



CITY OF VANCOUVER

ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT

Report Date: October 31, 2006
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Meeting Date: November 14, 2006

TO: Vancouver City Council

FROM: The Directors of Planning and the Housing Centre, and the Manager of the Sustainability Group, in consultation with the General Managers of Engineering Services and Parks and Recreation

SUBJECT: EcoDensity Initiative

RECOMMENDATIONS

- A. THAT Council approve the Terms of Reference and budget for the EcoDensity Initiative, attached as Appendix A, and direct staff to initiate the process leading to a June 2007 EcoDensity Forum and to develop an EcoDensity Action Plan, Charter and Toolkit;
- B. THAT the EcoDensity process seek and encourage ideas that respect and build on existing city policies on land use, sustainability, transportation and housing, including CityPlan and the Transportation Plan, while promoting innovative solutions for EcoDensity, including demonstration projects;
- C. THAT EcoDensity ideas reflect the EcoDensity objectives of sustainability, livability and affordability, and specifically recognize the key role of EcoStructure in supporting and enabling EcoDensity;
- D. THAT the EcoDensity process provide an array of ways for individuals and groups to participate, and seek the direct involvement of CityPlan Community Vision implementation committees, community groups, the development industry, Council Advisory Committees, design professions, academics, the non-profit housing sector, and non-government organizations;
- E. THAT Council approve an additional \$100,000 to support the development of information and enhanced communications for the EcoDensity Initiative, including the EcoDensity Primer (a backgrounder for the process), print and

radio advertising, media tours, speakers series, and website; source of funds to be the 2006 Contingency Reserve.

- F. THAT Council approve \$400,000 for the first year of implementation of the EcoDensity Action Plan, for staffing, public consultation and consultant services; source of funds to be the 2006 Contingency Reserve.

GENERAL MANAGER'S COMMENTS

The General Manager of Community Services RECOMMENDS approval of the foregoing.

COUNCIL POLICY

In 2002, Council adopted Sustainability Principles for the City, and has since moved forward a number of sustainability initiatives, including: the creation of the Sustainability Group and Climate Change Action Plan, a green building strategy and building code review, a showcase green development in Southeast False Creek, energy conservation programs, and greenhouse gas reduction initiatives.

Over the years, Council has approved policies to articulate and reflect the City's objectives for land use, transportation services and housing:

- The Central Area Plan (1991) and CityPlan (1995) establish Vancouver's land use directions. They support creating nodes - the Downtown, Central Broadway, and Neighbourhood Centres - where concentrations of jobs and services will provide a focus for transit services.
- Since 1998, Council has adopted eight Community Visions, which bring CityPlan to the predominantly single family areas of the city, and include amongst other policies, directions on the types and locations of new housing in neighbourhoods.
- The Vancouver Transportation Plan (1997), Downtown Transportation Plan (2002), Transit Strategy (2002), the Arbutus Corridor Official Development Plan (2005) and the Vancouver/UBC Area Transit Plan (2005) support:
 - increasing the provision of transit, limiting overall road capacity, maintaining an efficient goods movement network, traffic calming in neighborhoods, and providing more comfortable biking and walking environments;
 - using the trolley bus fleet as the basic transit service within the city; expanding the False Creek Streetcar to serve the Downtown and the preservation of existing rail corridors so that, if the opportunity arises, they may be used for other forms of transit as well as greenways; and supporting two new rapid transit lines through the city: the Broadway-Lougheed line to Granville, and eventually to UBC, and Richmond to Downtown.
- In 1989, Council adopted city-wide housing policy including encouraging affordable housing in all residential neighbourhoods in Vancouver.
- In October 2001, Council confirmed that its objectives for social housing are to maintain and expand housing opportunities in Vancouver for: low- and modest-income households

with priority given to families with children; seniors on fixed incomes or in need of support; single-room-occupancy residents; and the mentally ill, physically disabled, and others at risk of homelessness.

SUMMARY AND PURPOSE

The EcoDensity Initiative will engage those who live and work in Vancouver and who have an interest in the future of our city to generate new ideas for high quality densification in the neighbourhoods primarily outside the Downtown. While recognized as one of the world's most livable cities, Vancouver in its current form is not sustainable and is becoming increasingly unaffordable. EcoDensity will make a difference by delivering housing densification and other initiatives that use resources more efficiently and reduce waste (improving our "ecological footprint"), enhance neighbourhood livability through the delivery of supportive amenities and services, and improve affordability by increasing housing choice, supply and targeted affordability programs. EcoDensity is one part of the solution. For Vancouver to truly become more sustainable, livable and affordable, EcoDensity will need to be implemented together with initiatives related to transportation, housing, employment areas, green buildings and infrastructure, energy, food, and waste systems.

This report seeks approval for a process of broad public discussion of ideas for EcoDensity to be presented to Council at an EcoDensity Forum in June 2007. Deliverables will include an EcoDensity Action Plan, Charter (principles) and Toolkit. The process will seek innovative ideas to further EcoDensity that build on City policy for new housing, such as Community Visions. Ideas will also need to consider supporting amenities and services (EcoStructure), and in particular, serving an increased population with an efficient transit network. The process leading to the EcoDensity Forum will include many ways for people to be informed and involved, including an EcoDensity Primer booklet, an Ideas Month with a speakers series, tours, and Ideas Fair, and workshops for participants to further refine ideas for presentation to Council in June 2007. Staff also recommend that Council approve \$100,000 from 2006 Contingency Reserve for the development of information and enhanced communication materials to support and advertise the EcoDensity process, and \$400,000 from 2006 Contingency Reserve for staffing, public consultation and consultant support for one year to initiate implementation of the EcoDensity Action Plan.

BACKGROUND

In July 2006, Council supported the development of an EcoDensity Charter, Toolkit, and an EcoDensity Forum, to be held no later than Spring 2007, to discuss actions that lead to:

- Opportunities to improve housing affordability;
- Increased housing supply including city-wide approaches for new housing;
- Zoning designations which may allow fee-simple ownership of small lots or row housing;
- Economic analysis of proposed new housing types and zonings;
- Development of public amenities to meet the needs of new housing.

EcoDensity

Vancouver is one of the world's most livable cities, yet it has a sizable "ecological footprint." That is, it consumes resources and produces waste at a rate beyond the planet's ability to replenish and absorb. If everyone lived like Vancouverites currently do, it would take four planets' worth of resources to sustain us. So, while very livable, Vancouver has much room for improvement in becoming more sustainable and moving toward "single planet living." The city is also becoming increasingly unaffordable. By September 2006, the median house price on the east side was almost \$600,000; on the west side over \$1.2 million. The current rental market faces a vacancy rate of 0.6%, and over one-third of rental households pay over 30% of their income on housing.

EcoDensity is high quality densification that can make Vancouver more sustainable, livable and affordable in the following ways (see appendix A for more details):

Sustainable:

- makes transit accessible to more people and allows more people to walk or cycle to work and recreation, reducing the need for cars;
- enables better use of existing infrastructure and provides an opportunity for new green solutions, such as community energy, water and waste systems;
- reduces energy consumption by requiring much better building performance and construction technology;
- encourages integration of urban agriculture to reduce "food miles".

Livable:

- reflects the needs and interests of communities by engaging them in the process;
- makes for livable communities through the delivery of community amenities;
- creates more complete communities by having housing diversity within walking distance of shops and services, and accessible to transit;
- encourages locating jobs close to housing;
- promotes neighbourhood character and public safety through better, more responsive design;
- contributes to the local economy by increasing the market for local businesses;
- supports the retention of employment areas, which contribute to a diverse economy and a range of job opportunities.

Affordable:

- increases the housing supply;
- ties increased density to affordability programs;
- introduces new housing types, sizes, tenures and locations, which is particularly important for young families and the elderly who wish to stay in their neighbourhoods, but who do not have the range of housing available to meet their unique needs;
- reduces costs of construction and operation through new green building technology and services;
- investigates new financial tools.

EcoStructure

Amenities and services that support EcoDensity can be described as **EcoStructure**. EcoStructure includes more sustainable infrastructure for energy, transportation, food, water, and waste, and community services that make neighbourhoods more livable, such as parks, greenways, community centres and daycares. EcoDensity must be served by EcoStructure to be successful, since much of our “footprint” comes from choices around transportation, buildings, food, and waste.

DISCUSSION

The EcoDensity Initiative is a proposal to engage those who live and work in Vancouver and who have an interest in the future of our city to generate new ideas for high quality densification in the neighbourhoods primarily outside the Downtown. This will build on the last decade of work on CityPlan and Community Visions by thinking about increased housing in light of new information on the dramatic impact that we are having on the planet’s resources. At the same time, EcoDensity is about accelerating the implementation of existing policies for: increased housing choice in neighbourhoods, improved neighbourhood livability through the delivery of supportive amenities and services, and improved affordability by increasing housing supply, choice and affordability programs tied to increased densities.

The Terms of Reference (Appendix A) detail the scope and process for EcoDensity. To assist with their development, staff met with over forty individuals representing CityPlan implementation committees, the development industry, academia, the non-profit housing sector and non-government organizations.

EcoDensity will Encourage New Thinking and Build on Existing City Policy

The emphasis of EcoDensity is on high quality residential densification primarily in the lower density areas outside of the Downtown. The intent is for existing policies to provide the building blocks for creative and innovative new ideas. The EcoDensity Initiative provides an opportunity to think boldly about how to take existing policy to the next level. Creativity and innovation will be encouraged with best practices and models from the areas of green and affordable planning, design, construction, maintenance and finance. The EcoDensity process will also encourage new ideas on how to deliver EcoStructure at a broader range of densities and to test new green systems and infrastructure.

Existing policy enables the discussion. For example, CityPlan and the Community Visions contain an array of approved policy directions on new housing types and locations, ranging from medium density ground-oriented housing in Neighbourhood Centres to higher density opportunities on large or unique sites. There are also housing directions that communities are interested in, but want further planning and discussion before moving forward. Examples include new housing on arterials and new housing types such as traditional rowhouses. EcoDensity provides that opportunity. The Visions program has also developed a capacity and means of communication for residents to consider ideas and information that emerge post-Visions, as will be the case with EcoDensity.

EcoDensity ideas will need to reflect the connection with supporting amenities and services (EcoStructure). Again, existing policy provides a starting point for discussion. For example, City transportation policy and data provide the framework to understand how increased

densities affect the capacity of the transportation network. Transportation serves land use and is crucial to the EcoDensity discussion since mode choice comprises a significant portion of an individual's or area's ecological footprint. While some demand can be mitigated through the co-location of jobs and housing, much will still depend on the transit network. EcoDensity ideas will need to reflect existing capacity along transit corridors or the necessary increases to serve more population. For example, Central Broadway is currently at capacity with buses and will need rapid transit to meet even the existing jobs and population potential in current zoning.

City Financing Growth policy will provide the basis for discussion about how to finance future EcoStructure investments. This will be particularly important for medium-density areas, where there are not the same opportunities to secure the array of public amenities and support facilities as with the major projects downtown and elsewhere in the city. One area to explore is infrastructure agreements and programs funded by senior governments, which could be redefined from being sprawl-focused, as is the case with funding for road expansion, to being EcoStructure-focused.

A Process that Informs and Engages

Two key themes for the EcoDensity process are providing the information necessary to make informed choices and providing a variety of ways for people to engage and get involved.

The EcoDensity Primer (a backgrounder) will be developed this winter to help participants have an informed discussion about EcoDensity ideas. The Primer will include information on:

- Existing City land use, transportation and housing policies;
- The latest trends and information on the state of the environment, housing affordability and transportation;
- The role of EcoDensity in improving sustainability, livability and affordability, including best practices and examples;
- The emerging evaluation criteria against which EcoDensity proposals will be evaluated.

The EcoDensity Forum in June 2007, is the focal point of the process, providing the opportunity for Council to hear from the public on ideas and actions to implement EcoDensity. Specific outcomes will include:

- EcoDensity Action Plan: Immediate and longer term actions to implement EcoDensity, which could include demonstration projects, policy and regulatory changes, partnerships and new programs;
- EcoDensity Charter: Principles to guide future decisions on planning and development to achieve EcoDensity in Vancouver;
- EcoDensity Toolkit: Resources to help citizens and professionals understand the environmental implications of their development choices and to encourage the implementation of greener choices.

The run up to the Forum will offer participants an array of lively and engaging opportunities to learn about EcoDensity and to generate new ideas. This includes an Ideas Month early in the New Year, which will include a speakers series, tours, an EcoDensity Primer booklet, and an Ideas Fair where citizens can begin to share their ideas. Workshops will be held with interested groups and individuals to further develop ideas for presentation to Council at the June Forum.

During the process, staff will assist with the development and testing of ideas, and acknowledge the opportunities and challenges to implementation. Evaluation criteria will be developed and used by staff and process participants to ensure that ideas reflect EcoDensity's sustainability, livability and affordability objectives and consider the important relationship to EcoStructure. The criteria should address issues such as:

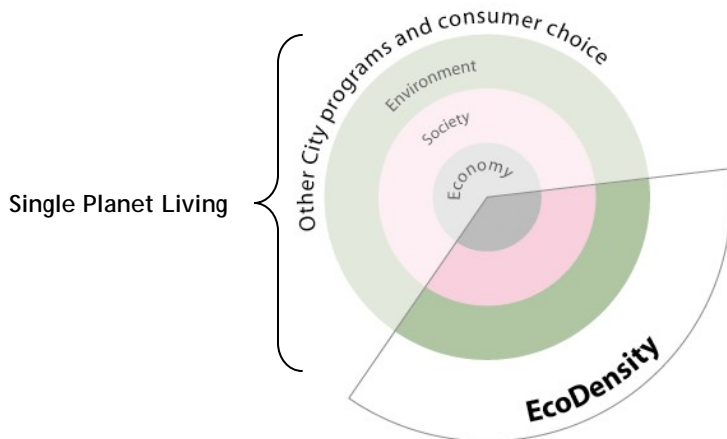
- Increasing the overall supply of housing.
- Lowering resource consumption and using existing infrastructure more efficiently.
- Improving building design to be more sustainable and affordable.
- Encouraging innovation in ecologically sustainable communities and buildings.
- Building on existing policy for new housing in CityPlan and Community Visions.
- Achieving high quality and compatible urban design.
- Ability to provide the needed transit capacity.
- Complementing population growth with supportive community amenities and services.
- Increasing neighbourhood health, diversity and cultural opportunities.
- Fostering mixed use neighbourhood centres where housing diversity is within walking distance of shops and services, and where convenient access to transit is provided.
- Meeting basic needs for housing, in terms of affordability and household size.
- Introducing new housing types, sizes, tenures and locations.
- Exploring alternative finance models and innovative tenure solutions.

Aligning EcoDensity with Other Initiatives

EcoDensity is part of a suite of actions that will be needed to move Vancouver closer to single planet living -- living on one planet's worth of resources. EcoDensity and other programs that deal with transportation, employment areas, green buildings and infrastructure, energy, food, and waste systems must be aligned. Success also requires inter-governmental commitments to deal with homelessness, supportive housing, and the various partnerships and lease arrangements that the City can engage in. There is a significant role for the private sector in pursuing business interests that complement EcoDensity, such as pioneering green developments or alternative finance mechanisms. Consumer choices and decisions also play a large role in helping Vancouver become more sustainable, such as choosing alternate transportation modes, recycling, energy conservation and waste reduction.

The EcoDensity process will identify linkages with these programs and issues. Some of this may be in the form of communication and information sharing between programs, and some may be in the form of new ways of doing business or organizing ourselves.

EcoDensity is One Part of a more Sustainable Vancouver



EcoDensity is one of the many actions that is required to help move us closer to single planet living. Other action must come from consumers and targeted programs in the areas of transportation, employment and industrial areas, green buildings and infrastructure, energy, food, and waste systems.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The proposed budget for the EcoDensity Initiative is \$800,000 (see Terms of Reference, p.13). In July 2006, Council approved \$300,000 for the Initiative. After further scoping and development of a detailed budget, staff recommend an additional \$100,000 be approved for information and enhanced communication to deliver the process. This includes the development of the EcoDensity Primer and a full array of communication outreach including print and radio advertising, media tours, speakers series, and website. Staff also recommend an additional \$400,000 be approved now for the first year of implementation of the EcoDensity Action Plan to ensure immediate action following the 2007 Forum. This includes a staff team comprised of a Planner, Housing Planner, Project Engineer and Planning Assistant, as well as funding for public consultation and consultant services. The source of funds being the 2006 Contingency Reserve, with any future ongoing funding being subject to Council approval and annual budget review.

CONCLUSION

The EcoDensity Initiative is a process to discuss and develop ideas for additional densification that will make Vancouver more sustainable, livable and affordable. It will include an EcoDensity Forum in June 2007, along with the development of an EcoDensity Action Plan, Charter (principles) and Toolkit.

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EcoDensity Initiative

Terms of Reference

November 2006

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background

On July 18, 2006, Vancouver City Council launched the EcoDensity Initiative to create a broad constituency to discuss and develop ideas for new housing that will significantly increase ecological sustainability while enhancing livability and affordability.

EcoDensity is high quality densification that uses resources more effectively and reduces waste (improving our “ecological footprint”), enhances neighbourhood livability through the delivery of supportive amenities and services, and improves affordability by increasing housing choice, supply and targeted affordability programs.

Vancouver has made a good start in these areas. The City has:

- said no to freeways and instead promotes walking, biking and transit;
- created livable, higher density, mixed use neighbourhoods;
- begun developing neighbourhood centres in single family areas, providing increased housing choices around shops and services;
- approved policy to retain industrial lands and initiated a study to determine how to use our land to accommodate future business growth, economic activity and transportation needs;
- been an active partner in the development of affordable and social housing for more than 50 years;
- sought integrated, mixed-use and inclusive developments;
- advanced the design of green buildings and is now building an entire sustainable community, with the development of Southeast False Creek underway;
- started to address energy use and greenhouse gas emissions;
- made these decisions through processes that engage and involve the citizens of Vancouver.

While Vancouver has made progress, it has a big “ecological footprint.” That is, it consumes resources and produces waste at a rate beyond the planet’s ability to replenish and absorb. If all people lived like Vancouverites, it would take four planets to sustain us. So, while Vancouver is recognized as one of the world’s most livable cities, there is much room for improvement in becoming more sustainable and moving toward “single planet living.” EcoDensity can help with this. The chart below compares ecological footprints for various cities. The biggest determining factors are building construction and operation, food production and transport, and transportation infrastructure and fuel.

CHART 1: ECOLOGICAL FOOTPRINTS OF VARIOUS CITIES

City	Ecological Footprint (number of planets)
Berlin	2
London	3.5
Toronto	4
Vancouver	4
Seattle	5
Calgary	5
Note: the boundaries for some cities are significantly larger than others which may influence the outcome of the Ecological Footprint analysis.	

Sources: Pacholsky, Jens. (2006) The Ecological Footprint of Berlin (Germany) for the Year 2000, Stirling University, Scotland; City Limits Website, Executive Summary download; Report prepared for the Federation of Canadian Municipalities: Ecological Footprints of Canadian Municipalities and Regions, Updated January 2005.

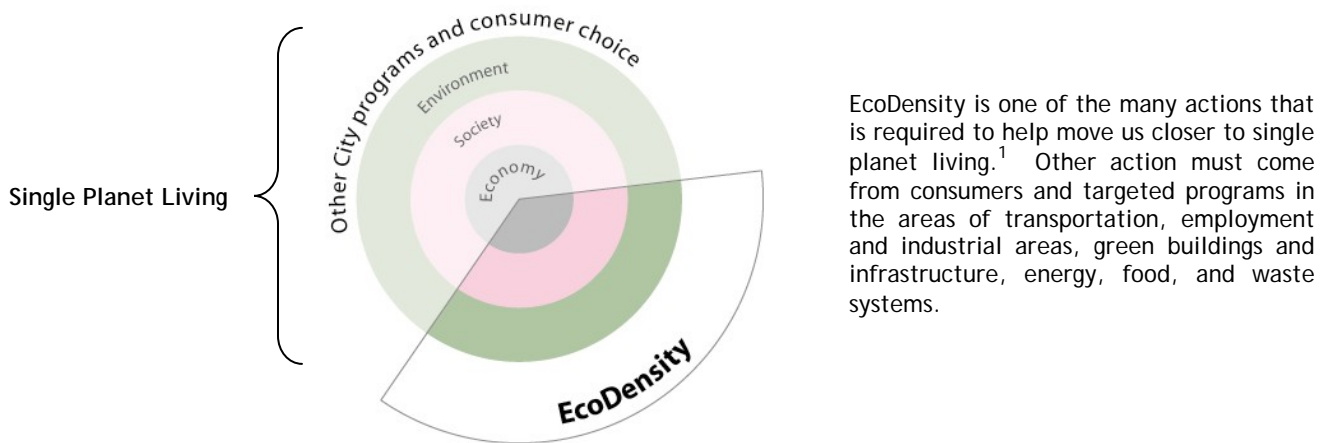
1.2. EcoDensity and Ecological Sustainability

EcoDensity can help Vancouver become a single planet city because high quality densification:

- makes transit accessible to more people;
- allows people to walk or cycle to work and recreation, reducing the need for cars;
- enables better use of existing infrastructure and provides an opportunity for new green solutions, such as community energy systems and the recapture of energy;
- reduces energy consumption by promoting better building performance and construction technology.

EcoDensity will be part of Vancouver's overall move towards a single planet city. Related initiatives must continue to progress and be aligned with EcoDensity (see Figure 1). This includes City programs that deal with transportation, employment and industrial areas, green buildings and infrastructure, energy, food, and waste systems. Section 7 details some of these key programs.

FIGURE 1: THE ROLE OF ECODENSITY IN ACHIEVING SINGLE PLANET LIVING



1.3. EcoDensity and Livability

EcoDensity also plays a significant role in making neighbourhoods more livable and vibrant - a key focus of CityPlan and Community Visions. This is because high quality densification:

- reflects the needs and interests of communities by engaging them in the process;
- makes for livable communities through the delivery of community amenities;
- creates more complete communities by having housing diversity within walking distance of shops and services, and accessible to transit;
- promotes neighbourhood character and public safety through better, more responsive urban design;
- contributes to the local economy by increasing the market for local businesses.

¹ William Rees, University of British Columbia School of Community and Regional Planning, 2006.

EcoDensity implements and builds on CityPlan directions and momentum. CityPlan connected increased housing capacity to livability and diversity of housing choice, and EcoDensity builds on those directions by connecting high quality density to reducing our ecological footprint and getting closer to single planet living.

Amenities and services that support EcoDensity can be described as **EcoStructure**. EcoStructure includes more sustainable infrastructure for transportation, water, food, waste, and community services that make neighbourhoods more livable, such as parks, greenways, community centres and daycares. Vancouver has a good start in implementing many amenities and services that exemplify EcoStructure. However, these efforts will need to intensify to complement EcoDensity.

There are opportunities to further implement EcoStructure through existing mechanisms that tie amenity provision to new development, for example, Community Amenity Contributions, Development Cost Levies, and public funding from the Capital Plan process. However, additional funding sources will be needed to make significant progress towards single planet living. Existing infrastructure agreements and programs with senior governments will need to be redefined from being sprawl-focused, as is the case with funding for road expansion, to being EcoStructure-focused.

1.4. EcoDensity and Affordability

EcoDensity can play a role in addressing the current housing affordability crisis. By the third quarter of 2006, the median house price on the east side was almost \$600,000; on the west side over \$1.2 million.² Home ownership is becoming more difficult for modest- and middle-income households and an impossibility for renters, whose median annual income was \$30,000 in 2000.³ While rents have been relatively stable for a long period of time, little purpose-built rental stock has been constructed since the mid-1970s, and the affordable rental stock is under redevelopment pressure. The current rental market faces a vacancy rate of 0.6%,⁴ and over one-third of rental households pay over 30% of their income on housing.⁵

EcoDensity can help address the affordability crisis in the city by:

- increasing the housing supply;
- tying increased density to affordability programs;
- introducing new housing types, sizes, tenures and locations, which is particularly important for young families and the elderly who wish to stay in their neighbourhoods, but who do not have the range of housing available to meet their unique needs;
- reducing costs of construction and maintenance through new green building technology and services.

For the city to become more affordable, EcoDensity must work in parallel with programs and initiatives at various levels of government. This includes initiatives around homelessness, supportive housing, and the various partnerships and lease arrangements that the City can engage in. Figure 2 shows the relative position of affordability within EcoDensity and the broader sustainability framework.

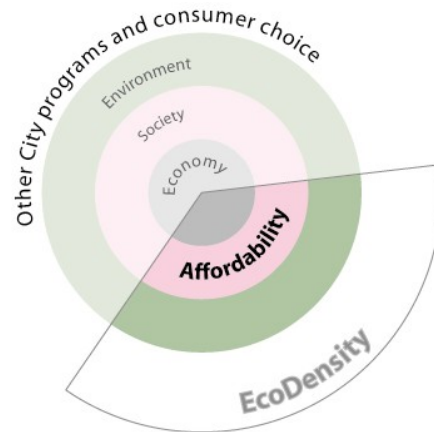
² Real Estate Boards of Greater Vancouver/Fraser Valley

³ Statistics Canada, 2001 Census

⁴ CMHC October 2005 Market Rental Survey

⁵ Statistics Canada, 2001 Census

FIGURE 2: ECODENSITY AND AFFORDABILITY



EcoDensity can help address part of the affordability issue through: increased supply, tying increased density to affordability programs, introducing new housing types, sizes, tenures and locations, and reducing costs through green technologies for construction and maintenance. Continued efforts are also needed at all levels of government to deal with affordability and related housing issues such as supportive housing and homelessness.

2. ECODENSITY'S RELATIONSHIP WITH EXISTING POLICY

Existing policy will provide the building blocks for creative and innovative ideas. EcoDensity provides an opportunity to think boldly about how to take existing policy to the next level. CityPlan, for example, provides for the development and reinforcement of Neighbourhood Centres, a diverse economy and jobs close to home. Community Visions contain a variety of approved policy directions on new housing in communities, including new housing types and locations, ranging from medium density ground oriented housing in Neighbourhood Centres to higher density opportunities on large or unique sites. There are also a number of housing directions that communities were interested in, but wanted further planning and discussion before moving forward. Examples include new housing on arterials and new housing types such as traditional rowhouses. EcoDensity provides the opportunity to review these directions.

EcoDensity ideas will need to reflect the connection with supporting amenities and services (EcoStructure). Existing policy provides a start point for discussion. For example, City transportation policy and data provide the framework to understand how increased densities affect the capacity of the transportation network. Transportation serves land use and is crucial to the EcoDensity discussion since mode choice comprises a significant portion of an individual's or area's ecological footprint. While some demand can be mitigated through the co-location of jobs and housing, much will still depend on the transit network. EcoDensity ideas will need to reflect existing capacity along transit corridors or the necessary increases to serve more population. For example, Central Broadway is currently at capacity with buses and will need rapid transit to meet even the existing jobs and population potential in current zoning.

3. PROCESS AND SCHEDULE (see Figure 3)

The process for the EcoDensity Initiative between November 2006 and June 2007 will include: providing background information to inform people's ideas for EcoDensity, developing ideas into choices, and presenting choices and actions for EcoDensity. The process will consist of four phases: Getting in Touch, Creating and Assessing Ideas, Presenting Choices and Making Choices.

3.1 Pre-Consultation

August - October 2006

Scoping sessions were held with interest groups from the academic, development, non-profit/government, and CityPlan communities, as well as staff, to discuss the process, ideas and emerging evaluation criteria. Background research on current conditions and best practices was initiated, as was the hiring of staff to support the process. A committee of senior staff was established to oversee program development.

3.2 Phase I: Getting in Touch

November - December 2006

In Phase I, staff will continue researching best practices. An EcoDensity Primer will be produced and a project website and phone line will be set up to start collecting input. Invitations will be sent to the public, interest groups and the media for an Ideas Month in early 2007.

3.3 Phase II: Creating and Assessing Ideas

January - May 2007

Phase II starts with an Ideas Month, including a speaker series, media coverage, tours, and an invitation for EcoDensity proposals. The Ideas Month culminates in an Ideas Fair to share information and generate additional ideas for EcoDensity. In February and March 2007, workshops will be held with interest groups and individuals to further develop and test ideas against the criteria for EcoDensity, which will be finalized through the process. Staff will collect and group all ideas, as well as start to assess implications, including opportunities for further work. Consultants will also be hired at this stage to assist with analysis (e.g. economic feasibility) and testing of options. The EcoDensity Charter and Toolkit will be developed during this phase. Logistics for the EcoDensity Forum will be finalized and invitations sent out.

3.4 Phase III: Presenting Choices

June 2007

Phase III consists of a broad report back to the public on the ideas that have been developed (including the EcoDensity Charter and Toolkit) through a series of open houses and leading up to the EcoDensity Forum (Choices Summit), in June 2007. The Forum will provide groups and individuals with the opportunity to discuss choices for EcoDensity and make their preferences known to City Council. Staff will also have an opportunity to provide comments on the choices, including opportunities, challenges and relationships to existing programs.

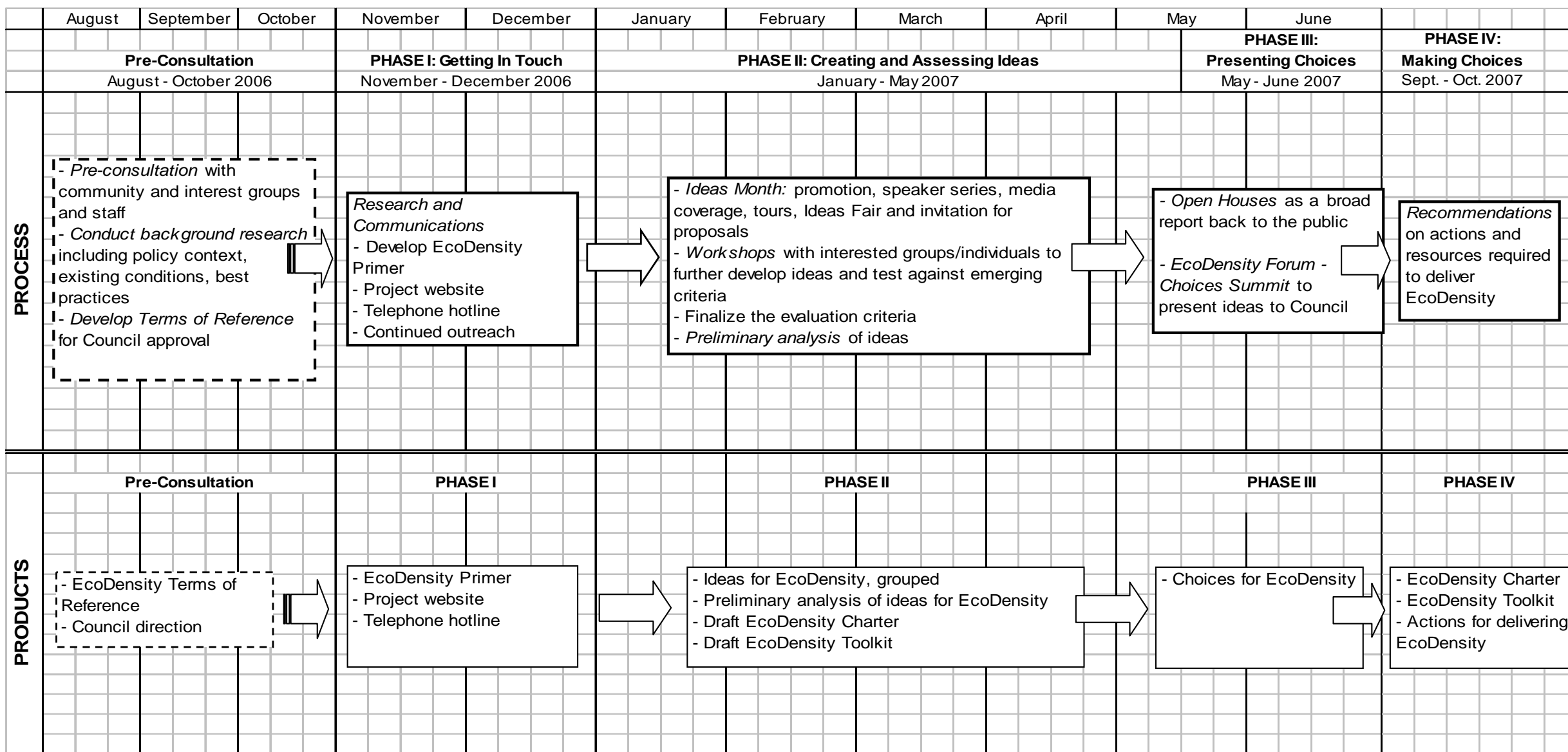
Council may make some decisions at this time on which ideas to move forward for further exploration and implementation.

3.5 Phase IV: Making Choices

Fall 2007

Staff will report back to Council in Fall 2007 on outcomes of the EcoDensity Forum and seek adoption of the EcoDensity Charter and Toolkit. An EcoDensity Action Plan of immediate and longer-term actions will be presented to move toward EcoDensity and single planet living in Vancouver.

FIGURE 3: PROCESS AND SCHEDULE



4. PRODUCTS

The process for the EcoDensity Initiative will focus on generating ideas and developing them into actions to deliver EcoDensity. The process will deliver:

a) EcoDensity Primer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A backgrounder to provide a starting point for EcoDensity ideas, which will include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Documenting existing City land use, transportation and housing policies; - The latest trends and information on the state of the environment, housing affordability and transportation; - The role of EcoDensity in improving sustainability, livability and affordability, including best practices and examples; - The emerging evaluation criteria against which EcoDensity proposals will be evaluated.
b) Public Awareness and Engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Share information on the connection between EcoDensity, sustainability and affordability so that participants can make informed choices; • Will be a key part of all steps in the process, particularly leading up to and during the Ideas Month (e.g. speaker series, Ideas Fair, interactive website).
c) EcoDensity Toolkit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resources to help process participants understand the environmental implications of their development choices and to encourage the implementation of greener choices; • May include an environmental performance measure (e.g. ecological footprinting), best practice examples, model housing designs and “How to” documents for greener and cheaper housing.
d) EcoDensity Charter	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Principles to guide future decisions on planning and development to achieve EcoDensity in Vancouver.
e) EcoDensity Action Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Immediate and longer term actions to implement EcoDensity, which could include demonstrations, policy and regulatory changes, partnerships and new programs; • The actions to be identified, developed and tested through the proposed process, then presented to Council for consideration; • Will include a monitoring and reporting strategy to ensure that actions are reviewed and their performance measured in the years to come.

5. SCOPE OF WORK

The scope of work for the EcoDensity Initiative includes:

Content:

- A city-wide context with an emphasis on the neighbourhoods outside the downtown peninsula.
- Developing an EcoDensity Primer, Charter, Toolkit and Action Plan to help guide future decisions on planning and development in Vancouver.
- Creating evaluation criteria against which EcoDensity proposals can be measured.

- Identifying and developing a series of immediate and longer term actions to move toward EcoDensity (which may include demonstration projects, new policies and regulation changes, as well as programs). These actions will need to reflect the Evaluation Criteria as developed through the process (see Section 6.2).
- Contributing to existing City initiatives by providing new information and opportunities to demonstrate ideas for EcoDensity.

Process:

- Offering a variety of ways for the general public, designers, academics, developers, and interest groups to engage in the EcoDensity process, culminating in the EcoDensity Forum in June 2007.
- Providing the information and expertise necessary for participants to make informed choices about EcoDensity.

Linkages:

- Coordinating with other City programs and initiatives in advancing sustainability principles (see Section 7, Related Initiatives).
- Providing information for the City's contribution to the Greater Vancouver Regional District's *Livable Region Strategic Plan* update.

6. DEFINITIONS AND EMERGING EVALUATION CRITERIA

6.1. Definitions

- *EcoDensity* - high quality densification that contributes to making a city more ecologically sustainable, livable and affordable.
- *Affordability in Housing* - where individuals, couples and families on modest and fixed incomes are not required to pay more than 30% of income on suitable and adequate housing.
- *Ecological Footprint* - the amount of land and water needed to sustain a person's consumption and waste patterns; usually described in the number of planets needed if the entire world was to follow those patterns.
- *EcoStructure* - environmentally responsible infrastructure that supports greener development and encourages higher density living, whether it be related to energy, water, transportation, food, waste management, or community amenities such as parks, daycares, community centres, etc.; EcoStructure supports EcoDensity.

6.2. Emerging Evaluation Criteria

The EcoDensity process allows for groups and individuals to generate and submit ideas for delivering EcoDensity. As ideas are developed, they will need to be assessed to determine implications for factors such as EcoStructure (especially transit capacity), environmental impacts, existing policy context, housing affordability and implementation costs. Evaluation criteria will be developed through the process to aid in this assessment while encouraging creativity and innovation. Based on the Mayor's Guiding Principles for EcoDensity, CityPlan and the City's Sustainability Principles, (see appendices), the criteria should address issues such as:

- Increasing the overall supply of housing.
- Lowering resource consumption and using existing infrastructure more efficiently.
- Improving building design to be more sustainable and affordable.
- Encouraging innovation in ecologically sustainable communities and buildings.
- Building on existing policy for new housing identified in CityPlan and Community Visions.
- Achieving high quality and compatible urban design.
- Ability to provide the needed transit capacity;
- Complementing population growth with supportive community amenities and services.
- Increasing neighbourhood health, diversity and cultural opportunities.
- Providing for high quality, compatible urban design.
- Fostering mixed use neighbourhood centres where housing diversity is within walking distance of shops and services, and where convenient access to transit is provided.
- Encouraging jobs close to home.
- Meeting basic needs for housing, in terms of affordability and household size.
- Introducing new housing types, sizes, tenures and locations.
- Exploring alternative finance models and innovative tenure solutions.

7. RELATED INITIATIVES

Many City programs are aligned with the EcoDensity Initiative, and more will emerge in the future. Examples are listed below. The EcoDensity process will identify linkages with these types of programs and issues. Some of this may be in the form of communication and information sharing between programs, and some may be in the form of new ways of doing business or organizing ourselves.

- **Community Visions and Neighbourhood Centres:** Community Visions identify what and where new housing is generally desired in Vancouver's single family neighbourhoods. The Neighbourhood Centres program implements these directions by working with communities to introduce zoning that permits new forms of housing along with an associated suite of improvements to neighbourhood shopping streets.
- **Sustainability:** The City is moving forward with a number of sustainability initiatives including: the Climate Change Action Plan, a green buildings strategy and building code review; a showcase green development in Southeast False Creek; energy conservation programs; greenhouse gas reduction, and zero waste initiatives.
- **Transportation:** City transportation programs promote walking, cycling and transit while also accommodating goods movement and the automobile (e.g. CityPlan, Transportation Plan, Greenways Plan, Community Visions, Neighbourhood Centres). Implementation of these programs has resulted in decreasing trips into the city (and downtown) by car and increases in all other modes.
- **Homeless Action Plan, Downtown Eastside Housing Plan, the Supportive Housing Strategy, City housing policies and non-market housing initiatives:** The City has been active in facilitating the development of non-market housing through discounted land leases and partnerships with the provincial and federal governments since the 1950s. Through the Housing Centre in collaboration with Planning, Real Estate, and the Sustainability Office, the City's role regarding housing affordability will continue in parallel with EcoDensity.
- **Employment Lands:** City policy supports retaining industrial land to meet the needs of city-serving, city-oriented, and port/river-related industries. The Metropolitan Core Jobs and Economy Land Use Plan will determine the land requirement of future employment in the core. In addition, pending programs in the False Creek Flats, Marine Drive Station Area and the Marpole Industrial Gateway will all help inform what role these existing industrial areas will need to play to ensure a healthy city economy and employment base in the future.

- Economic Development Strategy: The Vancouver Economic Development Commission is leading a project to develop an economic development strategy for the City of Vancouver. The first phase is to be carried out over a 12-month period from July 2006 to July 2007.
- Social Development Plan: Staff are creating a Social Development Plan to guide the City's social development work within a larger framework of sustainability. The focus is on social sustainability components, including addressing basic needs and building human capacity and social capacity. Vancouver is also committed to developing a just and sustainable food system that fosters sustainable equitable food production, distribution and consumption; nutrition; community development, and environmental health.

8. COMMUNICATIONS

The Corporate Communications Division will work with the EcoDensity project team to develop a comprehensive communications strategy.

The objectives of the strategy will be to:

- Recognize the progressive initiatives that have already been undertaken by the City to improve livability;
- Build understanding of the growing need to provide more housing that is sustainable, livable and affordable;
- Promote excitement for the process and the ideas for innovative and inspirational solutions;
- Help develop the key messages for EcoDensity and its strong connections to sustainability, livability and affordability;
- Address concerns and misconceptions about the concept as it emerges from the process.

The Corporate Communications Division will develop a detailed plan to support the project throughout the consultation period. It will be important to simplify complex information and to give citizens the information they need to make informed choices.

Since this is about innovation and ideas that can often best be expressed visually, it will be important to create tools that show people the possibilities and that help address their concerns.

Some information will need to be translated.

9. BUDGET

The following is the proposed EcoDensity Budget.

Budget Breakdown

Staffing	145,000
- Planner II, Planning Assistant	
Design and development of ideas and options	75,000
- Charter and toolkit	
- Feasibility analyses	
- "How to" documents	
- Testing of policy and regulatory changes	
Staging of Ideas Month, workshops, open houses and EcoDensity Forum	70,000
- Event coordinator	
- Event facilitator	
- Speaker series	
- Venue rental	
- Food	
- Telephone Hotline	
- Staff overtime	
Information and Communications	110,000
- EcoDensity Primer and brochures	
- Advertising (print and radio)	
- Website	
- Translation	
- Banners and signage	
- Video	
- Other communications materials	
Implementation Team	400,000
- Funding for first year of EcoDensity Action Plan implementation	
- Team comprised of Planner, Engineer, Housing Planner, Planning Assistant	
- Includes funding for public consultation and consultant assistance	
<hr/>	
TOTAL	\$ 800,000

10. ROLES

The EcoDensity Initiative will involve many contributors throughout the process. This section outlines the roles of participants.

- **Communities:** Individual residents as well as representatives of CityPlan Committees are invited to participate in all phases of the project, including the identification, development and assessment of EcoDensity ideas, and to ensure that proposals build upon the process and commitments of the Community Visions program.
- **Interest groups:** Groups that are interested in, affected by and/or responsible for EcoDensity are being asked to participate and partner in the process. They include community groups, academics, the design/development industry, government representatives, the not-for-profit housing sector and non-governmental-organizations.
- **Vancouver City Council:** Council supported the development of an EcoDensity Charter and Toolkit, and is responsible for approving the EcoDensity Terms of Reference. Councillors will be invited to participate in the process and will approve actions to deliver EcoDensity.
- **Staff:** Involvement will include a senior staff steering committee and staff technical team(s) to carry out the day-to-day management of the project, including public consultation, research, management of consultants, facilitation and assessment of ideas.
- **Consultants:** Consultants will be hired on an as-needed basis to assist with event organization and facilitation, design of materials, and to provide expertise in analysing options for EcoDensity (e.g. economic feasibility, ecological footprinting for Vancouver, etc.).

APPENDIX A
Mayor's Guiding Principles for EcoDensity
(July 2006)

- **Lower resource consumption and use existing infrastructure more efficiently**
Cities with high quality densities consume less land for development and energy for heating, cooling and transportation. They also make for more efficient use of costly investments such as new bridges, roads, water and waste systems.
- **Enhance the livability and beauty of neighbourhoods**
High quality density will help to increase the livability, quality and beauty of our neighbourhoods, ensuring the highest standards of architecture and urban design, creating interesting and lively public places, and expanding community amenities.
- **Increase housing choice, especially for young families and the elderly**
A dense city provides more opportunities for housing for all stages of the life cycle, such as infill, duplexes, and row houses or higher density options on large or unique sites. Higher density developments need to recognize the needs of all people, including families that require bigger units or more bedrooms, as well as provide public amenities for children and seniors.
- **Create mixed use neighbourhood centres**
Complete neighbourhoods have housing diversity within walking distance of shops and services, and provide convenient access to transit. These neighbourhood centres reduce reliance on the car, allow independence for seniors and youth, and facilitate daily interactions.
- **Increase public safety**
Growth can make neighbourhoods safer through more active streets and public spaces, quality designs that prevent crime, and a civic commitment to deal with annoyances, nuisances and other activities that detract from the quality of neighbourhood life.
- **Support our local economy**
A growing pool of residential homeowners will contribute to a new customer base for our local merchants and help keep our economy vibrant.
- **Maintain competitive tax rates while shifting tax burdens onto less sustainable activities**
Increased densities will serve to broaden the tax base, and will relieve pressure on both residential and business property taxes. Tax shifting away from income and property, and toward sprawl, waste and pollution will enhance our long-term sustainability.
- **Preserve and expand employment areas**
Employment areas and goods movement are critical to the functioning of cities, providing jobs and services for residents and businesses. Increased densities can help foster a strong industrial base and orderly, rational commercial development, which are essential to our economic sustainability.
- **Make sustainable transportation choices**
A more sustainable city is supported by investments in infrastructure that ensure mobility for all and provide alternatives to the car. Transit, cycling, and walking all become more efficient with higher densities.
- **Restore and expand natural environments that reflect our ecology**
Urban green space provides numerous benefits to city residents, providing space for recreation and natural experiences, improving the urban ecology and natural habitat, and fostering a sense of community that is a part of the landscape.

- **Improve building design**
New housing types will be needed to meet the demand for medium-density, ground-oriented housing in Vancouver. Designs need to challenge existing norms and be at the frontier for affordability, performance and sustainability.
- **Work with communities to make choices**
Working with communities in addressing housing needs, as Vancouver does through CityPlan, allows for housing capacity to increase in a way that reflects local needs and interests.
- **Access the world's best thinkers and designers**
Neighbourhoods seeking high quality density should be provided with access to some of the world's best urban thinkers and designers, along with information and toolkits necessary to understand the environmental implications of different development choices.

APPENDIX B
CityPlan: Directions for Vancouver
(Adopted in June 1995)
Summary Document

Introduction

In the fall of 1992, Vancouver City Council asked citizens for ideas about Vancouver's future. Over the following three years more than 20,000 people participated in developing a shared vision for Vancouver's future: CityPlan. On June 6, 1995 Vancouver City Council adopted CityPlan: Directions for Vancouver as a broad vision for the city to guide policy decisions, corporate work priorities, budgets, and capital plans.

City of Neighbourhoods

Vancouverites want a city of neighbourhoods each with its own identity. To make these neighbourhoods happen, CityPlan sets directions for neighbourhood centres, housing variety, and neighbourhood character.

Neighbourhood Centres

In all areas of Vancouver neighbourhood centres will provide a "heart" for each neighbourhood. Here, people will find shops, jobs, community services, public places, and housing for various ages and incomes. These centres will, for the most part, develop from existing shopping streets and attract people from the surrounding area to shop, work, meet with neighbours and friends, and participate in community activities.

Neighbourhood Housing Variety

Neighbourhood centres will provide a greater variety of housing in single-family neighbourhoods - townhouses, rowhouses, and apartments - for people at different stages of life and of different incomes. Older people will be able to stay in the community where they've lived most of their lives. More young people and young families will be able to find homes in their familiar neighbourhoods. Additional housing will be built around the downtown peninsula within walking distance of the many jobs downtown.

Distinctive Neighbourhood Character

Even with more people and more housing, Vancouver will retain much of its traditional look and feel - the trees and greenery, the heritage buildings and areas, the distinctive character of each neighbourhood, and the generally low-scale buildings away from the downtown. Change will be focused in the downtown and new neighbourhood centres. Around these centres, traditional single-family areas will remain.

How the character of each neighbourhood develops will reflect the wishes of the people who live there. Working with City Hall, neighbourhood residents will have a say in the types of new housing and the look of the neighbourhood.

The Challenges

- Defining where and how neighbourhood centres develop.
- Agreeing on how much growth and how to distribute this growth in the city. Developing new ways for residents to work with City Hall to shape their neighbourhoods.
- Creating the feel of single-family housing in new types of medium density housing.
- Balancing stronger design regulations with the need to reduce red tape and allow innovation.

Sense of Community

Vancouver residents want everyone to feel part of the community, to have access to services, and to live and work safely. To create a sense of community, CityPlan sets directions for: accessible, community-based services; promoting safety; addressing housing costs; art and culture; and diverse public spaces.

Accessible, Community-Based Services

CityPlan will help people create a city where community services are developed in consultation with the people who use them. Services will be located in neighbourhoods where they are easy to get to and targeted to those who need them most. Health, police, recreation, library, and other City staff will work together as part of community-based service teams

Working Together to Promote Safety

CityPlan will help Vancouver residents create a safer city - not just by reacting to crime, but by preventing crime before it happens. Community-based police officers, neighbourhood residents, and social agencies will work together on the social problems that often lead to crime. Neighbourhoods and developers will keep safety in mind when creating public spaces and new buildings.

Addressing Housing Costs

CityPlan will help to keep a supply of affordable housing in the city. Subsidized housing measures will continue to provide housing for some low and moderate income households. New City programs will encourage some lower cost market housing so a range of people can continue to afford to live in Vancouver.

Art and Culture in a Creative City

Art and culture will contribute more to the city's identity, neighbourhoods' character, and people's learning and self-expression. Vancouver will maintain a strong arts community that encourages local artists and reflects the city's diverse cultural heritage. Arts and cultural activity will increase through partnerships with business, education, and recreation.

New and More Diverse Public Places

CityPlan will lead to the creation of diverse public places. Streets will be designed for people, not just cars. Greenways for walking and biking will connect neighbourhoods throughout the city. Parks and open spaces will be developed in areas that need them. Downtown public places will be improved to make the city centre more welcoming.

The Challenges

- Finding innovative ways to fund community services, affordable housing, and parks.
- Forging partnerships between the City, other governments, business, arts, and non-profit groups to provide community services.
- Creating better ways to involve citizens in service delivery.
- Involving residents in the safety of their neighbourhoods.
- Defining the City's role in regulating housing costs.
- Securing regional support for Vancouver-based services, arts, and cultural activities.
- Sharing street right-of-ways as public places for
- Walking, socializing, biking, as well as cars.

Healthy Economy - Healthy Environment

Vancouver residents want a livable city with a wide variety of jobs, where our activities are sensitive to the environment. CityPlan sets directions for: creating a diverse economy and jobs close to home; ensuring clean air and water; and making transit, walking and biking a priority.

Diverse Economy and Jobs Close to Home

CityPlan will help create a city with a variety of economic opportunities and more jobs closer to where people live. Downtown Vancouver will continue to be the "region's downtown". Industrial lands will be maintained for new types of industries and businesses _ high tech research, repair services, and warehouses located near their customers and workers. More office, service, and retail jobs will be located in neighbourhood centres. Vancouver will continue to support job creation in regional town centres to cut down on commuting into the city.

Transit, Walking and Biking as a Priority

CityPlan puts walking, cycling, and transit ahead of cars to cut down on traffic congestion and improve the environment. People will have travel alternatives such as better transit service and streets will be more friendly for biking and walking. Cars will not be as convenient as they once were. More people will live close to shops, services, and jobs in their neighbourhoods, this will reduce car trips and congestion.

Clean Air and Water

CityPlan participants put clean air and water as top priorities. People may also be asked to pay user fees for services like water use and garbage collection to encourage conservation and reduce harmful impacts on the environment.

The Challenges

- Attracting suitable businesses to neighbourhood centres.
- Reversing the trend of allowing housing and retail developments to replace industry.
- Improving transit services.
- Using cars less.
- Implementing tolls and charges to encourage conservation and transit use.
- Adjusting our lifestyles to reduce, reuse, and recycle to reduce the impact of city life on the environment.

A Vibrant Central Area

Vancouver residents want a downtown that is a welcoming city centre and a place to work, live, and visit.

Downtown Vancouver

Vancouver's central area, surrounded by Burrard Inlet and English Bay, and encircling False Creek, will extend its activity to its waterfronts and have two major office districts - the region's downtown central business district and the medical-civic "uptown" on Broadway. Surrounding the business districts, new residential neighbourhoods will provide livable environments for a variety of people. Speciality character and heritage areas, lively retail streets, waterfront walkways, and diverse plazas and open spaces will be welcoming public places for residents, employees, visitors, and tourists. Offices served by transit, people living near work, and pedestrian and bicycle friendly routes will help to minimize the traffic pressures of downtown activity.

The Challenges

- Addressing the social impacts of growth and meeting the social needs of low-income people and families in and near the downtown.
- Keeping traffic impacts in check by encouraging more transit, walking and biking.
- Enhancing downtown's streets as public places.
- Making CityPlan Happen

Vancouver residents want a voice in decisions affecting them and their neighbourhoods, and they want a City administration that continues to make sound financial decisions.

People Involved in Decision-Making

Though City Council will still be the place major decisions are made, CityPlan will lead to more community involvement in decision-making. City staff located in the community will work together and with residents to shape service delivery. Residents will also play a major role in how their neighbourhood centres develop and what their neighbourhoods look like.

Financial Accountability

Vancouverites want a city that maintains a top notch financial rating and keeps spending under control. To move toward the vision without raising taxes means redirecting the City budget to gradually make CityPlan a reality. This means some parts of CityPlan will take longer to achieve than others.

The City in the Region

Vancouver residents want to do their share to help create a livable region, protect the region's green zone for agriculture and recreation, slow urban sprawl, and cut down on car travel by creating more complete communities. As the largest city in the region, Vancouver will continue to be the engine of the region's economy and play a major role in achieving the "Livable Region Strategic Plan". CityPlan suggests that Vancouver accept a share of the region's housing and job growth and provide for increased transit services. By doing so, Vancouver will help reduce urban sprawl onto farm and greenlands in the Fraser Valley.

APPENDIX C
City of Vancouver Principles of Sustainability
(Adopted in April 2002)
Summary Document

1. Today's decisions must not compromise the choices of our children and future generations.
2. We are all accountable for our individual and collective actions.
3. Resources must be used fairly and efficiently without compromising the sustainability of one community for another.
4. Using renewable resources is encouraged and supported, while the use of non-renewable resources should be minimized.
5. Renewable resource consumption should not exceed the rate of regeneration.
6. Strong collaboration and open communication between the public, the business sector, and all levels of government are important.
7. We value cultural, economic, and environmental diversity.
8. A community should provide a safe, healthy, and viable setting for human interaction, education, employment, recreation, and cultural development.
9. A sustainable Vancouver contributes to, and provides leadership towards, regional, provincial, national, and global sustainability.
10. The Vancouver economy should move forward from its dependence on non-renewable carbon based fuels, particularly for transportation, which are likely to fluctuate dramatically in price and supply.