

Moreover, the failure to balance passage and place can have adverse effects on the City’s response and resilience to natural disasters. A public that feels actively engaged in their community and the decisions that have shaped it is more likely to have a social structure, trust, norms and social networks that facilitate collective action. In a catastrophe, experience with developing people-driven collective actions proves valuable in providing support, both during and after the disaster. Generally, the most resilient communities are those that have previously worked towards common goals.

This paper will focus on the friction between passage and place within the Lower Mainland and explore how to satisfy the conflicting preferences for mobility and community.

CONTEXT

The effects of transit and auto-oriented developments on community have been a

recurring political discussion throughout Vancouver’s history. Examples include the decision to reject plans for the proposed Strathcona freeway extension in the 1960s, debates on gentrification and transit-oriented development that have been taking place since the Expo Line Skytrain was opened, and debates on the removal of the Dunsmuir and Georgia viaducts.

What these examples have in common is a fear by residents of potential impacts that large-scale transit and auto-oriented infrastructure projects could have on their communities. Such debates illustrate the challenges that planners face when developing community plans and mapping modes of transportation.

Vancouver has followed a process of “debate-and-decide” in planning transportation. This approach gives local government the ability to adapt policy and proposals based on community input. In the above examples, Vancouver planners and politicians responded to community voices.

The ability of Metro Vancouver to create transportation solutions that respond to community input has resulted in many of Vancouver’s successes in creating desirable public realms and neighbourhoods, accompanied by high quality rapid transit. Vancouver’s Waterfront Station for example connects rapid transit to transportation extending to several urban areas in the Lower Mainland. Likewise, Brentwood Mall and Metrotown Mall in Burnaby, Lougheed Town Centre in Coquitlam, and Moody Centre and Inlet Centre in Port Moody are positive urban planning choices that limit the need for automobile use, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, improve air quality, promote healthier lifestyles and revitalize declining urban areas while easily connecting individuals to other areas in the Lower Mainland.

The province and municipalities have a positive track record in implementing a

disaster-response route plan originally focused solely on roads, but now grown to include railways, marine routes and air transport. The Disaster Response Route is an example of effective collaboration to ensure that, regardless of the transit-oriented or auto-oriented orientation of the parties, a network of pre-identified roads is in place that can most effectively move emergency services and supplies in the event of a major disaster. As municipalities move forward in their planning, they are forced to take into account how their plans could affect the Disaster Response Route.

ISSUES

1. The ability to balance passage and place through inclusive planning practices, such as the “debate-and-decide” approach, pays additional dividends in times when the City is facing a crisis. The alignment of community input with transportation policy has been linked with community resilience in the face of disaster. However when characteristics of a strong community are missing - particularly a lack of involvement in major mobility decisions - the community has less capacity to cope with disasters.
2. There is a known positive correlation between transit-oriented development, housing prices and increasing land values, since proximity to transit is in many instances desirable for homeowners, builders and developers. Transit-oriented development could lead to gentrification and large-scale displacement of low-income residents if not responsibly implemented.
3. Local or regional transportation planning can be undermined by the Province. The British Columbia Gateway program, for example, sets out plans to expand auto-oriented development, although the development does not align with plans of several Lower Mainland municipalities. Heavy emphasis on auto-oriented transportation could disrupt the balance

between passage and place, a goal of the City of Vancouver.

4. The failure to align municipal and provincial planning approaches can yield highly inflexible mobility corridors that can be detrimental in the event of a disaster, inhibiting the movement of first responders and equipment into an affected area.

QUESTIONS

As the City of Vancouver moves forward in an attempt to build on prior successes, it is crucial to also take account of past errors and mistakes. By highlighting both the more and less successful planning efforts to balance community with mobility in Vancouver, this paper poses questions regarding gentrification, national/local relationships, access/equity, and mobility in a disaster.

- Does the synergy between commercial and residential elements in transit-oriented development foster a balance amongst social, environmental, economic and cultural sustainability? How is the provision of affordable housing and public space being incorporated into the urban revitalization that is catalyzed by large scale transit-oriented developments?
- Who has access to the spaces surrounding transit-oriented developments and under what terms will this access be provided? What about displacement of residents and businesses?
- How can we ensure that the national and provincial governments are working in parallel to the municipalities when it comes to transportation and community development?
- Does an increase in transit-oriented development require adjustments in the Disaster Response Route?

Community and Corridors is one in a series of background issue papers prepared for Shaping Resilience: A Summit on Resilience and Vancouver’s Future. Communities and Corridors was prepared by J.B. McEown and Anthony Perl, a Commissioner on the Vancouver City Planning Commission.

1. For a more detailed discussion of these issues see: Perl, A., & Kenworthy, J. (2010). “The Canadian City at a Crossroads between ‘Passage and Place.’” In Canadian Cities in Transition: New Directions in the Twenty-First Century (pp. 191-209). Oxford University Pressgroup.

VOLUNTEERS

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ROOM FACILITATORS

A City for All: Amelia Huang

Communities and Corridors: Jennifer Marshall

Engagement for Real: Janet Webber

Financing the Public Good and Public Spaces: Daniella Fergusson

TABLE FACILITATORS

Betsy Agar

Anna Brayko

Christine Callihoo

Emina Dervisevic

Kimberley Hodgson

Karenn Krangle

Peter Ladner

Robert Matas

JB McEown

Jennifer Miller

Julia Morlacci

Mitchell Reardon

Leslie Shieh

Anna Zhuo

NOTETAKERS

Ariga Ageos

Allec Allen

Yuri Artibise

Veronika Bylicki

Kevin Cherney

Jacob Crammer

Melody Ma

Cathy Wan Yi Lin

Charlotte Wayara

Kady Wong

Shirley Wu

Julia Yi