

## Suggested Tools and Actions - DRAFT (May 2007)

### Neighbourhood Planning

Develop a plan which maps the city's future pattern of development, amenities and services (i.e., a structure plan). The plan will determine potential locations, density levels, mixes of use, services/amenities, and timing of implementation, and will be prepared in consultation with the community.

The plan would be developed in layers. Layer One: create maps of ideas from existing policies such as CityPlan, Transportation Plan and Community Visions. Layer Two: map new ideas emerging from EcoDensity that are generally consistent with existing policies. Layer Three: map a longer term vision for the city which would look for new and bolder opportunities for densification.

Potential actions that could take place with Layers One and Two:

- Rezone all arterials outside of shopping areas (e.g., to RM-1) to permit row houses, townhouses, and low-rise apartments. Criteria would be required to determine eligibility, such as the need to be served by transit.
- Rezone all single family areas to permit infill/laneway housing and perhaps duplexes. Range of options include immediate rezoning to RT-10 to permit infill and duplex, or medium term development of a laneway specific housing provision in current RS schedules.
- Revise current Neighbourhood Centres Program to make centres greener (e.g., district energy systems) and denser (e.g., review commercial zoning to allow greater densities). There may also be ways of implementing centres faster through additional resources or streamlined processes.
- Undertake planning to create dense and green rapid transit station area plans, including reviews of Expo, Millennium and Canada line station areas.
- Undertake planning to explore higher density housing (e.g., duplexes, townhouses, low-rise apartment buildings) around and adjacent to parks, including Pacific Spirit and Central Parks.
- Review subdivision requirements to make sure that opportunities to densify are not lost through small subdivision applications.
- Review height limitations and view cones relative to EcoDensity principles.
- Review regulations to relax restrictions on home based businesses.

The structure plan requires several accompanying strategies. The strategies will need to be developed alongside the structure plan and discussed in detail with the public.

## Green Systems

The City needs to prepare an accompanying strategy to ensure that Vancouver's future pattern of development includes and, at a minimum, makes green systems possible. Below is a sample of just some of the tools and actions that could comprise the strategy:

- Modify the rezoning demonstration policy to reflect ecological design criteria and desire for more demonstration projects.
- Consider adopting the 2030 Challenge (all new buildings, developments and major renovations to be designed to meet a greenhouse gas-emitting energy consumption performance standard of 50 percent of the regional average for that building type, with a target for 2030 for all new buildings be carbon-neutral).
- To help implement the 2030 Challenge, require all buildings to provide a small percentage of their energy supply on-site from renewable sources.
- Set a minimum LEED equivalent level for buildings taking advantage of increased density.
- Review the Zoning and Development and Building By-laws to:
  - require green features in new construction such as solar-ready design, laundry air-drying facilities, rainwater harvesting and greywater reuse;
  - require green design approaches such as passive design;
  - reduce barriers to green design and development as well as replication of natural systems within development (e.g., remove requirements for energy-intensive features, allow gardening opportunities in higher density developments, do not require duplicate systems).
- Conduct a green review of heritage conservation guidelines to ensure they promote sustainability.
- Use City Facilities and Parks to generate energy (e.g. geothermal district heating), farm fruit and nut trees, and manage stormwater.
- Conduct City demonstrations of innovative ideas, such as:
  - panelised or modular construction;
  - neighbourhood scale composting and food production;
  - a pilot zone that has no rules other than performance criteria for sustainability.
- Supply land and start-up costs for community gardens on City property.

- Create Urban Agriculture Guidelines for the public realm to increase the availability of space for agriculture and community gardens.
- Require on-site food production gardens for new buildings, and establish guidelines to prevent shadowing.

### **Affordability and Housing Need**

The City needs to prepare an accompanying strategy to ensure that Vancouver's future pattern of development includes affordable housing. Below is a sample of just some of the tools and actions that could comprise the strategy:

- Seek to achieve 20 percent affordable housing on all significant rezonings (not just in new communities).
- Focus on adequate and affordable housing for families, particularly by ensuring a range of household sizes in new development, and funding sources for low-income households.
- Create incentives and remove barriers to the development of affordable housing units (affordable or rental).
- Allow secondary suites in duplexes, townhouses, row houses and apartment units.
- Make it easier to install basement suites and/or require suite-ready houses.
- Encourage the construction of partially finished units to allow occupants to save money by completing the unit themselves with finishes of their choice.
- Encourage flexible design that will allow buildings to adapt over time.

### **Transportation**

The City needs to prepare an accompanying strategy to ensure that Vancouver's future pattern of development includes sustainable mobility. Below is a sample of just some of the tools and actions that could comprise the strategy:

- Prepare a long term transportation vision for Vancouver, in particular the future rapid transit network, in conjunction with EcoDensity.
- Use public rights-of-ways creatively to create more community engagement opportunities: play spaces, gathering places, water infiltration areas, or small-scale gardening.

- Create car-free areas or corridors as part of the design of future neighbourhoods or in existing areas as part of a neighbourhood-wide traffic calming plan.
- With respect to parking:
  - a. Provide lower or no parking requirements in appropriate sites which have access to transit and are near shops and services (could include conversion of garages to housing)
  - b. Require the provision of car-sharing in multi-family housing at higher densities
  - c. Allow for car-sharing in lower density housing; and,
  - d. Charge for on-street parking, with progressive rates for households that have higher parking use or larger-sized vehicles.
- Develop systems for greener infrastructure for streets and lanes (e.g., country lanes).

### **Amenities and Social Infrastructure**

The City needs to prepare an accompanying strategy to ensure that Vancouver's future pattern of development includes amenities and social infrastructure. Below is a sample of just some of the tools and actions that could comprise the strategy:

- Develop a public realm strategy to accompany a new plan of development, and include diverse and varied use of public spaces and right-of-ways and found spaces.
- Create parkettes in or adjacent to commercial and institutional areas to provide public seating and play opportunities for children.
- Upgrade parks through provision of basic elements, such as sidewalks, pathways and seating as well as other amenities and environmental enhancements to accommodate an increasing diversity of users and park functions.
- Adjust the City's regulations for enclosed and unenclosed balcony space to ensure a minimum area of private outdoor space in higher density housing.
- Design rainwater discharge in creative ways that enhance the natural and aesthetic experience of the parks and the public realm.
- Encourage the use of rooftops for gardening and social congregation space.
- Use density bonussing or similar incentives to secure community amenities including Neighbourhood Houses, affordable housing, child care and parks.
- Make community amenities available across the City to meet the needs of the increased density.

- Increase support to community programming to provide opportunities for all of Vancouver's diverse populations to participate in community life.

## Heritage

The City needs to prepare an accompanying strategy to ensure that Vancouver's future pattern of development supports heritage retention. Below is a sample of just some of the tools and actions that could comprise the strategy:

- Hold a design competition to identify ways to incorporate sustainable characteristics of heritage buildings into current design.
- Create a transfer of density area outside the Downtown to support heritage conservation.

## Sustainability Practices in City Business

The City needs to prepare an accompanying strategy to ensure that sustainability practices form part of the way the City does business with respect to planning and development. Below is a sample of just some of the tools and actions that could comprise the strategy:

- Examine how levies and tax shifting can create incentives to a greener, denser pattern of development.
- Share the City's EcoDensity evaluation tool (presently under development) with other municipalities for their customization and use.
- Seek legislative amendments to reduce the City's liability when piloting more sustainable practices.

## Ideas for other departments to explore

The City needs to prepare an accompanying strategy to ensure that, in addition to EcoDensity, Vancouver will reduce ecological footprint in everything it does. Below is a sample of just some of the tools and actions that could comprise the strategy:

- Do full cost accounting of all major civic processes and expenditures, including EcoDensity demonstration projects.
- Create an energy service company to provide renewable energy to local customers.

- Create a sustainable purchasing utility.
- Require take-out food and drink containers to be recyclable in Vancouver's Blue Box system or be biodegradable, and ban all polylactic acid (PLA) plastics.
- Build a network of neighbourhood composting facilities in high density areas.
- Broaden landfill bans and require composting and recycling.
- Ban plastic shopping bags.
- Require office buildings to turn off lights when not in use.
- Emplace public recycling bins (like public garbage bins).
- Institute a local food purchasing policy at the City and encourage other institutions (hospitals, schools) to follow suit.
- Create a biannual sustainability summit and EcoDensity awards.