

VanRIMS No.: 8-3000-11

## MEMORANDUM

April 15, 2021

TO: Mayor and Council

CC: Paul Mochrie, Acting City Manager  
Katrina Leckovic, City Clerk

FROM: Vancouver City Planning Commission

SUBJECT: 2020 Report of Activities

### PURPOSE

To provide Vancouver City Council with a report on the activities of the Vancouver City Planning Commission undertaken in 2020.

### BACKGROUND

The Vancouver City Planning Commission (the Commission) was established by Council under [By-Law No. 5064](#) to assist Council in an advisory capacity by considering and submitting reports to City Council on matters relating to the planning and development of the City, including:

- (a) representing ideas and opinions about the future of the city, as citizens of the City of Vancouver, and
- (b) considering and reporting to Council on any proposal likely to have a significant effect on the future of the City.

### SUMMARY

During 2020, the Vancouver City Planning Commission (VCPC) carried out its work plan comprising dialogues and public events on themes relevant to the future of the city, and engaged on selected current planning topics and initiatives.

With the introduction of physical distancing measures from the COVID-19 pandemic, the VCPC moved its meetings and activities online for most of the year.

Under part A of our mandate, the VCPC hosted public events on: Milestones in Vancouver's planning and development (Chronology Project), the Post-Pandemic City We Want, and

AFTERSHOCK: Looking back at the 1918 epidemic for a view of Vancouver's future

Under part B of our mandate, the VCPC provided input to Council on current initiatives, including [Arbutus Greenway Option Lands](#) and [Support for Council Motion B4 – Ensuring Equity for Speakers Using Translation](#)

## EVENTS, DIALOGUES AND PROJECTS

The Vancouver City Planning Commission (VCPC) worked with a number of community partners on several events and projects designed to foster informed dialogue on themes important to the future of the city.

### A. Chronology of Vancouver Planning and Development Milestones

The VCPC convened [2019 Year-in-Review: A discussion of milestones that transformed Vancouver](#). This was our 5th annual year-in-review dialogue held on February 6, 2020 at the SFU Goldcorp Centre for the Arts, hosted in partnership with SFU's Vancity Office of Community Engagement. Panelists for the evening were [Sarah Blyth](#) from the front lines of the opioid overdose crisis; [Stephanie Allen](#), a champion of community housing; Ray Spaxman, the conscience of Vancouver's planning community; and, Ian Campbell, a hereditary chief of the Skwxwú7mesh Úxwumixw (Squamish Nation). The discussion was moderated by Am Johal, SFU's Vancity Office of Community Engagement Director of Community Engagement.

The list of potential 2019 milestones was previously reviewed at a workshop on November 18, 2019 attended by leading architects, urban planners, developers, city historians, journalists, academics, and students. Following the panel, the Chronology Committee identified a list of fourteen emerging milestones of 2018 based on the perspectives shared in a public survey, the workshop and during the panel. The public profile of the online chronology continues to increase. The [2019 emerging milestones](#) have been shared on blog posts and sparked a number of tweets and Facebook posts.

On December 14, 2020, the VCPC convened an online Year in Review workshop to review a list of [emerging milestones for 2020](#). While no review of 2020 would be complete without acknowledging the impact that COVID-19 had on almost all aspects of our lives, including city planning, we consider this an overarching theme of 2020, not a specific milestone.

The [2020 Year in Review Forum](#) took place on February 18, 2021 via Zoom. Panelists included Kamala Todd, an Indigenous urban community planner and filmmaker; Alex Boston, a renewable, resilient +restorative cities specialist; Anthonia Ogendule, a Black community leader empowering youth to transform communities and shift culture; and, Jesse Donaldson, an author and journalist who shines a provocative light on Vancouver's civic culture and history. The panel was moderated by Frances Bula, a journalist covering urban issues and city politics in Vancouver

### B. The Post-Pandemic City We Want

Due to COVID-19, our planned 2020 Summit on [The Vancouver We Want: The City We Need](#) was cancelled. In it's place the VCPC convened a series of events looking at the post-pandemic city we want.

The first event, the eponymously titled eponymously [The Post-Pandemic City We Want](#) took place on June 23, 2020 via Zoom. Hosted by VCPC co-chair Omar Dominguez, 346 unique participants joined Commissioners Sierra Tasi Baker, Veronika Bylicki, and Amina Yasin, and former Commissioner Leslie Shieh for the 90-minute event. The panelists addressed the question *How can we create a post-pandemic Vancouver that is just, equitable, decolonized, and inclusive for all?* A video, graphic recording, and transcript of the event is available on the VCPC [website](#).

A second event took place on September 2021. This event, entitled AFTERSHOCK: Looking back at 1918 for a view of Vancouver's future. Linking the past to our future, the VCPC's Chronology Committee hosted a panel discussion to explore how the 1918 influenza changed Vancouver and whether we should anticipate similar changes in the months and years ahead. Panelists included: Mary Rowe, president and CEO of the [Canadian Urban Institute](#); Wade Grant, from the Musqueam Indian Band, Kelley Lee, a Tier 1 Canada Research Chair in Global Health Governance and Professor in the Faculty of Health Science at Simon Fraser University; and, John Atkin is a civic historian, author and heritage consultant.. The panel was moderated by Uytay Lee, a CBC videographer who produces a video column called [About Here](#) where he challenges viewers to 'rethink' their city.'

### C. CityStudio Vancouver

In fall 2020, VCPC's Executive Director participated in a CityStudio project with UBC's Neil Armitage on Equitable Public Space in Vancouver, as part of his Social Inequality course. The course offers an in-depth exploration into the multiple ways that social inequality manifests itself and the consequences thereof on individuals, groups and society. Students looked at two questions related to this topic:

- What are the factors limiting Indigenous, Black and racialized people's mobility, access to, use of, and safety in parks and public spaces, and what actions can the City of Vancouver take to overcome them?
- How has COVID-19 impacted vulnerable populations' use of public spaces, particularly those experiencing homelessness and people living with disabilities? As the City of Vancouver reconsiders the prioritization of public spaces during COVID-19 (e.g. parks, plazas, bike lanes, open streets, and curbside patios) what actions can it take to address systemic inequities in the access to and enjoyment of public spaces?

Three student groups participated in this opportunity and investigated the following topics:

- MacDonald Park redesign
- [Project Tenantable Tents - Strathcona Park Homeless Camp](#)
- [Downtown Eastside Women Centre Curbside Patio Proposal](#)

The Strathcona Park Homeless Camp was chosen to be presented at the HUBBUB 15 events highlighting selected student projects. Each group presented their projects at our February 2021 Standing Committee meeting. Their final reports and related materials will be posted on the VCPC website and submitted in a memorandum to Council.

### CURRENT INITIATIVES AND TOPICS

In addition to considering items on Council's agenda and current planning initiatives, Commissioners also participated actively in discussion of urban issues relevant to the future of the city.

- **Research and Comment**

- i. [Arbutus Greenway Option Lands](#)

On January 8, 2020, Commissioners received a staff presentation on a parcel included in the Arbutus Greenway Option Lands located within Area 10B of the False Creek Area Development Plan. Although not presently part of any formal planning or development approval process within the City, the VCPC was asked to provide input on this matter, under a provision in the False Creek Official Development Plan Bylaw No. 4812 adopted in 1974.

The VCPC supports the recommendations of staff as presented to Commissioners and appreciate staff amending their proposal in response to community feedback. In particular, the Commission was pleased to hear that co-op housing will be included as an option for the site in addition to the Moderate Income Rental Housing Pilot Program (MIHRPP) in keeping with the original housing mix in False Creek South.

Additionally, Commissioners recommended that the proposed plans for the site included acknowledgement of the history and cultural significance of the original Indigenous inhabitants in the development of this site -- namely the xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish), and Selwítlh (Tseil-Waututh) Peoples -- as part of the City of Vancouver's commitment to being a City of Reconciliation. In particular they recommended meaningful engagement with the Skwxwú7mesh Úxwumixw to ensure compatibility of plans of their adjacent Seńákw development

- ii. [Support for Council Motion B4 – Ensuring Equity for Speakers Using Translation](#)

In October 2020, the VCPC provided input and comment to Council regarding Councillor Swanson's [Motion B.4 -Ensuring Equity for Speakers Using Translation](#). Commissioners were pleased that Council was seeking to adjust its practices and procedures to improve the public's engagement with, and respect for, local government.

The VCPC felt that the current rules disproportionately and inequitably restricts non-English speakers from fully participating in civic matter as they require translation services and therefore end up with less speaking time. In particular, allowing equal time for Indigenous people to speak in their own language would be one (small) step towards decolonization. We hope that this input will contribute to making the Vancouver City Council a recognized leader in public engagement on municipal governance.

- **Engagement in City Processes**

- i. *Other Advisory Bodies*

VCPC continued to have a representative on the Urban Design Panel in 2020. The perspective of the VCPC were communicated by the Commissioners and relevant new concerns and issues brought back from the panel..

- ii. *Staff Consultations*

The VCPC received presentations and provided feedback to staff on the following

current planning (and related) initiatives as part of staff's consultations with the public, stakeholders and advisory groups:

- Arbutus Corridor Option Lands Site
- Implementation of C2 Zoning (Arterial) Secure Rental Policy
- Employment Lands & Economy Review Update

### *iii. Other Organizations*

The VCPC received presentations and provided feedback to other organizations as part of their community outreach. The perspective of the VCPC was communicated by the Commissioners and relevant issues were considered.

- Abundant Housing Vancouver

### *iv. Engagement Topics*

The VCPC also considered other issues with long-term implications for the City's future in discussion with Liaison Commissioners from Council, Vancouver School Board and Vancouver Park Board, including:

- Arbutus Corridor Option Lands Site
- Broadway Planning Program \*
- City-wide (Vancouver) Plan
- Climate Emergency Response
- Housing Crisis
- Employment Lands Study \*
- False Creek South
- Procedures Bylaw 9756
- Regional Population Projections
- Rental Incentives Review
- Urban Indigenous Peoples Advisory Committee

## **CONFERENCES AND EVENTS**

In 2020, Planning Commissioners participated in numerous external conferences, panel discussions and other events on planning and development issues relevant to the City's future. Due to COVID-19, most of these events occurred virtually. Sharing knowledge and experience from these events formed a part of the VCPC's meeting agendas. These events included:

- World Urban Forum 10 (WUF10), February 8-13, 2020 (Commissioner Tamaki participated)
- Canadian Institute of Planners - COVID-19 + Planning, April 29, 2020 (ED Yuri Artibise on panel)
- Canadian Urban Institute - Cities in the time of COVID-19: How is the pandemic transforming the way we move?, July 16, 2020 (Commissioner Yasin was a panelist)
- Strong Women. Strong Places: A Conversation on Race & Intersectionality, August 5, 2020
- Vancouver Plan - Council of Joint Committees, August 10, 2020
- SFU - Pandemics & Long-Range Planning, September 30, 2020
- SFU - Whose Voice? Reimagining Public Engagement, October 15, 2020
- Housing Central Conference, November 2020
- MST Futurism: Decolonizing the City Through a Matriarchal Lens, December 03, 2020 (Co-hoisted by Commissioner Tasi-Baker)

- SFU - Planning for the Post-Pandemic City, December 10, 2020

## **PLANNING COMMISSION INTERNAL ORGANIZATION AND ACTIVITIES**

### *i. Meetings and Committees*

In addition to 10 regular meetings (two were cancelled in the early days of the COVID-19 pandemic, the VCPC continued to hold regular Standing Committee working sessions with the ED and all voting Commissioners. Additionally, the Commission had several smaller committees that conducted work on its behalf in 2020. These included:

- Executive
- Governance and Nominations
- Chronology
- Justice, Equity, Diversity, Decolonization, and Inclusion
- Events

## **PLANNING COMMISSION APPOINTMENTS TO OTHER CIVIC BODIES**

The VCPC had appointments on the following City of Vancouver civic bodies:

### **A. Urban Design Panel**

A Commissioner served on the Urban Design Panel, as prescribed by Council By-law No. 4722. Karenn Krangle each served in this role.

## **COMMISSIONERS DURING 2020**

This report covers the work carried out during the year by the following Commissioners who served al, or part of, the year:

- Albert Huang
- Alix Krahn
- Alyssa Koehn
- Amina Yasin
- Danielle Dhaliwal
- Karenn Krangle
- Marnie Tamaki (VCPC appointee)
- Omar Dominguez
- Rob Grant
- Robyn Chan
- Sierra Tasi-Baker
- Veronika Bylicki
- Yijin Wen (VCPC appointee)

The following Liaison Commissioners served as non-voting members, providing liaison with their elected bodies in 2020:

- Councillor Pete Fry, Vancouver City Council
- Commissioner John Irwin, Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation
- Trustee Janet Fraser, Vancouver School Board

The following Liaison Commissioners served as non-voting staff members, providing liaison with their department:

- Chris Robertson, Planning, Urban Design and Sustainability