

VanRIMS No.: 8-3000-11

MEMORANDUM

February 26, 2019

TO: Mayor and Council

CC: Sadhu Johnston, City Manager
Katrina Leckovic, City Clerk

FROM: Vancouver City Planning Commission

SUBJECT: Milestones 2018: Year In Review

The purpose of this memorandum is provide Vancouver City Council with a report on the activities of the Vancouver City Planning Commission's Chronology Program for 2018, including a summary of [TransFORMtion 2018: A Dialogue on Events that Changed Vancouver](#), our fourth annual Year in Review forum held on February 4, 2019.

Milestones 2018

The Year in Review forum, a VCPC program in support of the Chronology of Planning and Development in Vancouver, connects with the Commission's mandate to advise Council on the city's future and to provide space for thoughtful dialogue on planning and development through community engagement. Previous forums have offered an early glimpse of emerging issues on the urban agenda. In 2016, the Year-In-Review forum heard calls for the end of single-family zoning. In 2017, panellists noted a shift in the city's approach to housing, with more attention being paid to who was expected to live in the new housing that was being built.

At this year's forum, a panel of four prominent urbanists gauged the significance of city policies, events and decisions of the previous 12 months and attempted to discern the direction of the city as a result of those turning points in planning and development. During the event, panelists and audience delved into the opportunity to re-plan planning. Whether it is incorporating indigenous values in planning or redistributing power to amplify wider engagement, the central takeaway from the event was that it is planning itself that will be placed under the microscope as the city embarks on the citywide planning process.

The forum was the culminating event in a series of activities, including [a workshop on proposed milestones](#) and [a survey](#) circulated to community groups, academics, advocates and planning and development professionals. The Year-In-Review forum was livestreamed and a [video](#) and [podcast](#) of the dialogue is available.

Forum Highlights

The event began with a review of watershed moments in 2018 that could transform the city. A [curated list of milestones](#) served as the basis of the evening's discussion. Admission to the event, sponsored in partnership with SFU Vancity Office of Community Engagement, was free. Despite sub-zero weather, about 100 people came to the forum.

Panellists were former Vancouver City Councillor (1982-1993) and Member of Parliament (1997-2015) for Vancouver East, Libby Davies; former City of Vancouver Indigenous relations manager (2016-2018) Ginger Gosnell-Myers; Downtown Vancouver Business Improvement Association (DVBIA) CEO Charles Gauthier; and, Kira Gerwing, Manager, Community Investment at Vancity Credit Union, and a former urban planner with the City of Vancouver. The discussion was moderated by Am Johal, SFU's Vancity Office of Community Engagement Director of Community Engagement.

Among the milestones pinpointed by the panellists were Council's decisions to return the Marpole Midden lands to the Musqueam and to incorporate indigenous values in planning and design. They also considered as significant the decision to restart the planning process for Northeast False Creek in order to better reflect the interests of the Black, Chinese and Indigenous communities.

Panellists hardly mentioned measures to make housing more affordable, which dominated headlines for months during 2018. Meanwhile they proposed milestones not on the curated list, including construction of temporary modular housing (previously identified as a 2017 milestone), and the recently approved Mayor's Overdose Emergency Task Force report and recommendations.

With an eye to the future, they talked at length about the limitations of the current planning processes and innovative models for engagement. Kira Gerwing urged the city to step away from planning to ensure a more inclusive process. Give up ownership of the process and move ahead without having preconceived outcomes, said Charles Gauthier. Ideas put forward for consideration included extending deadlines to ensure inclusive engagement, and hiring staff to connect communities to city planners and do not rely on volunteers.

Next Steps

The VCPC Chronology Committee is currently reviewing the complete list of potential 2018 milestones, informed by the perspectives expressed at the forum and workshop and in the survey. The emerging 2018 milestones will be posted on the VCPC website and are to be reviewed in five years, to see if they pass the test of time.

The VCPC Chronology Committee is also exploring new partnerships to enhance the role of the Chronology in public debate and to expand the list of milestones to ensure that all turning points in planning and development in Vancouver are reflected in the Chronology.

APPENDIX

2018 Emerging Milestones

The list of [emerging 2018 milestones](#) currently under consideration include:

Indigenous Reconciliation

- City returns portion of village and burial site to Musqueam
- Indigenous values incorporated in planning and design

Community Planning

- City acts on Indigenous, Black and Chinese community interests to heal historic wounds
- City approves Community Benefit Agreement Policy

A City For All

- City adopts Women's Equity Strategy

Housing

- City endorses Making Room Housing Program and Affordable Housing Delivery and Financial Strategy
- City amends Rental Housing Stock ODP
- City creates Vancouver Affordable Housing Endowment Fund
- City approves Cambie Corridor Plan Phase 3.
- City approves Development Contribution Expectation in Areas Undergoing Community Planning

For descriptions of the significance of each milestone, please visit the [Chronology Program website](#).

What is a Milestone?

To qualify for the Chronology, a proposed milestone must meet the following criteria:

- A clear justification of how and why this event, policy or decision stands out as a transformative moment in the city's development or has potential to be a game changer.
- A direct relationship between the event, policy or decision and the actions that flow from the event, policy or decision. The representation of the milestone as a discernable action must be clearly established. This principle applies to all forms of planning. An event that concerns the city's social and cultural life that does not culminate in any form of action or decision will not qualify as a social-planning milestone.
- A rationale for listing the milestone in the designated year. Since pinpointing a year is sometimes difficult, the Chronology places new milestones on a list of emerging milestones that are re-evaluated after five years and then either confirmed or rejected. The passage of time can lead to a clearer understanding of the significance of events. Hindsight, delayed consequences, value shifts and attitudinal changes can lead to a different view of past events and decisions. What is seen as a milestone today may turn out to be insignificant in the future.
- Verifiable sources for all information related to the event's back- and current story. Primary source material is preferred, although secondary sources could be used to identify the significance of a milestone.

Panel Observations from the TransFORMATION 2018 Forum

“It’s really important to look back, reflect and evaluate what we’ve done well, how we got there and why we did it. We want to build on that foundation ... We are renown around the world for urban design and urban planning. I would argue, to some extent, we’ve lost our edge, and I think we need to pick it up again.”

- Charles Gauthier

“Planning process has become more formalized so as to seem more inclusive. It has become more structured and more controlled. It feels, to me anyways, like the planning process has become more of a communications and branding exercise than it really has becoming a community building process...”

How do you address that? [The citywide planning process] might be an opportunity to give the planning away from the city. Let the municipality create the room for planning to happen, but step away from actual planning work itself. That’s easy to say tonight but very hard to do, because what it means is you have to cede power. It will get messy. There will be fights. There will be debates. It’s scary.”

- Kira Gerwing

“At the end of the day, this is community building ... we have to remember that [a citywide plan] is not just a matter of bricks and mortar. It is ensuring that we are reflected, both our identities and our values, and things we care about and things we want to preserve. No matter how you spell it out, at the end of the day, it will still need to be embedded into the citywide plan...”

“In the future, we will see a city that reflects more what we could have been, had colonialism not been so successful.”

- Ginger Gosnell-Myers

“The struggle has always been between our yearning for community, to feel like a community, that we belong to a community, and the executive city ... It’s that ongoing struggle between what we yearn for and what we want, and what seems to happen ...

I’ve always been someone who believes in the philosophy of Think Big, Act Small. ...[The citywide plan] has to articulate really big values and big stuff we want all want but then we have to immediately break it down closer to home, take your own ownership of it. Otherwise it will become a monster that just keeps growing.”

- Libby Davies

About the VCPC Chronology Program

The Chronology of Planning and Development in Vancouver is intended to ground public debate of Vancouver’s future in an understanding of the legacies on the past. The Chronology is a work-in-progress, intended ultimately to be comprehensive, authoritative and publicly accessible to all residents who wish to be engaged in public debate.