

# Visioning Diversity: Planning Vancouver's Multicultural Communities

by

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## **AUTHOR'S DECLARATION FOR ELECTRONIC SUBMISSION OF A THESIS**

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## ABSTRACT

The roles and responsibilities of planners in managing culturally diverse cities are beginning to be articulated in the literature. “Visioning,” as planners have used it in recent years, has the potential to help realize “multicultural planning” because of its intentions to involve broad public participation and represent diverse interests, thereby promoting equity and facilitating democracy. This exploratory study examines how the City of Vancouver in British Columbia, Canada has involved ethnocultural groups through a visioning process.

To date, four Vancouver communities containing a sizeable immigrant population have participated in preparing plans for their neighbourhood through the city’s Community Visions Program. Information for this study was gathered through a critical review of planning-related documents and key informant interviews with staff and community participants (including those of visible minority background) in the Visions Program. Results from the data collection were grouped into main themes and triangulated for analysis.

Results indicate that visioning, as it has been used in Vancouver, is capable of being a useful technique in carrying out multicultural planning. There is evidence that planners have learned a great deal from engaging in multicultural planning, as seen through the increased success of outreach in the latter two communities to undergo the Visions Program. This suggests that Vancouver’s visioning exercise will improve simply by virtue of continued outreach. However, it is important to differentiate between the public consultation *process* and the resultant *products* in regard to policy and land use change. There appears to be more general satisfaction with the inclusive visioning process than with the end results. Empirical research suggests that if planners are serious about engaging in a multicultural planning process, they will need to guarantee some tangible results that can be seen in the community and that acknowledge and respect cultural diversity.

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# CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

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*“No culture can live, if it attempts to be exclusive.”*

(Mohandas Karamchand (Mahatma) Gandhi, 1869-1948)

## 1.1 CONTEXT

Planners need to possess a sensitivity to diversity more than ever in today’s multicultural Canadian society. Post-1970s immigration has had unprecedented, profound impacts on the human geography of Canada, which in turn have effected significant changes on cities’ physical form and social character. Whereas various theorists have recognized the role of culture in discussions of such contentious issues as integration vs. segregation (van Kempen & Özüekren, 1998), increased social polarization (Bourne, 1993), and land use conflicts (Ley, 1995), planners have been criticized for paying little attention to multicultural issues in their practical work (Wallace, 1997). As immigration from “non-traditional” source countries continues to fuel Canada’s population, planners find themselves increasingly challenged to not only understand diverse cultures, but also to recognize and balance the various needs of those who inhabit the postmodern, multicultural city.

The City of Vancouver in British Columbia (B.C.), Canada is a prime example of a place where multiculturalism has become a predominant feature of the contemporary cityscape. In 1971, almost three-quarters of the city proper’s population (74%, or 315 429 people) spoke English as a mother tongue. Twenty-five years later in 1996, propelled by population growth due largely to international migration, almost half of the population (47%, or 231 500 people) spoke a language other than English or French as their mother tongue. Chinese continues to be the second most common mother tongue language spoken today, followed distantly by Punjabi, Vietnamese, Tagalog (Filipino), and German. Charged with managing a diverse population with diverse needs, the City of Vancouver has responded to the changing ethnic makeup of its populace by introducing a number of policy and program initiatives. Consequently, Vancouver has often been regarded as a relatively progressive Canadian city in respecting and celebrating multiculturalism and diversity.

Nonetheless, the planning literature contains little critical and in-depth analysis of municipalities' efforts to include ethnic and racial minorities in the planning process.<sup>1</sup> One phenomenon that the literature is beginning to capture, however, is the recent popularity of "visioning" in planning. More significantly, practicing planners in North America have, within the past 15 years, increasingly employed visioning as a method to involve broad public participation. While public participation is only one aspect of visioning, it is one that has the potential to help realize "multicultural planning" by its implicit aim to promote equity and facilitate democracy through the planning process. The potential link between visioning and multicultural planning has not been addressed in the planning literature to date.

## 1.2 RESEARCH QUESTION AND OBJECTIVES

This thesis endeavours to examine how "visioning" in Vancouver has attempted to address and include diverse cultural interests. The research question formulated for the study is as follows:

*What is the effectiveness of efforts to plan for multicultural communities based on techniques such as visioning used by the City of Vancouver to engage neighbourhoods and ethnic communities at large?*

The particular visioning process related to the Community Visions Program is observed within an ethnocultural<sup>2</sup> framework. The Community Visions Program, or Visions Program, is a new initiative of the City of Vancouver to involve communities in creating neighbourhood-level policy documents called *Community Visions*. *Community Visions*, which are developed on a neighbourhood-by-neighbourhood basis, are intended to guide City Council decisions regarding those neighbourhoods for the next approximately 20 years.

The current research is directed at achieving the following four objectives:

- a) To examine the academic literature on multicultural planning and visioning, and to explore the appropriateness of visioning in planning multicultural communities.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Two Canadian exceptions to this statement include Edgington, Hanna, Hutton, and Thompson's (2001) comparative survey of local responses to immigration and multiculturalism in Sydney, Australia and Greater Vancouver, and Milroy and Wallace's (2001) study of diversity and planning practices in the Greater Toronto Area.

<sup>2</sup> The term "ethnocultural" is used in favour of "cultural" or "multicultural" to distinguish ethnic or visible minority cultural groups from religious and other less visible cultural groups. In this thesis, "ethnocultural" and "visible minority" are used interchangeably.

<sup>3</sup> The term "multicultural communities" is used in this context to articulate more succinctly "communities that are ethnoculturally diverse." The term "multicultural," while arguably inadequate in part because it refers to a formal federal policy (Milroy & Wallace, 2001) is still often used in the literature.

- b) To investigate the extent to which municipal planning policy in Vancouver addresses the needs of multicultural communities, particularly through the visioning process.
- c) To understand the interplays that take place between municipalities, neighbourhoods, and ethnic/racial communities in the planning process.
- d) To consider the extent to which planning can be multicultural and make recommendations on how the planning process – particularly visioning – might be improved with regard to multicultural communities.

The thesis is primarily interested in visioning as a participative process capable of including ethnic and racial minorities. A secondary concern is the question of the success of visioning as a new way of doing planning. This latter point can only be partially answered because of the scope of the thesis. Likewise, the economic and political processes that are so intrinsically linked with planning are recognized but cannot be directly addressed.

### **1.3 SUMMARY OF METHODS**

The thesis is an exercise in qualitative research. Situations where there is little firm information lend themselves to exploratory study (Del Balso & Lewis, 2001), when “not much has been written about the topic or population being studied, and the researcher seeks to listen to informants and to build a picture based on their ideas” (Creswell, 1994, p. 21). As in many exploratory studies, the goal is to formulate more precise questions that may be dealt with in future research, relying, as most exploratory researchers do, on qualitative data (Neuman, 2000). The adopted research method accords with James’s (2000) argument for more qualitative and in-depth analyses of communities in multicultural planning.

Four communities in Vancouver, B.C. were examined through a case study approach: Kensington-Cedar Cottage; Dunbar; Victoria-Fraserview/Killarney; and Sunset. These communities were selected based on their participation in the City of Vancouver’s Community Visions Program, which is a public planning program that attempts to involve citizens in preparing community plans for the future. The former two communities were pilot projects whereas the latter two underwent the Program from 2000-2001. As regards data collection, a critical review of relevant planning documents at the municipal and neighbourhood levels was conducted with an aim to discern references to ethnocultural diversity. Key documents that were reviewed include Vancouver’s official plan, *CityPlan: Directions for Vancouver*; *Community Visions*; and *Choices Surveys*. Semi-

structured interviews were carried out over a period of four months with 57 key informants, including planners, city councillors, and Visions Program participants. Results from data collection were grouped into main themes and analysed in order to fulfill the objectives outlined above.

## **1.4 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE RESEARCH**

This thesis will contribute to the planning profession through the expansion of both theoretical and practical knowledge on multicultural planning and visioning in Canada. While the connection between immigration and cities has been a preoccupation of urban research in many immigrant-receiving countries, planning literature has offered little to professional planners in regards to how ethnocultural diversity is, or should be, acknowledged in planning practice (Milroy & Wallace, 2001). In particular, there has been a dearth of empirical studies on the topic. It is evident, however, that the varying perspectives of “multiple publics” (Sandercock, 1998) – including ethnocultural groups – can sometimes affect planning in manifold and conflictive ways. By studying the experiences of the City of Vancouver in planning for its ethnoculturally diverse population, this research will reveal lessons for other Canadian municipalities that will encounter like challenges in the face of increased and rapid globalization and immigration.

Similarly, this research will contribute to the planning literature on visioning by filling a gap in case study applications. Visioning has been used in different ways and to fulfill different purposes in planning practice, though no application has been directly linked to planning multicultural communities. Through this research, a definition of visioning as it has been used in Vancouver will be formed. Multicultural outreach methods in the Community Visions Program will also be examined for their utility. Recommendations will be proposed on the effectiveness of multicultural outreach methods and the visioning process as a whole for planning multicultural communities.

Suggestions for further research in multicultural planning and visioning shall be articulated from the results of the study. Multicultural communities in Vancouver and other Canadian cities such as Toronto, Montréal, and Calgary may find the lessons learned invaluable as immigration continues to shape their demographic profiles. It is hoped that the results of this study will assist the City of Vancouver and all Canada’s multicultural cities in promoting equity through planning practice and policy.

## **1.5 THESIS ORGANIZATION**

The next chapter, Chapter Two, presents an overview of recent immigration to Canada, emphasizing growth rates and the impact of a shift in immigrant “source countries.” The imprint of immigrants on cities’ physical and social environments is discussed, thereby providing a rationale for the need for multicultural planning. Two examples of practitioners’ response to cultural planning issues are provided before the planning literature on multiculturalism and diversity is reviewed. In the last part of the chapter, the steps that the City of Vancouver has begun to take in addressing multicultural and diversity issues are examined.

Chapter Three commences by exploring the evolution of public participation in planning. This discussion sets the tone for some commentary on the remarkable emergence of “vision”/“visioning” in planning within the past 10-15 years. Although “visioning” has become very popular in planning, it is evident that the term holds various meanings. It is further apparent that different people use visioning in different ways. Within this context, two visioning processes that have been employed in the City of Vancouver – the CityPlan process and the Community Visioning process – are introduced.

In Chapter Four, the research methods adopted for this study are articulated, and data collection methods described. Specifically, the chapter reveals how the methods of document analysis and semi-structured interviewing were placed within a case study framework to realize the objectives of this qualitative study. The results from data collection are presented in Chapter Five of this thesis, followed by a critical discussion and recommendations for planning practice in Chapter Six. The final chapter, Chapter Seven, offers some conclusions on the effectiveness of Vancouver’s Community Visions Program in planning the city’s multicultural communities, as well as additional general recommendations. Future directions for research are also outlined.

# **CHAPTER 2: NEW IMMIGRANT GROUPS IN CANADA AND THE NEED FOR MULTICULTURAL PLANNING**

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## **2.1 INTRODUCTION**

Immigration is affecting Canadian cities in unprecedented ways. First and foremost, immigration is fuelling population growth in urban areas. The arrival and establishment of immigrants with diverse backgrounds is contributing to significant social change, due to demographic shifts associated with an aging population, smaller household size, and an increased proportion of female-headed families with children. Indeed, Bourne and Rose (2001) emphasize that migration, especially foreign immigration, will be “the major instrument of social change in the future” (p. 117). Thus, immigration is a significant force that will continue to affect many aspects of Canadian life in the 21<sup>st</sup> century – directly and indirectly, positively and negatively.

Politicians, planners, and other professionals have long been challenged to address the needs of minority groups and the marginalized in society, including women, the poor, and the homeless. In light of the migration processes of the late 20<sup>th</sup> and early 21<sup>st</sup> centuries, they are increasingly being called upon to address the needs of ethnic minorities and new immigrant groups. This chapter provides an overview of immigration processes in Canada, focusing on the emergent trends and circumstances of the latter half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. It explores the ways in which ethnocultural diversity has come to be a factor that must be considered in policy making. Having introduced the linkage between immigration and planning, this chapter then deliberates upon the implications of ethnocultural diversity for planning practice through a review of the literature.

## **2.2 IMMIGRANTS IN CANADA**

### **2.2.1 Canadian Immigration Trends**

Immigration to Canada is occurring at a time when the far-reaching effects of globalization have become an undisputed reality. Globalization is partially responsible for spurring an intense movement of people not only to classical regions of immigration such as North America and Australia, but also increasingly to western Europe and the Arab oil states on the Persian Gulf

(Friedmann, 1995). Worldwide immigration trends, as identified by Castles and Miller (1993) and Friedmann (1995), include: the “globalization of migration,” the “acceleration of migration,” the “differentiation of migration,” the “feminization of migration,” and the “transnationalization of migrants.” All of these trends are apparent in Canada.

Additional trends specific to Canada include high levels of immigration over the past decade. Throughout the 1980s and early 1990s, both the Conservative and Liberal governments set annual targets for immigrant<sup>4</sup> admissions at an ambitious 250 000 (Abu-Laban, 1998). These targets were a spin-off of an economic restructuring that emerged to respond to changes within the global economy and to handle a growing public debt (Ghosh & Pyrcce, 1999). Current government entry targets are at their highest levels for almost 90 years,<sup>5</sup> with an average of 200 000 actual entries into Canada in the late 1990s compared with 85 000 in the early 1980s. As such, current immigration levels are the highest since around 1910, “when Canada was engaged in a vigorous process of nation-building through European settlement” (Ley, 1999b). Canadian immigration policy has clearly been a “pull” factor for attracting recent immigrants.<sup>6</sup>

Conversely, personal yearnings to seek a more promising future, combined with tense political situations and unfavourable economic and environmental conditions elsewhere, have acted as “push” factors to realize the high immigration levels Canada is currently experiencing. For example, the spread of communism in Europe after the Second World War was a major push factor (Ghosh & Pyrcce, 1999). Ethnic conflicts throughout the 1990s made migrants of many from Afghanistan and the former Yugoslavia. Moreover, the imminent return of Hong Kong to China triggered mass migration to Canada in the years preceding 1997 (Shen, 1997).

Another current trend in Canadian immigration is the metropolitan concentration of immigrants. Canada’s three major metropolitan areas – Toronto, Vancouver, Montréal – and their surrounding urban areas have been the preferred destinations of 60 percent of newcomers landing between 1991 and 1996 (Ley & Smith, 2000). Approximately 42 percent of Toronto’s Census Metropolitan Area

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<sup>4</sup> The Canada Census defines “immigrants” as individuals who are, or who have been, landed immigrants in Canada (granted the right to live in Canada permanently by immigration authorities). “Recent immigrants” are persons who immigrated (“landed”) after 1980 (City of Vancouver, 1999e; Informetrica Limited, 2000).

<sup>5</sup> Entry levels for the first five years of the 1990s had a mean of 241 000, the highest five-year average figure since around 1910 (Ley & Smith, 2000).

<sup>6</sup> Of course, the opposite was quite true throughout most of Canada’s history; racist and discriminatory policies such as the head tax and transportation regulations restricted the entry of Chinese and South Asians, respectively (Weinfeld & Wilkinson, 1999).



(CMA) population is made up of immigrants, with Vancouver CMA coming a close second with 35 percent.<sup>7</sup> However, immigrants comprise less than 20 percent of the total Canadian population – 17 percent in 1996 (Ley, 1999b). This geographical trend to settle in large urban centres is due mainly to the perceived economic opportunities associated with the prosperity of these regions (Ley & Hiebert, 2001). Further, it is an outcome of linked or chain migrations; new immigrants settle where fellow-nationals are well established, enabling them, to a greater extent, to use their social networks to obtain jobs, housing (Bourne & Rose, 2001), and other important forms of socio-cultural support.

A third important trend in Canadian immigration patterns is the increasing polarization within the body of persons classified as “immigrant.” Abu-Laban (1998) argues that policy developments in the 1990s<sup>8</sup> resulted in Canada’s entrance into a new, third policy era phase regarding immigration, where immigrant families are “problematized,” and where great emphasis is placed on the economic self-sufficiency of immigrants. The latter component is promoted through policies such as the “point system” and the Business Immigration Program, which has been expanded numerous times since its nation-wide introduction in 1978. Upon examination of immigrant status figures, it may be inferred that current immigration policy heavily favours economic immigrants.<sup>9</sup> Indeed, the percentage of economic immigrants rose from 36 percent in 1986 to 59 percent in 1997, while that of immigrants entering Canada through the refugee and family reunification categories stood at only 13 and 28 percent respectively in 1997 (Ley, 1999b). Moreover, the propensity of the wealthiest classes of immigrants to locate in Vancouver while a higher proportion of refugee-status immigrants settle in Toronto, and particularly in Montreal (Ley & Smith, 2000), contributes to an unevenness not only between growing and “shrinking” Canadian cities (Bunting & Filion, 2001), but also between the prosperous, “winning” cities themselves.

A fourth trend witnessed in Canada and other “new world” nations has been a shift away from traditional immigration source regions. The long-sustained pattern of European and especially British immigrants has altered to the current pattern wherein Asian countries have become the main source of immigration (Kalbach & Kalbach, 1999). It has been argued (Green & Green, 1999) that this dramatic shift is the direct result of the 1967 Immigration Act in Canada, which introduced a point system to judge applicants in terms of their human capital, effectively replacing the previous

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<sup>7</sup> Based on 1996 Census figures.

<sup>8</sup> For a comprehensive discussion on the history of Canadian immigration policy, see Knowles (1992); Weinfeld & Wilkinson (1999); Wallace (1999).

<sup>9</sup> Even though Canada has been admired for its generous humanitarian programs in the past, allowing relatively easy entry to large numbers of refugee claimants (Ley, 1999b).

regulation of preferred origins.<sup>10</sup> The door was thus opened to those from non-traditional source countries in Asia, Africa, the Caribbean, and Latin America (Bourne & Rose, 2001). Recently in British Columbia, for example, as much as 80 percent of new immigrants have originated in Asia, led by Hong Kong and Taiwan, while new immigrants of British origin have fallen to a low two percent (Ley, 1999b).

The unprecedented geographical and social nature of post-war immigration to Canada has had, and will continue to have, similarly unprecedented implications upon Canada's urban spaces. As "visible minorities"<sup>11</sup> from the aforementioned non-traditional source countries are poised to become the majority in both Toronto and Vancouver, terms such as "host society," "mainstream," and even "visible minority" will be rendered less salient because they will no longer be numerically accurate (Hiebert, 1999). Without positive action, Canada's growing urban regions are likely to encounter problems related to racism and changing meanings of citizenship (Bourne & Rose, 2001) in addition to problems relating to infrastructure, the environment, and rising land costs (Ley & Hiebert, 2001). Planners thus face a notable challenge in the context of these rapidly changing urban environments.

### **2.2.2 Canada's Need for Immigration**

Immigration rates are notoriously difficult to forecast due to unpredictable political and social circumstances in both host and source countries. Nonetheless, it is generally agreed that high rates of immigration to Canada will continue in the foreseeable future. Due largely to the current trend of low fertility rates in westernized societies, Canada has been relying on immigration for continued population growth over the past two decades. Combined with the reality of an aging population (Bourne & Rose, 2001) and thereby an aging workforce (Ley & Hiebert, 2001), it is evident that immigrants will play an increasingly important role in sustaining and potentially augmenting the size of Canada's active labour force. The size and composition of the labour force will in turn affect the country's economic competitiveness in a global economy.

In the Canadian experience, this need for labour is, of course, not a novel phenomenon. "Dangerous foreigners" such as the Ukrainians and Finns were permitted entry under pressure to settle the west in the 19th century, and "undesirable" labourers, namely Chinese, Japanese, and South Asians, were

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<sup>10</sup> See Green and Green (1995) for a discussion on the effectiveness of the point system and other instruments.

<sup>11</sup> The 1996 Canada Census defines "visible minorities" as "people (other than Aboriginal persons) who are non-Caucasian in race or non-white in colour (based on the Employment Equity Act, 1986)" (City of Vancouver, 1999e).

recruited to work on the national railway during the period 1881-85 (Weinfeld & Wilkinson, 1999). Historic precedent (Hiebert, 1994) must be recognized as a reason why contemporary federal governments are quick to use immigration policy as a means of promoting economic development. It may be debated whether such use of immigration policy is justified in times of economic recession, as in the early 1990s in Canada. Nevertheless, it has been posited that there is currently a focus on selective immigrants who can make a positive contribution to the economy while making minimal demands on the country's immigration services (Ghosh & Pyrcce, 1999); the ethical undertones to this suggestion perhaps need to be further explored.

Slow population growth can become a problem when and where it "...limits opportunities, increases unmet expectations, reduces public services and depreciates the quality of everyday life" (Bourne & Rose, 2001). As such, immigration is required to sustain Canada's population. However, evidence shows that many fast-growing metropolitan areas have experienced net declines in domestic migration. Reasons for migration to the outer suburbs and beyond, rather than to more central parts of the metropolitan area, include an appeal for newness, abundant space, and proximity to the countryside (Bunting & Filion, 1999). A more disturbing explanation of low domestic migration to cities that warrants further research is that of "white flight" – cultural avoidance of immigrant visible minorities (Ley & Hiebert, 2001).<sup>12</sup> Emigration may also be on the rise as American recruitments for highly qualified workers combine with the lure of a better dollar to effect a movement that may be termed "brain drain" (DeVoretz, 1999). In view of these domestic migration patterns, the role of immigration in demographic replacement becomes even more salient.

This is not to assert, however, that cities will prosper indefinitely as long as they experience high levels of immigration. To the contrary, some evidence suggests that poverty is inextricably tied to immigration (Kazemipur & Halli, 2000). In 1996, for example, the employment rate for immigrants who have arrived in Canada since 1985 and been here for five years fell to 68% from 86% in 1981 (Carey, 2002). Even in perceivably prosperous Vancouver, 48 percent of immigrant households who landed between 1986 and 1996 had incomes below the poverty line in 1996 (Ley & Hiebert, 2001). While a positive relationship exists between length of time since landing and income, with established immigrants eventually earning even more than non-immigrants, it is apparent that visible minorities

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<sup>12</sup> It is uncertain exactly which population is fleeing the city. Is it the long-established population – a mainly "white" population – or are long-established "visible minorities" leaving as well? This phenomenon has been addressed in the literature largely vis-à-vis the American experience. See for example, Galster, (1990); Liska, Logan and Bellair (1998); Peach (1999). However, these studies, which focus heavily on the African-American cultural group, are distinct from Canada's situation because of the countries' respective social geographies.

and recent immigrants still earn lower than average incomes<sup>13</sup> (Hiebert, 1999). Further, the notion developed in the early 1990s that Asian immigrants in particular are extremely wealthy, creating an immigrant “overclass,” may be a myth (Ley, 1999b). The diversity of immigrant status is ultimately evident in that immigrants have entered the labour market as professionals and entrepreneurs on the one hand, and as domestic servants (Pratt, 1999) and janitors (Ley & Hiebert, 2001) on the other.

In addition to sustaining population growth, immigration also realizes the humanitarian objectives of family reunification and refugee settlement. These purposes, however, often seem to be overshadowed by economic goals. Indeed, the current policy emphasis on skilled, self-sufficient immigrants and their ability to integrate into Canadian society restricts entry of those in need of political asylum (Nash, 1994). Further, claims have been made that family immigrants are disregarded in favour of independent immigrants (Abu-Laban, 1998). It has been argued accordingly that such conditions may taint Canada’s reputation at home and abroad, as they suggest and even promote the idea that immigrants are a social, welfare, and economic cost to society (Abu-Laban, 1998). Furthermore, it has been suggested that the preference for skilled, business-class immigrants is leading to cuts in the provision of services to immigrants and refugees. Because services such as accommodation and vocational training are essential in helping immigrants achieve successful integration, thereby benefiting the whole of Canadian society, reducing them could be to the country’s long-term disadvantage (Ghosh & Pyrcce, 1999).

### **2.3 IMMIGRATION AND PLANNING**

Immigration patterns affect planning in numerous ways. Planners in turn can directly or indirectly affect the environments of diverse ethnocultural communities. This section explores the spheres in which Canadian planners may be able to address the cleavage between the official policy of multiculturalism<sup>14</sup> and the “reality” of multiculturalism,<sup>15</sup> particularly at the local level. Further, it conveys why a genuine sensitivity to diversity must first precede any attempts to plan for, and with, multicultural communities.

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<sup>13</sup> With some exceptions, especially those with high levels of educational attainment and work experience. A premier example is that of the Hong Kong Chinese population in Vancouver. Nevertheless, socio-economic differences are still as relevant among that group as any other group (Hiebert, 1999).

<sup>14</sup> Canada adopted an official Multiculturalism Policy in 1971, being the first country in the world to do so. See Kobayashi (1993) and Kymlicka (1995) for further discussion on this policy.

<sup>15</sup> The “reality” of multiculturalism refers to the ethnocultural diversity that exists in Canada, and the implications of this diversity on all Canadian citizens.

### **2.3.1 The Need for a Multicultural Perspective**

The human ecologists associated with the Chicago School put forward an early structural analysis of neighbourhood change in the 1920s. The city was analyzed as a separate entity; in a process of invasion and succession, previous immigrant groups in the inner city moved outwards and were replaced by more recent, poorer immigrants (Park, Burgess & McKenzie, 1925/1974). A positive relationship between social status and residential distance from the urban core was therefore perceived. While the Chicago School's analysis has been criticized for paying too little attention to how neighbourhood change actually occurs (see van Kempen & Özüekren, 1998), more recent research demonstrates that the spatial segregation, or "ghetto-ization," of some immigrant groups is still occurring. It has been argued, for example, that a concentration of housing types (in terms of price, age and size, and tenure) almost automatically implies ethnic or cultural concentrations in a particular geographical area (van Kempen & Özüekren, 1998). Some advantages of such arrangements include the garnering of social nurturing opportunities (Portes & Sensenbrenner, 1993) and networking opportunities (Aldrich, Cater, Jones & McEvoy, 1981), and the alleviation of isolation (Boal, 1981). Disadvantages include residents' limited access to information on the availability of jobs (Hughes & Madden 1991), a potential for racism and discrimination (van Kempen & Özüekren, 1998), and negative effects on the presence of commercial facilities stemming from a concentration of poverty (Sarkissian, 1976).

"New" minority groups have significantly recomposed settlement patterns in Canada's urban and suburban areas. In Vancouver, for example, the proportion of all Indo-Canadians living in the City of Vancouver fell from over 60 percent in 1971 to around 20 percent in 1996, while their presence grew substantially in the suburbs of Richmond, Surrey, and Delta (Hiebert, 1999). Similarly, the suburbanization of Chinese businesses in Toronto since the early 1980s illustrates the demand among a sizeable Chinese-Canadian population living outside of the central city for distinct cultural goods and services (Wang, 1999). In some instances, evolving demographic and social change may brew ethnic tensions and cultural conflicts, such as was evidenced between the white owner-occupants, black tenants, Somali youth, and management of the Kingsview Park condominium in suburban Toronto (Qadeer, 1997). While conventional urban planning may not have had a defined role in addressing the ensuing 1993 Kingsview Park riots and social breakdown of the community, planners were continually called to respond to this situation (Qadeer, 1997).

As a significant component of population growth, immigration contributes to urban planning problems such as lack of infrastructure, declining environmental conditions of land, water, and air, and rising land costs (Ley & Hiebert, 2001). While these are products of any rapid economic growth, immigration confers additional impacts upon housing and employment opportunities. It has been suggested, for example, that house prices in Vancouver have been highly sensitive to recent immigrant arrivals (Ley & Tutchener, 1999; Mitchell, 1993). There is also evidence of wage discrimination and occupational segregation between whites, Asians, and blacks in Canada (Howland & Sakellariou, 1993). Service providers and their administrators (including planners) are moreover affected by immigration in numerous ways. Staff at both hospitals and at City Halls, for example, may find it difficult to provide service where there is a language barrier. Indeed, the lack of English in particular has been identified as the greatest barrier to access to services and participation in the local community (Blackwell, 1994). On the other hand, there may be profound cultural differences even where the same language is spoken.

The most significant impact of immigrants, however, may be their physical imprint on the urban landscape. In Canada's metropolitan areas, the concentration of immigrants has led to the emergence of built forms unfamiliar to long-established Canadian residents, particularly those of northwest European descent. The highly visible physical transformations effected by these developments have attracted the attention of a huge populace both in Canada and abroad, not to mention that of the media. Furthermore, new built forms and land uses such as Islamic mosques, Sikh temples, and cemeteries to suit the burial preferences of the Chinese<sup>16</sup> require various public approvals and planning permissions (Qadeer, 1997). Canadian planners are thus poised to encounter situations – some distinguished by conflict – related to diverse cultural interests as the population continues to grow and diversify as a result of sustained high levels of immigration.

### **2.3.2 Planning's Response**

Two of the most recognized examples of land use conflict involving ethnocultural groups are firstly, "Asian theme" malls in suburban Toronto, and secondly, "monster homes" in Vancouver. In both instances, much vocal opposition was raised to either proposed or existing developments, thereby creating charged environments with subtle racist undertones, or even overtones. Planners responded

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<sup>16</sup> See Fong (2001) for an interesting discussion on how Chinese families in Vancouver are affecting cemetery design and the cemetery business.

to the opposition with traditional planning tools, and on the ad hoc, reactive basis that is characteristic throughout much of the practice.

In Toronto, Chinese commercial activity has proliferated in the suburbs over the past two decades, first in the form of plazas in the 1980s, and increasingly in the form of large shopping centres in the 1990s (Wang, 1999). These shopping centres, which have been termed “Asian-theme malls,” are different from typical suburban malls in that they consist of a large number of very small retail outlets, and lack a traditional anchor store. Instead of a department store operating as an anchor, a restaurant might perform the role, as up to 50 percent of the total space may be allotted for restaurants and eating facilities (Wang, 1999). Further, Asian-theme malls are often enclosed. As *neighbourhood* shopping centres, this is an uncharacteristic feature; enclosed malls are typically the norm for *regional* shopping centres (Preston & Lo, 2000).

In one of the few documented cases of the Asian-theme mall phenomenon in suburban Toronto (Preston & Lo, 1999), the objections of area residents to a proposed new development are clearly articulated. When a proposal was put forward in 1994 for an enclosed shopping centre covering 5963 square metres in the predominantly Chinese-Canadian suburb of Richmond Hill, it was met with much neighbourhood opposition. The Bayview Landmark mall – so named for its developer – garnered resistance from residents for its high number of restaurants and eating establishments, as well as for its enclosed nature and its condominium form of tenure. Resident opposition to the development came from both the Chinese immigrant population<sup>17</sup> and the non-Chinese population. Arguments in favour of the proposed Asian-theme mall development included its appeal to recent Chinese immigrants who were used to shopping in small spaces, and the potential for immigrants to own and operate small businesses in the shopping centre.

Amid the strong neighbourhood opposition to the proposal, the Town of Richmond Hill promptly amended its official plan and introduced an interim control by-law. The by-law restricted the development of not only the Bayview Landmark mall, but of *any* shopping centre over a certain square footage. Subsequent to these changes, the developer revised the site plan to conform to three of the four revised planning regulations. Town Council rejected the revised site plan, and Bayview Landmark proceeded to appeal the decision to the Ontario Municipal Board (OMB). The OMB struck

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<sup>17</sup> Some Chinese residents, particularly the longer-term residents, cited similar concerns to those of non-Chinese residents, while conveying a desire for their children to “experience Canadian multiculturalism with friends from all ethnic groups” (Leung, in Preston & Lo, 1999, pp. 187-188).

down Richmond Hill's official plan amendment. However, the judgment did not benefit the developer, as it was ruled that the number of retail units in the proposed mall be limited, not to 125 as per the developer's revised site plan, nor to 72 as proposed by the Town of Richmond Hill, but to only 30. The judge supported his ruling by arguing that residents did not think the proposed mall was appropriate for the existing zoning. To reduce the number of retail units so drastically, however, would not have been profitable for Bayview Landmark, especially since the units had already been sold. Thus, no development had occurred on the site even five years after the original proposal.

Akin to the Asian-theme mall incidents in suburban Toronto, the "monster homes" issue in Vancouver was portrayed as largely concerning the Chinese immigrant population. During the period of high immigration of the late 1980s and early 1990s, Vancouver's housing stock was undergoing significant redevelopment. Existing detached houses were being demolished and the lots clear-cut, while large houses that took up the maximal allowable building space replaced them in order to economize construction costs amid an environment of rising land prices. Ageing city residents provided the main "push" for these events by downgrading to apartments or smaller single-family homes (A. McAfee, personal communication, March 27, 2002). Other long-term residents contributed to the momentum by taking advantage of the housing boom, trading their high-priced city properties for suburban homes (Li, 1994). At the same time, immigrants – most of them from Hong Kong – became owners and occupants of the large houses.

This housing movement was in effect across Vancouver and in some of its suburbs, yet it became especially prominent in the upper- and upper-middle class neighbourhoods of Shaughnessy and adjacent Kerrisdale.<sup>18</sup> Characterized by houses in the English Tudor or Craftsman style surrounded by ample greenery and gardens, these old Anglo-Canadian neighbourhoods exemplified traditional British values and evoked a picturesque, romanticized notion of the English countryside (Ley, 1995; Majury, 1994). The presence of large, rectangular or boxed-shape houses did not conform to Anglo-Canadian values of the urban landscape. As such, they were pejoratively referred to as "monster houses" or "unneighbourly houses" in numerous letters to Vancouver City Council. Other complaints regarding this new built form included bulkiness, and a loss of sunlight, open space, and privacy (Li, 1994).

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<sup>18</sup> The monster house issue started to be a public concern of basic overlooking and overshadowing in the east side of Vancouver long before it became an issue in these neighbourhoods. In these higher income areas, the issues were more to do with design, while on smaller lots, the issues were more to do with right to light and privacy (A. McAfee, personal communication, March 27, 2002).



A perception quickly developed that the wealth and cultural tastes of the overseas Chinese were fuelling the proliferation of monster houses. It has been noted that some letters to Council, as well as some media coverage of the events, carried an unmistakable racial overtone (Li, 1994). Negative views and even animosity toward Chinese immigrants were expressed implicitly if not explicitly, despite the lack of evidence that the bulky, “unneighbourly” houses were a cultural preference of overseas Chinese. Indeed, it has been suggested that the latent racism on the part of Anglo-Canadians ostensibly had to do with the fear of economic displacement (Stanbury & Todd, 1990) by the “other.” The determined resistance to the new, large houses, often cited as opposition to growth, may also be seen as opposition to new inhabitants (Ley, 1995). Nonetheless, the eager acceptance of unproved perceptions of recent<sup>19</sup> Chinese immigrants as responsible for building monster houses in the Vancouver case demonstrates that a social construction of race had already occurred (Li, 1994).

The City of Vancouver responded to complaints against monster houses by revisiting its zoning regulations. The notion of “neighbourliness” was a major factor in publicly attended Council meetings dealing with the unwelcome houses. Consequently, three separate by-laws were enacted between 1986 and 1990 to significantly restrict floor space ratio, height, and yard space in single-family zoned residential areas (Li, 1994). Opposition to monster houses persisted throughout the late 1980s; the political pressure was constant as the public fought for the protection of landscape and trees, and demanded neighbourhood-specific reviews. Ultimately, the recommendation that traditional designs be preferred but not mandatory in new construction was made and accepted for the most part, though builders received a density bonus if they built in a traditional neighbourhood form (Ley & Murphy, 2001). The problem with “monster houses” has since disappeared, and a reworked Tudor revival style has become the builder’s choice for a new vernacular in Vancouver (Ley, 1999a).

Thus, immigrants have recomposed Canada’s settlement patterns and encouraged new built forms reflecting their cultures, changing the social dynamic in the communities where they live in the process. Whether or not the conflict that arose in the “Asian-theme mall” and “monster homes” instances was intentionally directed at a single ethnocultural group is still somewhat ambiguous. The two cases illustrate vividly how the issues of “race” and “culture” in planning and development are often sub-textual, exemplifying the “democratic racism,”<sup>20</sup> or subtle prejudice, of contemporary society. Indeed, Peake and Ray’s (2001) conception of racism “does not begin and end with

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<sup>19</sup> Though one could argue that the negative perceptions of recent Chinese immigrants also permeated perceptions of the long-settled Chinese population because of their similar visible appearance.

<sup>20</sup> See Henry, Tator, Mattis, & Rees (1995) for a carefully documented account of democratic racism. Also in Michalos & Zumbo (2001).

exceptional acts of hatred and prejudice, but instead emphasizes the everyday and entirely normalized qualities of racism in our culture and geographies” (p. 181). The difficulty of defining such a concept is perhaps one reason why, as Córdova (1994) argues, awareness of the extent to which race exacerbates inequality has not sufficiently permeated the field of planning.

Nevertheless, the fact remains that conflict was perceived throughout the management of planning issues in Toronto and Vancouver, affecting area residents, many of whom were Chinese immigrants. In both of these land-use related planning situations, traditional regulatory planning tools such as zoning and official plan amendments were technocratically applied with varying degrees of success. The need for a multicultural perspective in planning is clearly demonstrated in these cases, yet planning’s response seems limited in dealing with culturally-related conflict. Insofar as planning is concerned with the “public interest,” planners appear to require additional tools in order to address, more completely, issues that affect a “public” composed of multiple cultural interests.

## **2.4 PLANNING LITERATURE**

There are arguably many strides remaining for practicing planners to take in their work with multicultural communities. But to what extent has the planning literature addressed ethnocultural diversity? In the mid-1990s, Wallace (1997) asserted that there were “absent voices” in the literature on this topic. Four years later, Edgington, Hanna, Hutton, and Thompson (2001) acknowledged the growth of theoretical interest in multiculturalism and urban governance, but contended: “there has been a dearth of empirical studies that assess the extent to which local governments have taken up the challenge of multiculturalism” (p. 175). In view of these limitations, two distinct streams in the planning literature that speak to ethnocultural diversity are identified here: the role of government and policy; and new ways of “knowing.” A review of these two streams provides the framework for a discussion of the current study’s findings in Chapter Six.

### **2.4.1 The Role of Government and Policy**

In Canada, immigration is an area of federal responsibility; the government in Ottawa is mandated with administering multiculturalism to its citizens. At this level, the 1988 Canadian Multiculturalism Act, devised by the Trudeau government in 1971, represents the official policy on multiculturalism. Citizenship and Immigration Canada, Human Resources Canada, and the Department of Canadian Heritage are all federal agencies that administer responsibilities pertaining to multiculturalism

(Edgington et al., 2001). The federal government has provided considerable funding for multiculturalism expenditures under programs such as “race relations” and “heritage culture” (Mitchell, 1993). The Department of Canadian Heritage has also published an Annual Report on the Operation of the Canadian Multiculturalism Act since 1987. Initiatives noted in the 1999-2000 Annual Report include: a multicultural strategy developed in conjunction with the national Family Violence Initiative to disseminate information widely; television programming that reflects the multicultural nature of Canada; and an Ethnic Diversity Survey to be fielded in 2002 (Department of Canadian Heritage, 2000).

The level of involvement in multiculturalism at the provincial level differs across the provinces. Due to an increased recognition of the impacts of immigration on service provision and on fiscal positions, Canadian provinces have gained interest in managing immigration over the past decade (Burstein, 2000). British Columbia (B.C.), for example, adopted a Multiculturalism Act in 1993. In 1996, Québec reorganized its priorities on immigration by creating le Ministère des Relations avec les Citoyens et de l’Immigration. Further, Ontario provides funding to encourage community-based delivery of cost-effective settlement services through its Newcomer Settlement Program.

The influence of local governments in administering multiculturalism has been less pronounced. Indeed, local governments do not have independent constitutional existence in Canada; municipalities are creatures of the provinces, created by provincial legislation. In B.C., therefore, spending on multicultural services by local government is empowered under the auspices of the B.C. Local Government Act, but “there is no mandatory legislation which requires local councils to implement access and equity approaches to its services, neither is there specific funding” (Edgington et al., 2001, p. 178). In light of the increasingly multicultural nature of Canadian cities, however, it may become evident that more legislation is required to deal with diversity at the local level.

A difficulty nevertheless lies in the formulation of such legislation. Should policies be targeted explicitly at “specific groups according to their ethnicity, age and gender” (Friedmann, 1995, p. 283) or should they be examined from a multicultural perspective, but worded to serve the common interests of all (Qadeer, 2000)? Policy makers face the additional difficulty of constructing abstract “motherhood” statements rather than statements that can be realized “on the ground.” To this end, it is perhaps not surprising that no jurisdiction either in Canada or abroad has undertaken a comprehensive review of its Official Plan or Zoning Laws from a multicultural perspective (M. Qadeer, personal communication, Feb. 5, 2001). Moreover, planners need to be wary of the zoning

tool's potential to contribute to "structural racism," such as was evidenced in early 20<sup>th</sup> century America (Ross & Leigh, 2000). At that time, racial zoning was used to exclude "undesirable" groups from entering certain residential communities, as well as to prevent the spread of "slums" into upscale neighbourhoods.

Despite the obstacles, it may be argued that the success of the Canadian urban planning system in meeting diverse needs has been in facilitating and approving new, sometimes controversial forms of development, thereby creating our cities' multicultural landscapes (Qadeer, 2000). Ethnic villages, recreation facilities, and places of worship reflect the cultural diversity in postmodern cities. Conversely, it has been underscored that the cultural differences arising from these developments have only been accommodated in planning's "typical incremental, procedural, and reactive ways, not through comprehensive policy initiatives" (Qadeer, 2000, p. 17).

Comprehensive planning policies that consider diverse needs rather than satisfying specific circumstances may facilitate the institutionalization of multicultural, or "pluralistic" planning (Qadeer, 2000). Perhaps a "cultural assessment" of planning documents should be undertaken, aided and informed by community focus groups that include minority community leaders and students. Socio-cultural forces must inform planning notions and norms such as parking requirements, compatibility of land uses, and service provisions. Allowing minority voices to be heard in the policy formation process should lead to the creation of equitable policies. In turn, planners' efforts to improve civic engagement and participation, and to combat racism and intolerance should be enhanced. At a simply pragmatic, or alternatively, simply democratic level, equitable policies should allow for ethnic representation in the planning profession (Hoch, 1993) and on decision-making bodies (Qadeer, 1994) in order to garner greater cultural understanding among both minority and majority groups. Moreover, implementing a code of ethics throughout the planning process may provide opportunities for minorities and the politically weak or unorganized to participate more effectively in the formal planning process.

The concentration of immigrants in a few major cities lends support to the argument that planning issues are best addressed at the local level, within appropriate legal frameworks set at the national level (Friedmann, 1995). Indeed, writers on the subject (Ley & Murphy, 2001; Edgington et al., 2001) are increasingly proposing that planners, in concert with local councils, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and partners from the private sector, play an affirmative and active role. On the other hand, it may also be contended that the emphasis on the role of local governments is unrealistic

in the present political and economic climate, supporting a call for public/private partnerships and NGOs to wield more power.

Regardless, the government and policy stream of the multicultural planning literature advocates greater government involvement in planning, calling for a revision of planning policy and process to serve all groups fairly. It has been asserted that governments at all levels must work cooperatively and transcend jurisdictional boundaries in order to better manage migration and diversity (Burstein, 2000). Planners, through government action and policy revision, are not only justified but also enabled to link knowledge with practical applications in furthering social equity.

#### **2.4.2 New Ways of “Knowing”**

Whereas the weaknesses of planning policy and process in addressing diversity have been recognized, the planning profession itself has also been criticized. Critics argue that the old core concepts of rationality, comprehensiveness, and the single public interest can no longer be upheld in societies where difference is the order of the day. It has been suggested that the cultural assumptions (white, male, Euro-centric) of “traditional” planning practice are in contrast to the values of many who reside in contemporary multicultural cities (Sandercock, 1998). Moreover, some resistance to multicultural planning *per se* has been perceived in the profession (Wallace, 2000; Au, 2000). Writers argue that new, creative, non-traditional resources, methods, tools, and roles are required to plan for diverse cultures. The second stream identified in the planning literature on ethnocultural diversity thus deals with the realization that knowledge in planning can be gained in several ways (Grenier, 2000).

Sandercock (1998) underscores that planning theory has been an almost exclusively male and white domain. In view of the multicultural reality in cities, she suggests that an “epistemology of multiplicity” needs to be adopted by planners in order to address the concerns of culturally diverse populations. The epistemology consists of six ways of “knowing”: knowing through dialogue; from experience; from local knowledge; through symbolic and non-verbal evidence; through contemplation; and through action planning. These ways of knowing are illustrated through positive initiatives that focus on community. At MIT’s Department of Urban Studies and Planning, for example, a “Community Fellows Program” that enables community leaders of colour to learn one another’s stories has been initiated, while cross-cultural workshops have been held in Los Angeles to address the discrimination of banks toward blacks and visible minorities. The efforts of Frankfurt, Germany’s unique Municipal Department of Multicultural Affairs in promoting multiculturalism and cultural understanding amid a hostile environment toward ethnic minorities are proposed as a step in

the right direction. Likewise, the National Congress of Neighbourhood Women's model for community education and action in Brooklyn, New York is seen as key in developing and articulating women's roles in rebuilding communities in poor, multi-racial neighbourhoods. In contrast to these relative successes, Sandercock reveals that the cosmopolitan metropolises of New York, Paris, and London, among others, demand many improvements before achieving the postmodern utopia that she terms "cosmopolis" (1998).

In a similar vein, Burayidi (2000) identifies six ways of cultural misunderstanding that need to be addressed in planning multicultural societies. These misunderstandings may be addressed through solutions related to communication, the gathering of information, the mediating role of planners, teamwork, styles of decision-making, and approaches to knowing. Both Sandercock and Burayidi promote a new skill set among planners, encompassing language, communication, openness, and empathy; planners possessing new skill sets will be able to facilitate a two-way, constant communication with the groups and individuals with whom they work. This "transactive" (Friedmann, 1973; 1987) method stands in opposition to Davidoff's (1965) model of advocacy planning, where the planner as "expert" works not *with*, but *on behalf of* groups that have traditionally been underrepresented.

It has been suggested in the literature that traditional, technocratic planning methods such as public hearings and zoning changes often create further tensions and conflicts between competing groups (Ameyaw, 2000). The past use of zoning as a manipulative tool that enforced racial segregation in Southern American cities (Silver, 1997) may also be cited. Writers on multicultural planning support the adoption of new planning tools and methods to begin solving these and other problems. The utilization of extensive methods such as conducting ethno-specific interviews, involving multicultural organizations in the decision-making process, working with cultural groups to promote empowerment, and training and educating staff, may be classified as appreciative planning, where emphasis is placed on mutual respect, mutual learning, trust, and care-based action (Ameyaw, 2000). Appreciative planning is exemplified in the City of Surrey's (a Vancouver suburb) approach to producing a task force report on intercultural inclusivity throughout a planning process that addressed parks and recreation services (Ameyaw, 2000). It should be noted, however, that efforts to hear typically marginalized voices may fail if a lack of trust toward governments and their administrators exists. These feelings are likely to be found, for instance, among immigrant groups originating from countries where corrupt governments and unstable political situations have been prevalent.

Writers on multicultural planning recognize that changing institutional practices alone is not sufficient in dealing with diverse needs. Planners and their counterparts need to “speak truth” to each planning situation, acknowledging first and foremost the presence of culture/race (Mier, 1994). Simply acknowledging who is in a room and more importantly, who is *not* in a room can make an acute difference (Wiewel, 1992). Furthermore, planners need to greater appreciate the value of community groups and grassroots leadership in citizen-led planning (Mier, 1994).

In some planning organizations, however, threats of change and an associated fear inhibit advances toward fully acknowledging and embracing diverse cultures. Some planners fear that, by accommodating a specific cultural or ethnic group, they may be restricting the development of other groups as the community evolves over time (Wallace, 2000). In other instances, a “fear of change pits traditionalists against innovators, specialized approaches against integrated ones” (Au, 2000, p. 21). Moreover, it has been contended that the planning profession is in a state of arrested emotional development due to the belief among some that “uncertified” people cannot understand the complexities of planning processes (Sandercock, 1998).

While these feelings may validly emerge out of the struggle to keep up with a rapid rate of change, it appears that planners in today’s diverse society would be more effective and influential in their work if they possessed a greater understanding of, and sensitivity to, culture. Indeed, planners have been acutely criticized for three shortcomings in dealing with diverse groups: 1) an inability to critically examine and analyze issues from a multicultural perspective; 2) an inability to adapt the universal rational planning process to address the concerns of multicultural groups; and 3) an inability to design participatory processes that bring racial and ethnic group into the planning process (Ameyaw, 2000, p. 105). To this end, language training and exchange programs should be made available to planners. In addition, the hiring of ethnic planners would not only display equity, but may facilitate a greater cultural awareness within organizations. Planning practitioners and theorists should also look beyond their own discipline and give greater attention to broad social theories (Beauregard, 1989) that may help in understanding multicultural cities.

In order to embrace multicultural planning, the profession must acknowledge that the ideology it has traditionally been based upon no longer suffices in planning multicultural cities. Planning tools and methods must be adapted to reflect the transformation in cities from a perceived homogeneous society, to a distinctly diverse one. The leitmotif in the stream of planning literature promoting multiple knowledges appears to be a conscious effort to enhance the traditional planning process.

While the solutions as outlined by the writers are ambitious, and more rhetorical about *why* multicultural planning is needed rather than practical about *how* it may be carried out, they are an important starting point. Thus, while equitable policy revision and government action may enable planners to link knowledge with practical applications, it is argued that planners' actions may be further enhanced if they combine a multicultural sensitivity with new ways of knowing in their work.

## **2.5 MULTICULTURAL PLANNING IN VANCOUVER**

Academic social scientists and professionals alike have been responding to the increase in Vancouver, B.C.'s ethnocultural diversity over the past 15 years. Whereas the Canadian-born population in the Vancouver CMA increased 31% between 1981 and 1996, the immigrant population increased 72% during the same period (Informetrica, 2000). The profile of immigration to Vancouver has also changed substantially. In the decade from 1986 to 1996, immigration from Europe and the United States fell dramatically while trans-Pacific migration rose; by 1996, Hong Kong had replaced the United Kingdom as the single most important place of birth among immigrants living in Greater Vancouver (Hiebert, 1999). Charged with managing a diverse population with diverse needs, the City of Vancouver has responded to the changing ethnic composition by introducing a number of policy and program initiatives.

One of Vancouver's first and foremost policies on multicultural and diversity issues was the Equal Opportunities Employment (EEO) Program, which commenced in 1986. This program includes guidelines for hiring a diverse workforce, and requires staff to report to Council periodically on progress made by all city departments. In 1988, City Council adopted a Civic Policy on Multicultural Relations to recognize the strength of cultural diversity while promoting access for all residents to civic services, regardless of background or language spoken. Significant efforts – including extensive document translations – were subsequently made between 1993 and 1995 to reach out to multicultural communities throughout the public consultation for a new city-wide official plan. Two notable achievements in 2002 include the introduction of a “Newcomers’ Guide” to inform newcomers on civic issues and available services, and the formation of a city-wide translation and interpretation policy. Additional practical applications in recent years include diversity training for staff, the development of community-based programs, and the provision of grants to local ethnic NGOs (City of Vancouver, 2000d). Table 2.1 provides a summary of the City of Vancouver's initiatives addressing multicultural and diversity issues.



TABLE 2.1: CITY OF VANCOUVER INITIATIVES ADDRESSING MULTICULTURAL AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

<b>Initiative</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Date Implemented</b>
<b>Equal Employment Opportunity Program</b>	Policy that aims to create a representative work force, with equal employment opportunities for women, visible minorities, First Nations peoples, and people with disabilities	1986
<b>Civic Policy on Multicultural Relations</b>	Recognizes cultural diversity; endorses and encourages access to civic services for all residents, regardless of background	1988
<b>Hastings Institute</b>	Institute established to provide diversity training to city staff, other municipalities, and provincial government ministries	1989
<b>Community Conference: "From Barriers to Bridges"</b>	City hosted conference; Council reaffirmed its policy of reflecting cultural diversity in all aspects of civic involvement and participation	1993
<b>CityPlan</b>	A large public involvement process on developing a city-wide plan for Vancouver that included significant participation from cultural and immigrant groups; materials translated into 7 languages	1993 - 1995
<b>Special Advisory Committee on Cultural Communications</b>	Council-appointed committee which advises Council on various policy-related issues concerning diverse groups	1994
<b>Diversity Communications Strategy</b>	Forms framework for new communication initiatives related to diversity	1995
<b>Multilingual Information Referral Phone Service</b>	Provides information on civic issues in Cantonese, Mandarin, French, Spanish, Punjabi, Vietnamese	1996
<b>Ethnic Media News Monitoring Service</b>	Provides overview of key issues covered in ethnic press for Council and city staff	1997
<b>Civic Elections</b>	Special efforts made to reach out to diverse cultural communities	1993, 1996, 1999
<b>Public Consultation</b>	Aims to discern communities' perspectives on multiculturalism/diversity, public participation, and access to services; forms framework for city-wide outreach strategy	2000
<b>Newcomers' Guide to the City</b>	Guide intended to inform newcomers on civic issues and available services	2002
<b>Translation and Interpretation Policy</b>	City-wide policy designed to provide guidelines on dealing with translation and interpretation needs	In progress

Source: Adapted from City of Vancouver, 2000d

It has been demonstrated in the literature that, while some of Greater Vancouver's "outer municipalities" have hardly utilized multicultural policies and programs, the "core" municipality of Vancouver has been more diligent in delivering services to the multicultural community (Edgington et al., 2001; Edgington, 1999). Despite not having an overarching formal policy on multiculturalism, the City has continually demonstrated a commitment to its culturally diverse populace, and is in the process of developing more comprehensive policies to this effect. It is important to note, however, that efforts to recognize and include ethnocultural groups in city processes have not been implemented without resistance. Staff have had to field telephone calls from people objecting to the high costs associated with document translations, and demanding that newcomers learn English instead (CV14). Staff have also learned to change their language, favouring the term "diversity" over "multiculturalism" in an effort to portray a more inclusive front; likewise they now speak in terms of "valuing" diversity rather than "managing" diversity (CV02). Ultimately, it is acknowledged that the City of Vancouver is taking positive steps toward realizing Sandercock's (1998) "cosmopolis," as is demonstrated by its establishment of a variety of policies and programs addressing cultural diversity since the mid-1980s.

All the same, there is a lack of information on the ability of Vancouver's multicultural initiatives to help newcomers achieve full citizenship. It is clear that an extensive provision of techniques and services alone does not guarantee the effective incorporation of minority groups into the decision-making process (Edgington et al., 2001). For example, one informant noted that the City's EEO program has been successful in hiring more females, but that it has had difficulty attracting visible minorities (P01). To what extent, then, are typically marginalized voices heard? What are the tangible results of these policies and programs? Do the actions of the local government reflect the opinions of multiple cultural groups? Such are the questions that have yet to be fully explored in the literature. They will be addressed in this thesis as they relate to the City of Vancouver's Community Visions Program.

## 2.6 CONCLUSION

The most recent wave of international migration to Canada has proceeded at an unprecedented pace. In the process, immigration has had a distinct impact upon the country's physical and social landscapes. It is as yet unclear what the full implications of immigration and cultural diversity will be on planning practice. What is clear, is that "[c]ulture, in all of its meanings, has become a priority in multicultural society, and has created the new professions of social, cultural and now multicultural planning" (Ley & Murphy, 2001, p. 126). This reference to multicultural planning as a profession ultimately maintains that planners do indeed have a social responsibility to address these issues, and that they are well placed to do so. It is encouraging, therefore, that planners – particularly in world cities and other rapidly growing metropolitan areas such as Vancouver, B.C. – are increasingly becoming aware that the struggle is not over *whether* planning ought to be culturally sensitive, but *how* (Burayidi, 2000).

## CHAPTER 3: TOWARD VISIONING IN PLANNING

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### 3.1 INTRODUCTION

Public participation has long been recognized as a desirable component of planning. In practice, however, the process of soliciting citizen involvement and fairly representing their views in the planning process has often been problematic. Nevertheless, planners have continued to develop new strategies to promote equal representation from diverse interests. The concept of “visioning,” in one of its meanings, has emerged out of this movement. Because of an inherent aim for equity and inclusiveness found in recent applications, visioning has the potential to be a useful technique in carrying out multicultural planning.

Developing “visions” and “visioning” are relatively recent trends in planning, yet their popularity within the past 10-15 years has been remarkable. These words and related ones such as “visionary” and “envision” are now commonplace in the American and Canadian planning literature, even though there is no clear body of identifiable visioning literature therein (Shiple & Newkirk, 1998). Regardless, visioning has been employed as a planning technique in numerous municipalities across North America, the United Kingdom, and Australia ever since Chattanooga, Tennessee undertook a community visioning program in 1984 (Shiple & Newkirk, 1998). While there are certain advantages to visioning, there are also notable disadvantages. In particular, it has been argued that practitioners seem to work largely from a set of tacit assumptions about the usefulness of the practice but without either a firm theoretical basis, or alternatively, a documented record of successes (Shiple, 2002).

This chapter explores the evolution of public participation in planning, thereby setting a framework for the discussion on the emergence of visioning. The various meanings of vision terms are considered before their usage in planning practice is articulated. In the second part of the chapter, the visioning processes employed in Vancouver, B.C. are presented. The information recorded here, along with that of the previous chapter, establishes a foundation for the subsequent discussion of visioning’s effectiveness in planning ethnoculturally diverse communities.

### 3.2 PARTICIPATORY PLANNING APPROACHES

The rational-comprehensive approach to planning of the 1950s served as an appropriate model for a profession which, up until that time, had operated much less systematically. The principles of efficiency and rationality formed the basis for a sequential planning process that can be generalized in three-steps: first, planners consider possible courses of action; second, the consequences following from the adoption of each alternative are identified and evaluated; and finally, an alternative that would be most likely to achieve the community's objectives is selected (Meyerson & Banfield, 1955). Later writers suggested including implementation and monitoring steps to embellish the process (Robinson, 1972). It may be argued that this process, often referred to as the "traditional" planning model, remains the general basis for much community planning practice today (Hodge, 1998). However, it is also widely apparent that rational-comprehensive planning has had, and continues to have, its critics.

As early as the 1960s, opponents began to reproach the rational-comprehensive model for disregarding citizen involvement (Godshalk, 1967) and for being too scientific in attempting to achieve the orderly development of urban environments (Harvey, 1985). The public began to challenge the planner's expertise (Grant, 1989), bolstering calls within the profession for a transformation of planning from a top-down to a participatory process (Fainstein & Fainstein, 1998). Planners in turn began to realize that planning could not be practiced as an objective activity that embodied a single "public interest" (Gerecke, 1976). Accordingly, advocacy planning and transactive planning surfaced beginning in the mid-1960s within the heated context of local activism surrounding urban renewal and expressway projects. Combined with the coming of age of an affluent "baby boom" population concerned about local issues, these planning models paved the way for the "participation era" of the 1960s and 1970s (Grant, 1989).

Advocacy planning was articulated and exemplified by Davidoff (1965). His model essentially involved planners advocating for, or giving voice to, disadvantaged groups such as the poor. Advocacy planning has since evolved from defending excluded interests, into equity planning, where advocacy is found in the planning process itself (Marris, 1994). A sound example of equity planning is the case of Cleveland, Ohio in the 1970s, where the city's Planning Commission worked in an activist and interventionist style to provide a wider range of choices for the city's poor and black, who were often one and the same (Krumholz, 1982). Advocacy/equity planning (the terms are now used more or less interchangeably) and transactive planning overlap in their premise of social equality.

However, ongoing public participation is not a necessary condition of the former, “for the aim is equity, not consultation” (Fainstein & Fainstein, 1998, p. 271).

In transactive planning, the term “transactive” stems from Friedmann’s (1973) depiction of planning process as a set of transactions. Planners are seen to contribute invaluable information to the planning process, such as theory, new perspectives, and processed knowledge, while citizens/clients contribute intimate knowledge of context, community priorities, and operational details. As such, constant communication between planners and the public is promoted, which ideally results in reciprocal education and involvement between planners and the community (Godshalk, 1967). The planner’s role in transactive planning is to develop a set of community relations strategies, and to inform community-based groups about the policies affecting them (Forester, 1989). Citizen participation is encouraged in the critical analysis of these policies. Further, planning is regarded as a democratic process; planners should be open to knowledge possessed by citizens, particularly those “...in the front line of action – households, local communities, social movements” (Friedmann, 1987, p. 394). Increased interaction is stressed in transactive planning, particularly through verbal communication. This principle is the premise for social, or “mutual,” learning. First advocated by Vickers in 1965, mutual learning is a less bureaucratic style of planning that allows for broad participation, resulting in both planners and citizens gaining knowledge (Hodge, 1998). Because of its emphases on participation and education, mutual learning is an example of a transactive planning process.

The need for participatory approaches at the local level was well embedded in planning practice by the 1980s. However, it was becoming ever more apparent that involving the public in planning processes was complex and multi-dimensional. Planners encountered problems of elitism and conflicting interests in participatory planning exercises (Grant, 1989), in addition to issues of cost and efficiency. The NIMBY (not-in-my-backyard) and LULU (locally unwanted land use) syndromes raised serious obstacles to change almost everywhere, especially in the context of gentrified neighbourhoods, or in cases about determining locations for so-called “noxious” uses such as group homes and landfill sites. At the same time, however, despite twenty years of working in a participatory mode, planners were often struck by the public’s apathy in neighbourhood community planning processes (Grant, 1989). Nevertheless, planning ideology and legislation formally recognized that community members have the right to participate in decision-making.

In the 1990s and into the 21st century, the planning profession began to explore new techniques and models for engaging the public in the planning process. In addition to traditional methods such as

public hearings and open houses, planners started using more varied approaches that included roundtable discussions, forums, facilitation techniques, and consultation (Young, 1995). Tools that had rarely been used in planning, such as focus groups (Zotti, 1991), were utilized more as their merits were recognized. In the planning literature, writers proposed communicative planning (Healey, 1992) and consensus building (Innes, 1996) models to address issues of equal and fair representation. Furthermore, the concepts of mediation, negotiation, dispute resolution, all involving “multiple publics” (Sandercock, 1999) came into the fore in planning practice.

One critique of the formal planning process, especially central to this thesis, is that the institutional procedures and formal apparatus of planning work to enforce dominant bureaucratic forms of organization and discourse in ways that marginalize other ones (Tauxe, 1995). Though planning processes invite broad participation, the degree to which voices – especially minority voices – are actually considered in decision-making varies widely. By continuing to seek public input and involvement, however, the planning profession is exhibiting a sincere intention to involve and represent diverse interests, including those of minority groups. To this end, planners are demonstrating a commitment to the principles of democracy and equity. Characteristics of new participative planning approaches include: local people controlling the agenda while the authorities take a listening stance; an encouragement of community capacity building, where people are empowered to meet their own needs; and support for not-for-private-profit projects in the informal economy (Young, 1995). Thus, while there have been frustrations and disillusionments with public consultation and participation in local planning over the decades, participative approaches have remained an integral component of the planning process. The trend continues today toward a more humanistic, pluralistic face in planning. Visioning, in one of its iterations, has an important role to play in this sphere.

### **3.3 MEANINGS OF “VISION”**

Multiple meanings are embedded in the term “vision.” In its literal meaning, it refers to what can be seen – the visual – perhaps in the form of an image or a picture. This meaning may also encompass what can be seen with the *mind’s* eye, not only by people who are awake and rational, but also by those in a dream or trance state. One source of the visioning concept, for example, harkens back to Classical Greece, where priestesses of the Delphic Oracle could supposedly see into the future (Shipley, 2000). Within planning, a vision in the literal sense may be expressed in the form of a city having tree-lined streets, with people walking and biking. The metaphoric meaning of “vision,” on

the other hand, may refer to an idea, value, or aspiration for the future. As such, people may have a vision of their city as being inclusive, equitable, and happy.

Vision terms have been used extensively within planning commentary and planning literature since the early 1990s. They have oftentimes been associated with great people – “visionaries” (Shiple & Newkirk, 1998) – who have been able to influence or shape the future. Visionaries in the planning field include Ebenezer Howard, Robert Moses, and Jane Jacobs. More recently, different usages of the term have ranged from communities calling their comprehensive plans “visions,” to others using the term “community strategic visioning” to signify a planning process, to still others conducting visioning as an exercise that stimulates public involvement in community planning (Helling, 1998). In these meanings, “vision” can denote a sense of *product* such as plans or policies, while “visioning” conveys a *process*.

It has been suggested that planners have borrowed and adopted recent approaches to visioning from diverse areas, rather than developing their own meanings to vision terms (Shiple & Newkirk, 1998). Definitions of visioning in planning have thus been varied and imprecise. Ideas have been borrowed from business management, for example, where emphasis is placed on the role of leaders in empowering others in the agency to fulfill a vision (Nutt & Backoff, 1992). In strategic management, visioning has been described as a technique for identifying critical issues as a preliminary to the plan-making process, but not as a part of it (Kemp, 1992). Further removed from planning, the field of sports motivation has referred to the visualization component of vision; people are encouraged to clearly imagine the results of their actions before they carry them out (Smith, 1990). Planners’ extensive borrowing from these and other areas such as education and holistic healing has resulted in an inherent difficulty of applying one single definition to encapsulate the varied usage of visioning in planning practice. Unfortunately, the planning literature to date also contains little critical analysis of the concept.

### **3.4 VISIONING AS A PLANNING TOOL**

The meanings attached to vision terms in planning are manifold and complex, and it may be argued that neither the profession nor the public has agreed on a solid definition. Regardless, there do appear to be certain trends in their usage throughout the profession. While contemporary meanings of “vision” in planning do not necessarily refer to things that can be seen, they often do look toward the future. Based on the work of front-line planners who popularized the terms, vision plans generally



have a purpose of informing action (Helling, 1998). Moreover, the emphasis on public involvement is pronounced in the emerging process of visioning. Finally, visioning seems to draw upon the strategic planning method popularized in the 1980s.

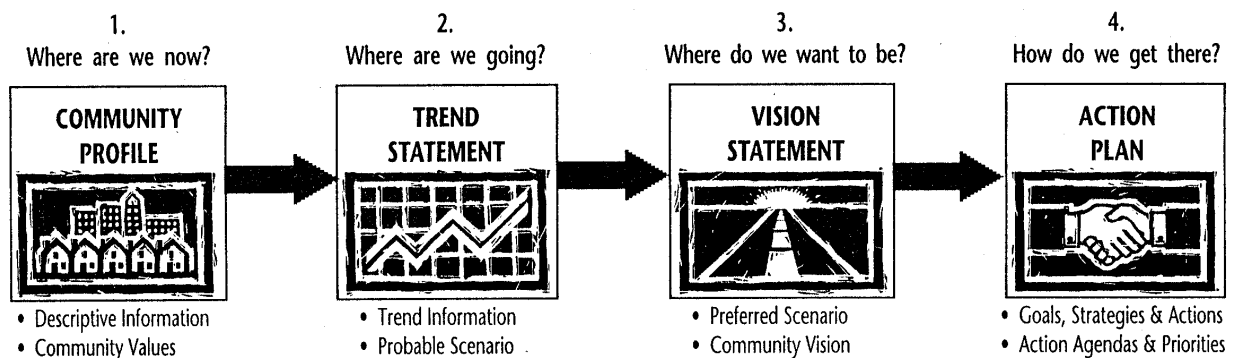
It is important to first distinguish the broad meanings of the terms “vision” and “visioning” as they have been used in planning. The former is a noun, which in its substantive or tangible form, may refer to a vision statement or a comprehensive plan. Visions may be represented in words, diagrams, and pictures. It is noted that the classic visionary plans of the past, such as Ebenezer Howard’s “garden cities” and Robert Moses’s public works plans for New York City, were not participative. Alternatively, “visioning” is a relatively new verb that has come to be associated with a procedural meaning; it represents a planning process involving extensive public participation. In essence, visions and visioning can be interdependent; visions can provide a basis for visioning, while visioning exercises can lead to vision plans and the implementation of those plans.

Planners have often set the objectives of visions as guiding public decisions and informing action. Vision plans therefore often contain goal-oriented statements coupled with proposed actions to reach those goals in the future. For example, the Vision 2020 plan for Washington’s Puget Sound region calls for “concentrating new growth and employment over the next 30 years in 10 to 15 regional and subregional centers along the Everett-Seattle-Tacoma corridor” (Franklin, 1991, p. 25). In order to deal with this growth, specific transportation-related solutions are proposed, including 130 miles of light rail, the addition of carpool and express bus lanes to existing highways, and five new passenger ferry terminals (Franklin, 1991). It may be argued that vision plans are distinguished by containing specific proposals for action, as these are often lacking in traditional plans. Indeed, some of the more systematic outlines for visioning, such as the Oregon Model, emphasize action plans. As proposals rather than goals, these action statements allow for some flexibility in the implementation of the visions. On the other hand, it may also be argued that visions are just plans with some specific objectives. Ultimately, it is still unclear in many instances how vision plans are different from traditional plans. It could be that planners are adopting the “vision” term because it has a mystique associated with both great plans of the past (Shipley & Newkirk, 1999) and the general notion of future. Furthermore, they may feel that people relate better to the softer sounding word “vision,” than to the technocratic-sounding word “plan.”

Visioning as a process has been increasingly used in community planning. The visioning process is exemplified in the Oregon Model, which acted as a basis for several planning exercises that took

place in that state between the late 1980s and the early 1990s. The Oregon Model is comprised of a four-step process: profiling the community, analyzing the trends, creating the vision, and developing an action plan (Figure 3.1) (Oregon Visions Project, 1993). In the planning literature, it has been underscored that visioning processes often involve multiple stakeholders – including citizens – working collaboratively at the local level to achieve a shared image of the future (Helling, 1998; Klein, Benson, Andersen & Herr, 1993). Indeed, it has even been suggested that visioning is “ideally suited to public involvement” (Oregon Visions Project, 1993, p. 5), and that it is “specifically intended to democratize planning by pulling citizens together” (Oregon Visions Project, 1993, p. 18). Proponents of visioning essentially believe in the ability of citizens to make decisions that affect their lives (McAfee, 1997). In Canada, visioning exercises have been conducted in Halifax, Ottawa, Kitchener, and Vancouver, among other cities.

FIGURE 3.1: THE OREGON MODEL FOR COMMUNITY VISIONING



Source: Oregon Visions Project, 1993

The visioning approach, as outlined in the Oregon Model, relies strongly on the strategic planning method that was first used in the corporate world in the 1980s. Public sector strategic planning has proven to be very similar to what the corporate sector successfully called “visioning.” It consisted of a series of basic steps, including: conducting an environmental scan, selecting key issues, setting mission statements, and developing an implementation plan to carry out strategic actions (Sorkin, Ferris & Hudak, 1984). Strategic planning similarly promoted broad public participation. While strategic planning has been applied as recently as 1996 in the development of Greater Vancouver’s region-wide *Livable Region Strategic Plan* (1996), it has been suggested that this method has evolved into, and has been effectively replaced by, visioning (Oregon Visions Project, 1993).

Visioning may be seen to differ from more traditional forms of community planning in several ways. The focus on citizen input is divergent from the rational-comprehensive model's confidence in the "planner as expert." Where advocacy planning allowed for adversarial participation in the interest of a special group (Davidoff, 1965), visioning implies a collaborative strategy to deal with conflict (Helling, 1998). Indeed, although public involvement has long been solicited in planning process, it has not always resulted in *meaningful* public involvement (Klein et al., 1993). Visioning has further claimed to address a wide range of concerns; be strongly geared to community values; create alternatives scenarios to express both possible and probable futures (Oregon Visions Project, 1993); have a front-end emphasis; and be inclusive (Klein et al., 1993).

Conversely, critics of broad public participation processes, including visioning, have maintained that citizen participation sometimes becomes an end rather than a means (Seelig & Seelig, 1997). Numbers may indicate high levels of participation, but are participants really representative of the general population, or do they represent only certain groups? What about the "silent majority" who do not or cannot participate? Moreover, it is uncertain whether the public even has the ability to look toward and plan for the future. Without possessing the ability to "forward think" within prospective contexts, participants' opinions in a public planning process may simply reinforce the status quo, albeit reflecting a more utopian version. Another concern of visioning is the potential generation – at great costs – of "wish lists" that contains few specifics (Seelig & Seelig, 1997). Finally, competing forces and interests may result in the creation of a vision so broad and so vague that it is ultimately ineffective (Earley & Boles, 2000). These critiques are in addition to those based on the promiscuous use of vision terms.

### **3.5 VISIONING IN VANCOUVER**

Amid the discourse surrounding the advantages and disadvantages of visioning, this section begins to explore how the City of Vancouver has exemplified the recent popularity of visioning in planning through two public planning processes: CityPlan, and the Community Visioning process. A brief overview of these processes reveals both similarities and distinctions between Vancouver's use of visioning and the definitions and broad concepts outlined above.

The City of Vancouver is governed by the *Vancouver Charter 1953*, a Private Bill that specifies powers. Under the Charter, the City is not required to have a city-wide Official Community Plan (OCP). It is, however, required to adopt a Regional Context Statement (RCS) in support of the *Livable*

*Region Strategic Plan (LRSP)*, Greater Vancouver's regional growth strategy. Vancouver's RCS, adopted in 1999 by City Council, outlines the relationship between the *LRSP* and the city's other plans. It applies to the entire city. Vancouver's Zoning and Development By-law also covers the entire city in specifying land use regulations. Other city plans and policies such as the *Central Area Plan*, *Greenways Plan*, the *Transportation Plan*, the *Industrial Lands Policy*, and *CityPlan*, when combined with the Zoning and Development By-law, contribute to providing a planning framework equivalent in scope to a city-wide OCP (City of Vancouver, 2001h).

### 3.5.1 CityPlan

*Vancouver residents have created a CityPlan that will lead to a city of neighbourhoods; a city where there is a sense of community for all ages and cultures; a city with a healthy economy and environment; and a city where people have a say in the decisions that affect their neighbourhoods and their lives.*

– *CityPlan: Directions for Vancouver*

Prior to 1992, Vancouver City had various area and neighbourhood plans, but no overarching city-wide plan to guide policy decisions. By the late 1980s and early 1990s, it was becoming apparent that this lack of an official plan was contributing to emerging problems such as vocal citizens opposing new development, and a perceived lack of coherence between different city policies (Edgington, 1999). In 1992, planning staff were asked by City Council to develop “a process for people to talk to people about future directions for Vancouver” (McAfee, 1997, p. 19). Council subsequently approved the proposal that a plan “reflecting a shared vision for the future of Vancouver” (City of Vancouver, 1995) be prepared. Based on the CityPlan process, visioning in Vancouver consisted of:

- 1) the notion of the future by broadly determining how Vancouver should look in the next 30 years;
- 2) a public process that allowed for extensive participation throughout;
- 3) the public advising decision-makers on choices generated through the public process;  
and
- 4) a policy document of chosen directions to guide City Council decisions.

These characteristics parallel visioning processes used in other planning contexts. The specific methods employed throughout Vancouver's CityPlan visioning process, however, are found to differ. In particular, the focus on allowing the public to make choices appears to signal an emphatic departure from decision-making styles of the past.

With projections of Vancouver's population increasing by another 160 000 people by 2021 to a total population of 633 000 people, City Council turned to the public for input on how the city could accommodate growth. The intent of CityPlan was to create a broad image of the city in approximately 30 years that was shared by citizens. Council also wanted to see a comprehensive plan that included directions on arts, culture, and community services, in addition to more "typical" planning topics such as transportation and housing.

Planning staff, following guidelines set by City Council, developed the CityPlan public process. Early on in this process, it was decided that CityPlan could not be based on processes where staff prepared plans that then went to the public for input. Rather, Vancouver City Council was seeking a new process to involve the public right from the ideas stage. The CityPlan process was therefore not based on an existing model, but was created specifically for Vancouver while bearing in mind its social, cultural, and political "situatedness."

Between 1993 and 1995, the CityPlan process proceeded to be the largest public consultation process to date in Vancouver; over 20 000 people actively participated by making submissions and attending events (City of Vancouver, 1995). Subsequent surveys found that about 20% of the city population – or 100 000 people – felt engaged in the process. Innovative methods were used to promote and accommodate participation, including liberal use of local media (including the ethnic media), "city circles" of small citizen groups, and "tool kit" binders to provide information about the city. Numerous efforts were made to include minority and ethnocultural groups through translation and extensive outreach; CityPlan materials were made available in seven languages.

A focal point of the CityPlan process was to allow citizens to advise Council by making choices that would affect their future. Indeed, city staff informants underscored that this emphasis on making choices, or "choicing," is what distinguishes Vancouver's notion of visioning from that of other cities. Proposed by Council, this effort may have been made to counter criticisms that planning processes have traditionally been executed from the top-down, rather than from the bottom-up. Thus, participants decided that they wanted to see Vancouver as a "city of neighbourhood centres" rather than as a "city of mixed residential neighbourhoods," "a central city," or "a traditional city." Participants also chose to spend some of their tax dollars on housing and cultural activities, rather than leaving them to market forces. Further, they considered whether or not to increase neighbourhood housing variety, and whether or not to increase the amount of lower cost market housing in lower density neighbourhoods (City of Vancouver, 1995).

*CityPlan: Directions for Vancouver* was approved by Vancouver City Council in 1995 as a broad vision for the city. The *CityPlan* policy document contains a number of “Directions” that cover a wide range of topics, along with a series of “next steps” that will be taken. The next steps, or proposals for action, are in accordance with the action plan emphasis of recent vision plans in other North American municipalities. As such, *CityPlan* Directions are not goals with an end, but guidelines as to how the City can achieve citizens’ notion of Vancouver in the future. While *CityPlan* is not bound by law, it is a Council approved policy that is meant to be a framework for guiding decisions on City programs, priorities, and actions over approximately 30 years. It does not contain detailed by-laws, maps, or budgets; these details are to be addressed on a neighbourhood-by-neighbourhood basis by city staff in consultation with citizens.

### **3.5.2 Community Visions**

*Working together for the future of your neighbourhood.*

– *Community Visions Choices Survey*

In 1996, City Council approved the Community Visions Program as part of a strategy<sup>21</sup> to bring *CityPlan*, the city’s official plan, to the neighbourhood level. The Visions Program, described as a “new approach to local planning” (City of Vancouver, 2000a) aims to develop plans for all communities in the city within a 10-year period, thereby moving toward building “a city of neighbourhoods,” as articulated in *CityPlan*. The Community Visions Program is defined by the city in consideration of both a process and a product, and adheres to the principles laid out in the *CityPlan* process:

- 1) The Visions Program asks citizens to look toward the future of their neighbourhoods.
- 2) It is a neighbourhood-based planning process that provides several opportunities for public input and participation, including open houses, surveys, and “watchdog” roles. The process is promoted as open and transparent.
- 3) Citizens are asked to decide on alternatives by completing a “Choices Survey.”
- 4) A policy document of future directions for the community is prepared based on the results of the survey.

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<sup>21</sup> Other City plans/programs intended to realize *CityPlan* include the *Greenways Plan*, the *Transportation Plan*, *Community Policing*, and the *Industrial Lands Strategy* (City of Vancouver, 1996).

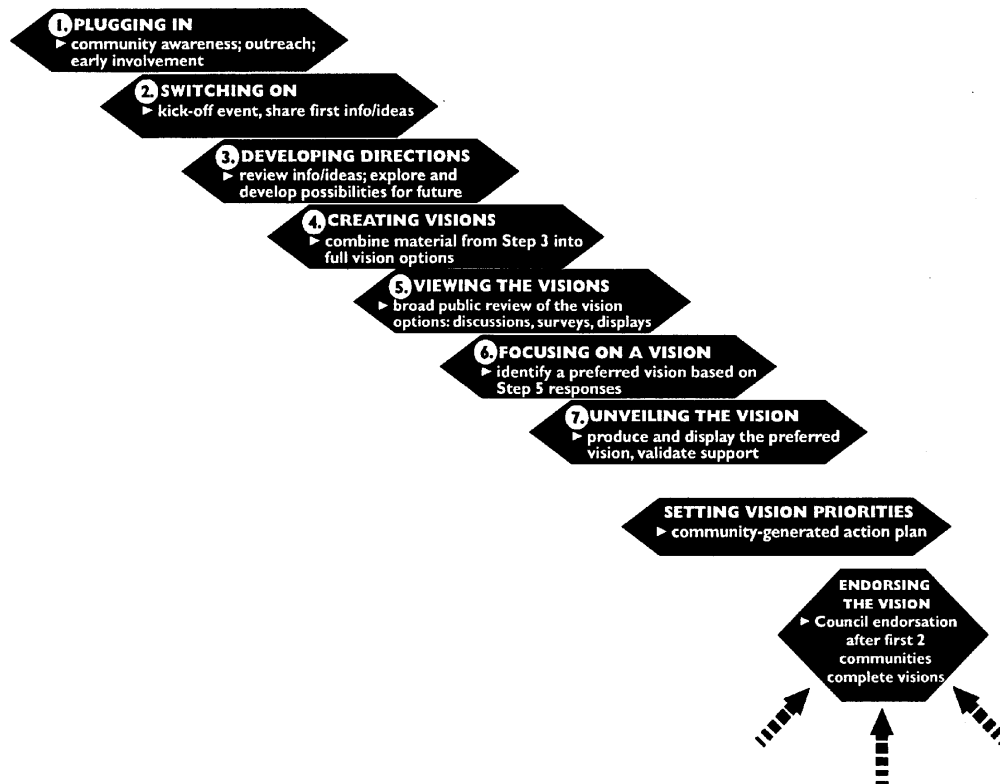
The term “*Community Visions*” was chosen for the new neighbourhood plans to avoid confusion with the *Local Area Plans (LAP)* that existed in five Vancouver communities.<sup>22</sup> Communities that had had little or no planning – and therefore no existing neighbourhood plan – were prioritized to undergo the Community Visions Program en route to materializing in a plan – or *Community Vision* – what they wanted their community to look like in the future. The first priority was given to two communities that underwent the Visions Program concurrently as pilot projects: Kensington-Cedar Cottage on the east side of Vancouver, and Dunbar, on the west side. The intent in developing the Community Visions Program was to bring some CityPlan activities to the local level promptly, as part of the implementation of the city-wide plan. The Program aimed to develop community plans that covered the same broad range of topics found in *CityPlan*. This was opposed to the previous *LAPs*, which focused on land use. It was also decided that areas with existing *LAPs* would not receive the full-scale version of the Visions Program, but a modified one at a later date.

The process for the Community Visions Program was developed through workshops held between city staff and the public, based on a draft public process prepared by staff on the advice of citizens. Staff subsequently formulated the Terms of Reference for the Community Vision Program (Appendix A), which outline the purpose, ground rules, process, and roles for those involved in the program. Akin to the Oregon Model for Community Visioning, the resultant Community Visioning process in Vancouver is comprised of a series of seven steps (Figure 3.2) carried out over an eight-month period. The process concludes with “unveiling the vision,” a step that entails preparing and distributing materials that document the preferred image of the community’s future. Following approval of the *Community Vision* policy document by Council, staff develop an implementation program with the community. This step is entitled “setting vision priorities: community-generated action plan” in the Community Visioning process (Figure 3.2). The implementation program is then adopted by Council to guide further actions. Implementation of the *Community Visions* is somewhat vague in the Terms of Reference themselves: “a variety of activities will occur over an extended period of time to implement the vision” (City of Vancouver, 1996). Nevertheless, the emphasis of action plans in visioning is upheld in Vancouver’s case, in that action statements are incorporated into the *Community Visions*, and action plans are formulated subsequent to the visioning process.

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<sup>22</sup> *Local Area Plans* were detailed plans that dealt mainly with land use. They took five to eight years to develop and typically laid out regulations to the rezoning stage. Over 25 years, the City of Vancouver had developed *Local Area Plans* for five communities: Mount Pleasant, Marpole, Grandview-Woodlands, Kitsilano, and the West End.

FIGURE 3.2: VANCOUVER COMMUNITY VISIONING PROCESS

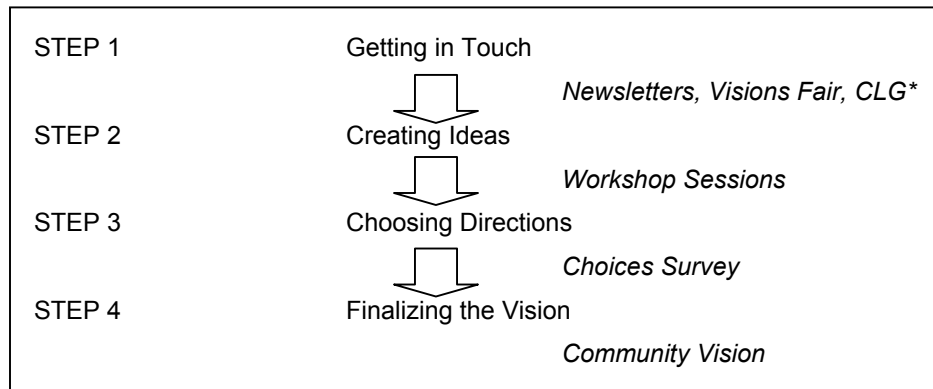


Source: City of Vancouver, 1996, p. 7

In order to work efficiently in terms of time and resources, the City conducts the Community Visions Program in two communities concurrently. The Program was carried out from 1997-1998 in Kensington-Cedar Cottage and Dunbar, two communities that had previously had very little planning. As required in the Community Visions Terms of Reference, an extensive review process of the two pilot projects was carried out in 1999. The review was based on: data collected during the program; input from staff team members, Community Liaison Groups, the City Perspectives Panel, and workshop participants; and a consultant evaluation on public involvement. This evaluation contained suggestions on defining the program mandate, resourcing the program, and honing communication strategies, among others. Two major changes that emerged out of the review were the shortening of the Community Visioning process from seven steps to four (Figure 3.3), and the lengthening of time allotted to complete each step. Vancouver City Council approved the pilot projects in 1998 and voted to continue the Community Visions Program in other communities. The revised four-step process was then employed for visioning a second set of communities from 2000-2001: Victoria-Fraserview/Killarney and Sunset. The next two communities slated to participate in the Program, starting in 2002, are Renfrew-Collingwood and Hastings-Sunrise.



FIGURE 3.3: REVISED VANCOUVER COMMUNITY VISIONING PROCESS



\* CLG: Community Liaison Group

### 3.5.2.1 Community Visions – The Process

The Community Visions Program has two interconnected, concurrent processes: the community visions process and a concurrent city-wide process. The latter is primarily intended to provide a city-wide and CityPlan perspective; a City Perspectives Panel<sup>23</sup> appointed by Council considers the resultant *Community Vision* policy documents in this light. However, it has been suggested that the city-wide process was envisioned in the Terms of Reference to be more than it has turned out to be (CV03). As such, the scope of this thesis only includes the community visions process.

CityPlan staff<sup>24</sup> facilitate the community throughout the community vision, or “visioning,” process in exploring and creating options that move in the broad directions of *CityPlan*. As outlined in the Community Visions Terms of Reference, an important process ground rule is the requirement for inclusiveness throughout the process:

The process must provide a variety of ways to be involved that are meaningful to participants of various ages, cultures, interests, and parts of the community (City of Vancouver, 1996).

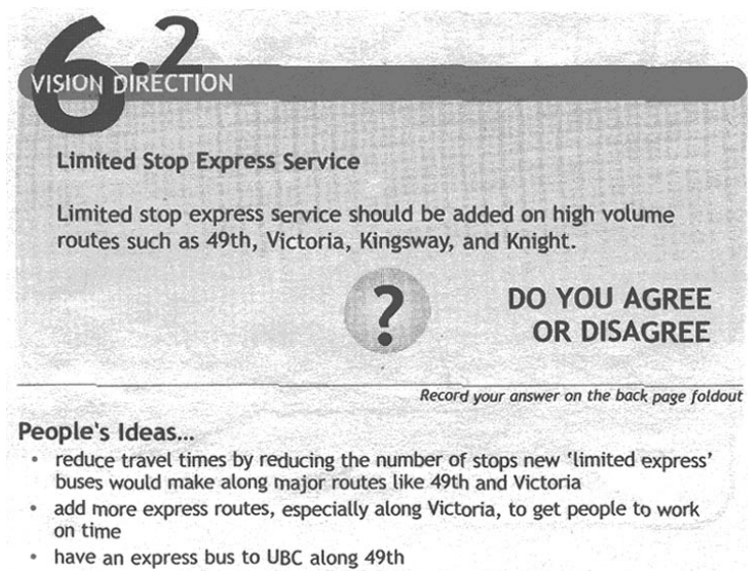
In Step One of the revised visioning process (see Figure 3.3), a Community Liaison Group is formed to provide advice, to provide continuity, and to act as a watchdog on behalf of the community. A large kick-off event is held to raise awareness among the community and to gather initial ideas.

<sup>23</sup> Members of the City Perspectives Panel are volunteers chosen because of their mix of expertise and community involvement in projects relating to social, environmental, transportation, and growth issues.

<sup>24</sup> These are City of Vancouver staff who work in the City Plans Division of the Planning Department. The Planning Department is comprised of two divisions: City Plans, and Current Planning. Planning is one department under the Community Services Group; other departments include Permits and Licenses, Support Services, Housing Centre, and Social Planning.

Extensive outreach to solicit participation begins, continuing throughout the process. In Step Two, workshop sessions on a variety of topics are held, where the community works with CityPlan staff to develop “Vision Directions.” Like the CityPlan Directions, these are broad guidelines for future actions in the community. Citizens’ specific suggestions for action are provided under the heading “People’s Ideas.” Figure 3.4 illustrates a proposed Vision Direction that was developed in the community of Victoria-Fraserview/Killarney (VFK). A “Choices Survey” containing the Vision

FIGURE 3.4: VFK VISION DIRECTION 6.2



Source: City of Vancouver, 2001j

Directions is prepared and distributed to all households and businesses in the community, as well as to selected high school classes for input toward the end of the visioning process. A random survey is also carried out with the aid of a survey consultant in an attempt to reduce self-selection bias. By way of an example, the Choices Survey for VFK was a 45-page document containing over 100 proposed Vision Directions. Citizens were asked to indicate their degree of agreement with proposed directions along a five-point scale. In the final step of the Community Visioning process, staff compile and analyze the results of the Choices Survey. Proposed Vision Directions that receive 50% or more “agree” votes from the general survey and 55% or more “agree” votes from the random survey are categorized as “supported” Vision Directions (City of Vancouver, 2001k). These, together with “non-supported” and “uncertain” Vision Directions, are then put together in a *Community Vision* policy document for presentation to City Council.

### 3.5.2.2 *Community Visions – The Product*

*Community Visions*, as defined in the Terms of Reference, are policy documents that express how a community proposes to meet its own needs while moving forward on *CityPlan* directions. The Terms of Reference emphasize that ideas and directions in *Community Visions* are communicated through words, drawings, photographs, and maps (City of Vancouver, 1996). At the time of this research, *Community Visions* existed for the communities of Kensington-Cedar Cottage and Dunbar, while those for Victoria-Fraserview/Killarney and Sunset were about to be presented to City Council for approval.

*Community Visions* are plans that describe how *CityPlan* will be implemented according to the unique characteristics of each community over approximately 20 years. The policy documents address each topic area covered in *CityPlan*, including: “neighbourhood centres,” “neighbourhood housing variety,” “accessible, community-based services,” and “transit, walking, and biking as a priority.” Whereas the process ground rules speak to ethnocultural groups by mandating opportunities for their participation, the content ground rules employ a neutral language in describing culturally generic “vision options” and “CityPlan Directions.”

The City of Vancouver’s goals in developing *Community Visions* are to increase certainty about the future, as well as to give both the community and City Council a clear idea of what needs to be done, and where energy and resources need to be focused (City of Vancouver, 1996). The City cites their intention for all communities to have a *Community Vision* within a reasonable time as the reason why visions are not as detailed as community plans traditionally have been:

A [*Community Vision*] will generally not include new zoning by-laws, design specifications for community greenways, or the locations of bus stops, traffic circles or speed bumps. It will set directions, guide decisions, lead to actions, and identify priorities for further work (City of Vancouver, 1996).

Thus, *Community Visions* do not portray specific visual images of an end-state for neighbourhoods. They are policy documents, which, like *CityPlan*, are not bound by law. Together, *CityPlan* and *Community Visions* provide a broad policy framework for future decisions that will affect Vancouver’s neighbourhoods.

### 3.6 CONCLUSION

The planning profession achieved a consensus in the 1970s that public participation, despite the many difficulties it generated, was a vital component of community planning (Grant, 1989). Since then, novel theoretical models and techniques have emerged in an attempt to accommodate diverse interests and to hone participatory planning approaches. Most recently, the concept of visioning has gained popularity not only for its commitment to citizen involvement, but also for its focus on informing action. The implications of the concept carrying multiple meanings are uncertain, but what is certain is that there has been, until now, little critical analysis of its applications in the literature. Few empirical studies of the effectiveness of visioning have been conducted, and none have directly addressed ethnocultural aspects within. It is further evident that what people call “visioning” in community planning, though prevalent in Canada and in other countries, often means different things to different people.

In one manifestation of the term, the City of Vancouver has employed “visioning” to depict a public planning process that relies largely on citizens to generate ideas of how they want to see their communities in the future. These ideas are eventually realized in a Council-approved policy document called a *Community Vision*, and considered for action in a subsequent implementation plan. Based on this experience, the potential of Vancouver’s version of visioning to encompass typically marginalized interests – including those of ethnocultural groups – in planning process and outcome is great, due to its aim for inclusiveness.

This thesis is primarily interested in visioning – as it has been used in Vancouver – as a planning process capable of including ethnic and racial minorities. In light of the migration processes discussed in Chapter Two, the current research on planning ethnoculturally diverse communities in Vancouver is both timely and relevant. A secondary concern for the thesis is the success of visioning as a new way of doing planning. However, this question can only be partially answered both because of the limited amount of information available, and because of the scope of this thesis.

## CHAPTER 4: RESEARCH METHODS

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### 4.1 INTRODUCTION

Vancouver receives the highest number of immigrants to Canada after Toronto. In 1996, 227 430 out of approximately 508 000 people (45%) living in the city proper were classified as visible minorities (Statistics Canada, 2001), the majority of them being Chinese. Vancouver's ethnocultural diversity makes it a suitable site for studying multicultural planning. Furthermore, as iterated in Chapter Two, the City of Vancouver has been relatively progressive in recognizing its ethnoculturally diverse population through programs and policies in recent years.

This chapter details the methods employed to answer the research question: *What is the effectiveness of efforts to plan for multicultural communities based on techniques such as visioning used by the City of Vancouver to engage neighbourhoods and ethnic communities at large?* The chosen qualitative methodology is discussed before site descriptions of the case study communities are presented. This chapter specifically demonstrates how semi-structured interviews were supplemented by a critical analysis of planning documents, and placed within a case study framework in order to realize the goals of the study. Limitations of the methodology are addressed before some advantages of the researcher being from an immigrant family are explored in the final section of the chapter.

### 4.2 QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

Planning for multicultural communities is a relatively new field, one that has only recently garnered greater attention in the planning literature. However, while a theoretical interest has been prominent in this literature, there continues to be a lack of empirical study therein. Situations where there is little firm information lend themselves to exploratory study (Del Balso & Lewis, 2001), when "...not much has been written about the topic or population being studied, and the researcher seeks to listen to informants and to build a picture based on their ideas" (Creswell, 1994). As such, the goal here was to formulate more precise questions that may be dealt with in future research, relying, as most exploratory researchers do, on qualitative data (Neuman, 2000). The research question was left open to fulfill this purpose, and to accommodate the limited amount of information available.

The allowance for a flexible, emerging research design in qualitative methodology (Feagin, Orum, & Sjoberg, 1991) was invaluable in this attempt to evaluate planning practice in multicultural communities. One needed to recognize at the outset of the study that, as information is collected from various informants, unexpected circumstances might cause a need for the methodology to be modified accordingly. For example, if key informants demonstrated a lack of knowledge on multicultural aspects of their communities through interviews, the researcher might have considered conducting focus groups, or distributing a survey in order to reach a larger sample. It was also acknowledged that translators or interpreters might have needed to be employed in speaking with members of ethnocultural groups who did not possess a sound command of English, thereby preventing the researcher from collecting information first-hand.

Two other aspects of qualitative methods pertinent to this study are 1) that all perspectives are valuable, and 2) that all settings and people are worthy of study (Taylor & Bogdan, 1984). Hence, the views of both planners and community residents, visible minority and non-visible minority individuals, were solicited for their opinion on the Community Visions Program. It was believed that their different perspectives on the effectiveness of particular planning strategies would contribute to developing insights into the Community Visioning process.

#### **4.2.1 The Case Study Approach**

Case study was appropriate for this research because it allowed for an in-depth, multifaceted investigation on a single social phenomenon (Feagin et al., 1991, p. 2), namely, the effectiveness of visioning as technique in planning diverse ethnocultural communities. The case study approach further allowed for the employment of detailed, varied, and extensive information, including that from documents, oral histories, interviews, and participant observation (Neuman, 2000; Yin, 1984). In contrast to longitudinal research that examines features on many units, case studies examine comprehensively many features of a few cases over time. The researcher uses the logic of analytic induction, considering the context of a case and examining how its parts are configured (Neuman, 2000).

Whereas the case study approach has, on one hand, been criticized for providing little basis for generalization and for researchers' lack of rigour (see Yin, 1984, pp. 21-22), strong arguments have been made on the other hand that the approach ought to be a major methodological tool in social science inquiry (Feagin et al., 1991; Sjoberg, Williams, Vaughan & Sjoberg, 1991). The recognition

that all the aspects of social life are interconnected, and that often one cannot be adequately understood without consideration of the others, favours the case study approach and its prescription for varied techniques in order to achieve breadth (Berg, 1998). For example, it would be irrelevant in the current study to examine participation rates of visible minority populations in the Community Visions Program without inquiring about their experiences as newcomers, or without considering their cultural traditions.

Four Vancouver communities were selected as case studies in order to help determine how Vancouver's Community Visions Program involved and incorporated diverse cultural interests. In particular, multicultural aspects of the program and of the communities were explored. The four case study sites are: Kensington-Cedar Cottage, Dunbar, Victoria-Fraserview/Killarney, and Sunset.

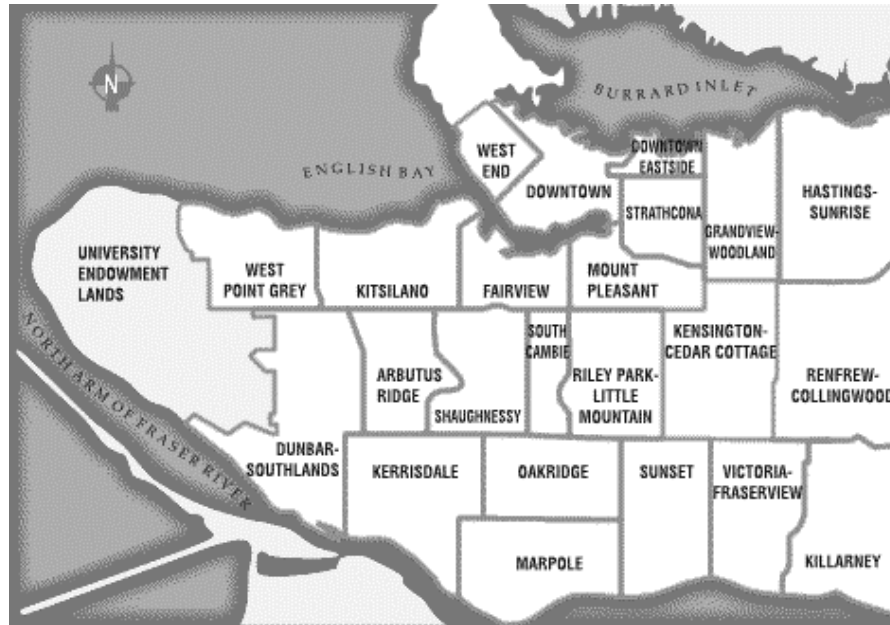
### **4.3 A TALE OF FOUR COMMUNITIES**

The City of Vancouver is one of 21 member municipalities that make up the Greater Vancouver Regional District, a region comprised of about 2 million people in the southwest corner of British Columbia, Canada. Vancouver itself covers 113 square kilometres, and is surrounded by water on three sides (City of Vancouver, 2001a). The city is divided into 23 "local areas," or communities (Figure 4.1). In 1996, Vancouver City Council approved the Community Visions Program as part of a strategy to bring *CityPlan* – Vancouver's city-wide official plan – to the neighbourhood level. Vancouver communities were prioritized into communities that had previously had little or no community planning. A working group of representatives from all communities then selected Kensington-Cedar Cottage and Dunbar to go through the program as pilots. Their vision programs subsequently lasted from 1997 to 1998. After Council agreed to continue the program based on the pilot projects, the communities of Victoria-Fraserview/Killarney and Sunset – also communities that had previously had little planning – underwent the program from 2000 to 2001. While several other "suburban"<sup>25</sup> communities in the City of Vancouver are slated to undergo the Visions Program in upcoming years, only these four – Kensington-Cedar Cottage, Dunbar, Victoria-Fraserview/Killarney, and Sunset – had either completed, or were in the process of completing, their programs at the time of this research. They were therefore chosen as case study sites.

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<sup>25</sup> As opposed to Central Area, or Downtown communities.

FIGURE 4.1: VANCOUVER LOCAL AREAS MAP



Source: City of Vancouver, 2000e

The two pilot communities to undergo the Community Visions Program – Kensington-Cedar Cottage and Dunbar – are located at opposite ends of the city, while the two latter communities – Victoria-Fraserview/Killarney and Sunset – are adjacent in the southeast quadrant. Whereas Official Development Plans exist for the central Downtown and newer neighbourhoods such as False Creek, the first four communities selected for the Community Visions Program have had little or no planning within recent decades. The communities have only been affected to varying degrees by a city-wide Secondary Suite Review in the late 1980s, and by zoning changes such as those recently proposed for the city-wide C-2 (commercial districts) zoning schedule. Through the Community Visions Program, citizens, together with city staff, develop a plan for the future of their communities. These plans are called *Community Visions*, and become official city policy once approved by Council. The four study communities are distinct in many ways, but significantly for this thesis, they are distinct in their ethnocultural composition.



### 4.3.1 Kensington-Cedar Cottage

Kensington-Cedar Cottage (KCC) is an area covering 7.2 km<sup>2</sup>, located on the east side of Vancouver. In 1996, approximately 35%<sup>26</sup> of the total KCC population of 42 400 spoke English as a mother tongue, while 34% spoke Chinese. The next most common language spoken as a mother tongue was Vietnamese (5%). The median household income was \$36,652, comparable to the City of Vancouver's \$35,544. At 18%, the percentage of single parent family households was relatively high, compared to Vancouver's average of 16% (City of Vancouver, 1999d).

First settled in 1888, KCC remained largely rural until the beginning of World War I. A number of industries emerged in the early 1900s, including the Nanaimo Foundry, Bader's Biscuits, Tait Pipe, and Fletcher's Meats. After World War II, a high school was built on what used to be a dairy farm (City of Vancouver, 2001d). KCC, like much of Vancouver, experienced profound growth in population and diversity in the latter part of the 20th century.

Kensington-Cedar Cottage is a combination of two communities; the major arterial road Kingsway separates Kensington to the south from Cedar Cottage to the north (Figure 4.2). The two communities have some distinct characteristics, but have been defined by the City as one local area for administrative purposes. The first notable planning initiatives for KCC arrived in the late 1970s along with \$4 million from the federal government's Neighbourhood Improvement Program. Funds were used to upgrade Cedar Cottage's community centre and to develop a new one in Kensington, provide a community library, acquire non-conforming land uses, improve parks, and beautify the area (City of Vancouver, 1997b). The 1987 *Broadway Station Area Plan* applies to the northern section of the Cedar Cottage community, where the Skytrain – Vancouver's advanced light rapid transit system – runs. The only other planning related actions unique to KCC were the adoption of policies for an industrial “let-go” area<sup>27</sup> in 1996, and changes to the RT-5/5M (two-family zoned districts) schedule in 1996 (City of Vancouver, 1997b).

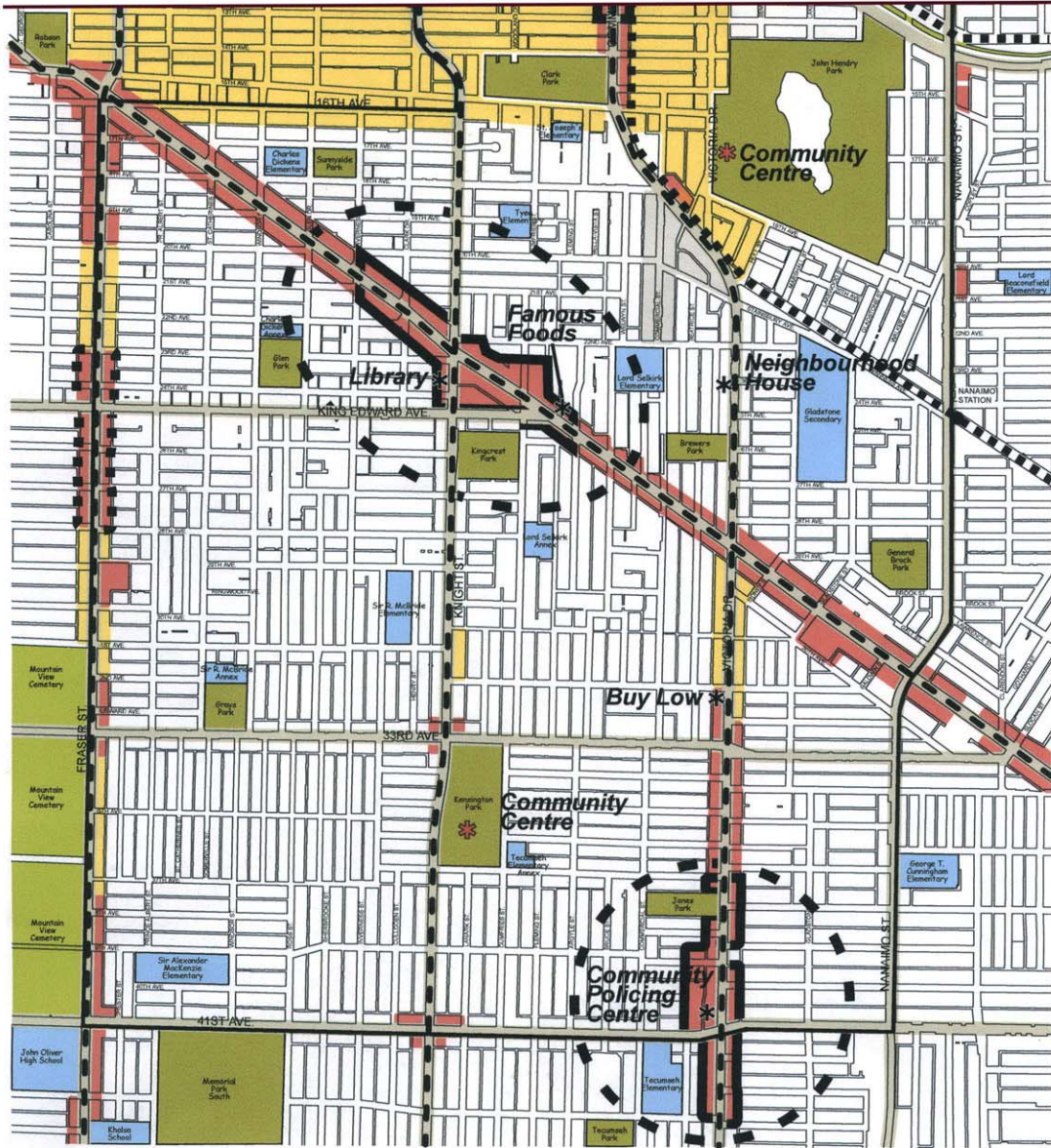
The combination of Kensington and Cedar Cottage into one local area was an especially contentious issue throughout the Community Visioning process, made more so by the nature of the other pilot community, the smaller, wealthy west side neighbourhood of Dunbar. Several community informants expressed concerns that the two joined neighbourhoods have completely separate issues. Where

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<sup>26</sup> All percentages cited in Section 4.3 are approximates, based on 1996 Canada Census data.

<sup>27</sup> These are previously industrial-zoned areas that were “let-go” to other uses e.g. commercial, residential.

FIGURE 4.2: KENSINGTON-CEDAR COTTAGE



- single-family area - more retention of older "character" houses; rental suites more feasible; traffic calming where needed
- existing apartment and duplex zones
- existing commercial zones with apartments above
- major neighbourhood shopping area - improved
- other neighbourhood shopping area - improved
- industrial commercial/apartment
- potential for new housing choices (rowhouses, four- & sixplexes & duplexes)
- streets with safer pedestrian crossings, better bus shelters, more greenery
- major arterials
- \* community centres - improved and expanded other facilities/services
- school
- park - improved, more useable, more trees
- other green space
- SkyTrain - existing line and planned Broadway line
- Vision area boundary

## Community Vision

**Kensington - Cedar Cottage**

Cedar Cottage is comprised of people from a variety of ethnic backgrounds, Kensington's visible minority population is mainly of Chinese ethnic background. The residents of Kensington are perceived to have higher levels of income and home ownership. At the same time, Cedar Cottage has significantly higher crime, drug, and prostitution rates.

### **4.3.2 Dunbar**

Like Kensington-Cedar Cottage, the community of Dunbar has been combined with the community of Southlands to form one local area for administrative purposes (Figure 4.3). A primary arterial road – Southwest Marine Drive – once again divides the two communities. Southlands sits on the low-lying flatlands of the Fraser River floodplain, and contains much rural farmland. Due to its sensitive agricultural and environmental nature, a plan was developed for the community, resulting in the adoption of the *Southlands Plan* by City Council in 1988. Because of the existence of this plan, Southlands was not included in the Community Visions Program.

Dunbar is located on the west side of Vancouver. In 1996, 21 420 people lived in Dunbar-Southlands – half the number who lived in Kensington-Cedar Cottage. A significant 70% of that population spoke English as a mother tongue, while only 18% spoke Chinese, the next most common language. The median household income was a high \$70,548 – double that of the City of Vancouver. At just under 11%, the proportion of single parent families in the community was one of the lowest in the city (City of Vancouver, 1999c). Dunbar displays a strong British heritage in both its architecture and landscaping. It has consistently been one of the most stable and homogeneous communities in Vancouver.

Native Indians were the first to occupy the Dunbar-Southlands area, perhaps as early as 400 B.C. The Musqueam Reserve was dedicated by the Canadian Federal Government in 1879 and remains today. The first non-native residents of adjacent Dunbar settled in 1912, on Canadian Pacific Railway-owned land that had recently been logged and therefore unsuitable for development (City of Vancouver, 2001c). Nevertheless, development continued slowly in the 1910s, and by 1927, three streetcar routes served the area. At the time, Dunbar was part of the Municipality of Point Grey. Zoning by-laws were adopted in 1922; when Point Grey municipality amalgamated with Vancouver seven years later, it was agreed that the existing zoning by-laws would be respected (City of Vancouver, 1997a). Having undergone significant land development since the mid-1920s, most of



FIGURE 4.3: DUNBAR



Dunbar was built up by the time of amalgamation. Subsequent development took place in the post-WWII years, and in the early 1970s (City of Vancouver, 2001c).

In the early 1990s, the city-wide Secondary Suites Review program resulted in some zoning changes for rental suites in Dunbar. More significant, however, were the changes made to the RS (single-family district) zoning schedule in the late 1990s in response to the “monster homes” issue. The adopted RS-5 and RS-6 zonings, which aimed to provide the City with more control over the design and appearance of new houses, applied to most of the Dunbar community (City of Vancouver, 2001c). The policies contained in Dunbar’s *Community Vision*, which was completed shortly after these rezonings, reflects citizens’ desire to maintain the existing single-family residential character of the neighbourhood. The issue of monster houses has since died down, if not disappeared, as a reworked Tudor revival style has emerged as the new style of choice for builders (Ley, 1999a).

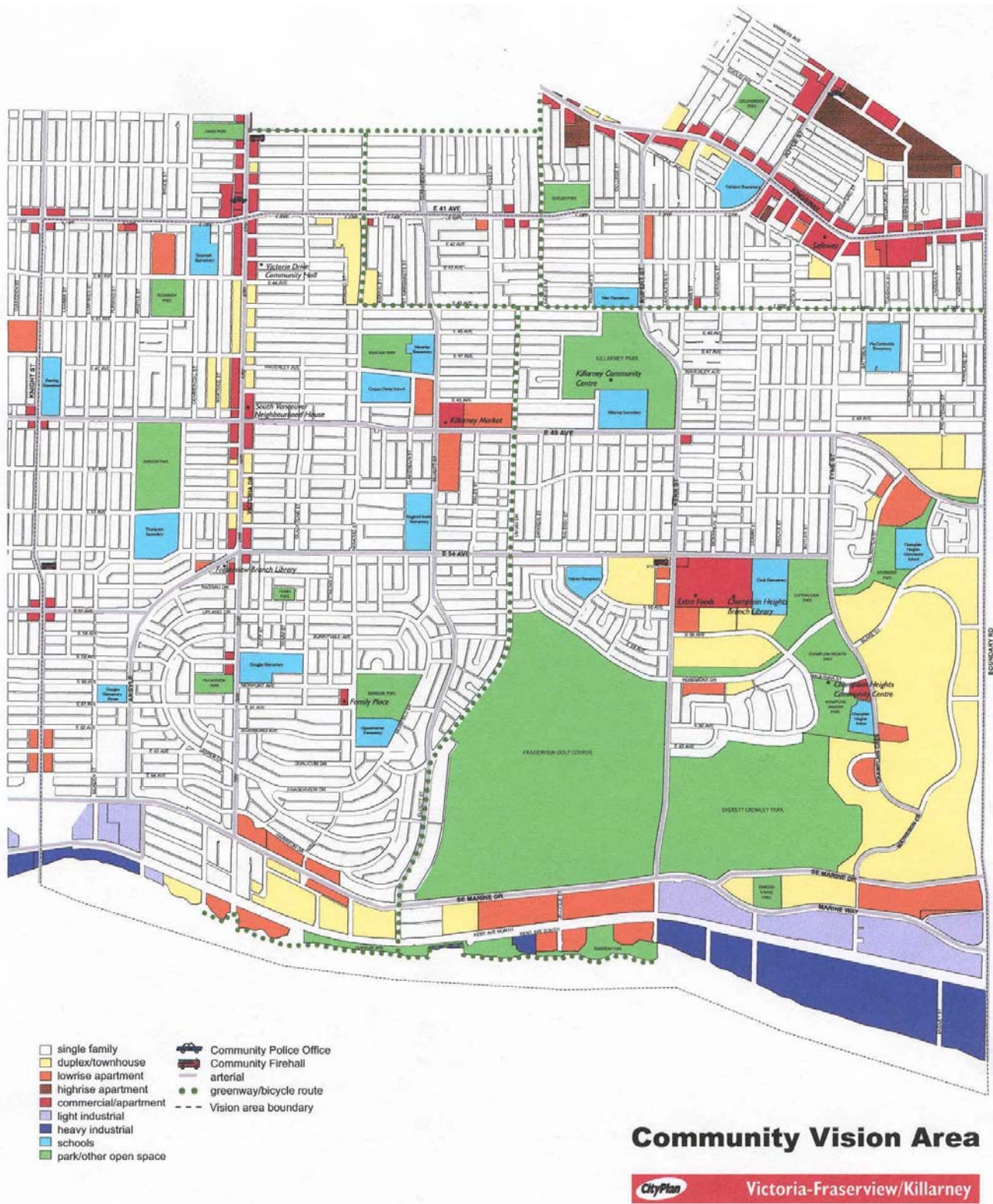
### **4.3.3 Victoria-Fraserview/Killarney**

Victoria-Fraserview and Killarney are two local areas in southeast Vancouver that were combined for the purposes of the Community Visions Program (Figure 4.4). The total area for this “vision” community was 12 km<sup>2</sup>; the total population was 50 120 (City of Vancouver, 1999e) – more than twice the population for Dunbar *and* Southlands combined. However, unlike in Kensington-Cedar Cottage, the Victoria-Fraserview/Killarney (VFK) combination was not a critical issue throughout the Community Visions Program, even though it could be argued that the two communities are different. In 1996, 52% of the VFK population spoke English as a mother tongue, while 38% spoke Chinese and 4% spoke Punjabi. The growth in the ethnic Chinese population is perceptible through an increasingly Asian-influenced shopping area along Victoria Drive at 41st Avenue. In 1996, the median household income was \$39,271 and \$42,631 for Victoria-Fraserview and Killarney respectively – both slightly higher than the median for the City of Vancouver. One informant revealed that house prices in the Fraserview area were the highest for Vancouver’s east side (V08).

Located on Vancouver’s southern slopes, Victoria-Fraserview/Killarney overlooks the Fraser River. The area was first inhabited by non-native families in the 1860s, but remained a tract of largely undeveloped second growth forest and farmland until the end of WWII. To the displeasure of existing residents, over 1000 new houses were constructed by the Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation in post-war years in Victoria-Fraserview to remedy the housing shortage for returning



FIGURE 4.4: VICTORIA-FRASERVIEW/KILLARNEY



war veterans. A further indication of change in the community was perceived beginning in the late 1980s, as the traditionally strong industrial presence along the north arm of the Fraser River was being replaced by residential development (City of Vancouver, 2001g). Killarney was the last neighbourhood in Vancouver to be developed, experiencing significant residential growth beginning only in the 1950s. In the 1970s, 207 hectares of city-owned land in the southern part of the area was transformed into Champlain Heights, a medium-density residential development comprised of a variety of housing types (City of Vancouver, 2001e).

Though Victoria-Fraserview/Killarney (VFK) has been affected by planning regulations resulting from new development, it has never had a comprehensive community plan. The city's 1988 Secondary Suite Review program did not significantly alter VFK, as residents chose to reject a rezoning to allow secondary suites in its single-family areas. In Killarney, a developer recently submitted a successful application to redevelop the Champlain Mall built in the 1970s to serve the residents of Champlain Heights. A new comprehensive residential project, Fraser Lands, has further been proceeding since the 1990s along the Fraser River. This development abides by the City of Vancouver's Industrial Lands Policy (1995), which aims to preserve remaining industrial lands (City of Vancouver, 2000c).

#### **4.3.4 Sunset**

Sunset is located in southeast Vancouver, adjacent to the western boundary of Victoria-Fraserview/Killarney (Figure 4.5). The community covers 6.3 km<sup>2</sup> and contained 31 320 inhabitants in 1996. The unique ethnic makeup in Sunset is composed of three nearly equal groups: in 1996, only 27% of the community's population spoke English as a mother tongue, while an equal 27% spoke Chinese, and 24.5% spoke Punjabi. At \$39,092, the median household income in Sunset was slightly higher than the City of Vancouver's (City of Vancouver, 1999e).

Sunset's earliest settlers in the late 19th century were drawn to the area because of its proximity to the Fraser River, and therefore opportunities to farm, fish, and log. The area (including neighbouring VFK) was incorporated in 1892 as the District of South Vancouver. A single-track streetcar line served the original Village of South Vancouver at the south ends of Main and Fraser Streets by the mid-1890s. Sunset experienced an early industrialization and housing boom; its population multiplied from 5000 in 1909, to roughly 35 000 just two years later. Nevertheless, the area remained largely rural throughout its 1929 amalgamation with the City of Vancouver, and into the post-WWII



FIGURE 4.5: SUNSET



- single family
- duplex/townhouse
- lowrise apartment
- commercial/apartment
- light industrial
- heavy industrial
- schools
- park/other open space
- Community Firehall
- arterial
- bicycle route
- Vision area boundary

## Community Profile





years. With the return of war veterans, new houses, schools, and a community centre were built by 1950 (City of Vancouver, 2001f). Currently, one of the most distinctive characteristics of Sunset is its Punjabi Market, a well-established, visibly South Asian commercial row with restaurants, clothing, and other specialty goods and services catered largely to the Indo-Canadian population. The community is also home to a sizeable Sikh temple.

Past planning in Sunset include the city-wide 1988 Secondary Suite Review and 1995 Industrial Land Policy. Where Victoria-Fraserview/Killarney rejected the rezoning to allow secondary suites in single-family areas, Sunset chose to permit the suites in all its single-family areas. With regard to the Industrial Land Policy, most of Sunset’s industrial areas by the Fraser River will be maintained. The exception is the immediate frontage along Southeast Marine Drive – a major arterial road –, which has been designated to allow highway-oriented retail in addition to industrial uses (City of Vancouver, 2000b).

Table 4.1 provides a summary of various characteristics of the four Vancouver communities studied here, based on 1996 Canada Census Data.

TABLE 4.1: KCC, DUNBAR, VFK, SUNSET IN COMPARISON

	City of Vancouver	Kensington-Cedar Cottage	Dunbar-Southlands	Victoria-Fraserview	Killarney	Sunset
Area (km <sup>2</sup> )	113.1	7.2	8.6	5.3	6.8	6.3
Population	514 008	42 400	21 420	25 705	24 415	31 320
Mother Tongue						
<i>English</i>	66%	35%	70%	33%	46%	27%
<i>Chinese</i>	21%	34%	18%	45%	31%	27%
<i>Punjabi</i>	2%	3%	0.1%	4%	2%	24.5%
Median Household Income	\$35 544	\$36 652	\$70 548	\$39 271	\$42 631	\$39 092
Single-parent families	16.5%	18%	11%	16%	18%	16%
Some University Education	38%	22%	57%	24%	30%	25%

Source: City of Vancouver, 1999e

#### 4.4 DATA COLLECTION

A critical analysis of relevant municipal documents was undertaken concurrent with and subsequent to interviewing, which was the main data collection method in this study. Two main groups were interviewed: key informants from the City of Vancouver, and community participants of the Community Visions Program from each of Kensington-Cedar Cottage (KCC), Dunbar, Victoria-Fraserview/Killarney (VFK), and Sunset. The information collected from the document analysis and staff and participant interviews was then triangulated to achieve a comprehensive outlook on multicultural components of the Visions Program. The results of the data collection are found in Chapter Five.

To begin with, three sets of municipal documents were reviewed for the critical analysis:

1) Vancouver's official plan, entitled *CityPlan: Directions for Vancouver*; 2) the completed *Community Vision* policy documents for KCC and Dunbar; and 3) the *Choices Surveys* for VFK and Sunset, upon which their *Community Visions* will be based. The purpose of these document reviews was to discern any reference to ethnocultural diversity and multiculturalism both within Vancouver's existing policy, and throughout the Community Visioning process. Because it was anticipated that such content would be latent rather than manifest, the use of a *concept* (Berg, 1998) was chosen as the unit of analysis. Thus, words such as "newcomers," "diverse population," and "immigrant services" were identified to cluster around the conceptual idea of ethnocultural diversity and multicultural planning. In addition to the documents mentioned above, City Council meeting minutes, media reports, and various other materials related to the Community Visions Program<sup>28</sup> were consulted in order to enhance the gathered data.

With regard to interviewing, a sequential sample<sup>29</sup> of municipal staff and Visions Program participants was selected upon the advice of existing contacts at City Hall. Sequential sampling, akin to purposive sampling, uses the judgement of an expert to identify a sample with a specific purpose in mind (Neuman, 2000). In this case, it was desirable to contact informants who were aware of, and who were involved with, the Community Visions Program. From there, the snowball sampling method was enacted – chiefly among Program participants – to reach an interconnected network of people (Neuman, 2000). The theoretical sampling strategy (Taylor & Bogdan, 1984) was used as a

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<sup>28</sup> These include notes from Vision workshops, advertising features, and letters to the Planning Department.

<sup>29</sup> Due in large part to "indefinite populations," non-random samples are much more common than true random samples in cross-cultural research (Lonner & Berry, 1985).

guide for determining the number of informants, where the importance was not the actual number of interviews conducted, but the potential of interviews to yield results. As such, interviews were sought only until a saturation point in information was reached.

Fifty-seven interviews were conducted in Vancouver, B.C. between May 2001 and August 2001 – fifty-two in person and five over the telephone. Sixteen were City of Vancouver staff interviews, while 41 were Visions Program participant interviews. The length of interviews ranged from 30 to 90 minutes. Interviews were tape recorded with the permission of participants and transcribed for analysis.

Municipal key informants were comprised of planners, community resource people,<sup>30</sup> and politicians. A Senior Planner oversees the Community Visions Program. Experienced planners manage each community supported by a junior planner and community resource person. Some of the staff interviewed worked directly within the vision communities; others did not. Six out of the 16 municipal key informants interviewed could be classified as visible minorities. Staff interviews were conducted at Vancouver City Hall. A breakdown of City of Vancouver staff interviews appears in Table 4.2 below.

TABLE 4.2: CITY OF VANCOUVER STAFF INTERVIEWS

<b>Category</b>	<b>City of Vancouver Staff</b>	<b>(Visible Minority Staff)</b>
Planners	8	(2)
Junior Planners	4	(1)
Community Resource People	2	(2)
Politicians	2	(1)
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>(6)</b>

Community Visions Program participant interviews took place in participants’ homes, at City Hall, or in public spaces such as community centres and coffee shops. Involvement in the Program ranged from attending one workshop, to sitting on the Community Liaison Group and attending all Visions events. Though limited in the community of Dunbar, ethnocultural diversity was achieved among interviewees. Of 41 community participants, 19 (41%) were visible minorities. Thirty-five interviews were conducted in English, four in Cantonese Chinese, and two in Mandarin Chinese. Chinese interviews were completed with the assistance of a lingual/cultural interpreter. Table 4.3 shows the breakdown of Community Visions Program participant interviews.

<sup>30</sup> Also called multicultural outreach workers. Community resource people were hired specifically to conduct outreach in the vision communities, focusing on ethnocultural groups. They are not trained as planners.

TABLE 4.3: COMMUNITY VISIONS PROGRAM PARTICIPANT INTERVIEWS

<b>Community</b>	<b>Community Visions Program Participants</b>	<b>(Visible Minority Participants)</b>
Kensington-Cedar Cottage	10	(2)
Dunbar	9	(0)
Victoria-Fraserview/Killarney	12	(10)
Sunset	10	(7)
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>(19)</b>

A semi-structured format was adopted for interviewing, as it could not be assumed that answers to a rigid interview schedule would yield all the information relevant to the study topic (Berg, 1998). (In-depth qualitative interviewing, where repeated face-to-face encounters are required to facilitate elaborate descriptions and experiences (Taylor & Bogdan, 1984), was infeasible due to time restraints.) The espoused semi-structured format therefore consisted of selecting standardized, open-ended questions arranged for the purpose of taking each interviewee through the same sequence (Patton, 1982). Interview guides differed slightly between city staff and Visions Program participants, though both addressed various multicultural aspects of the communities and of the Community Visions Program (see Figures 4.6 and 4.7 for interview guides). Scheduled and unscheduled probes were used to collect more elaborate responses from interviewees. Flexibility and spontaneity were somewhat limited, but the systematic process reduced interviewer judgement and bias. Interviewing via the semi-structured method also facilitated analysis of the gathered information through the ability to locate respondents' answers to the same question, as well as the ability to organize similar questions and answers (Patton, 1982).

FIGURE 4.6: INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR COMMUNITY VISIONS PLANNERS

**A. POLICY**

- 1) What is your understanding of municipal policies as they relate to multicultural communities? Have policies (e.g. CityPlan) successfully identified and addressed the needs of new immigrant groups? Or have they failed? How?

**B. COMMUNITY VISIONS PROGRAM – PROCESS**

- 1) What was your role in the Community Visions Program? What was the time span? How did you feel about your role?
- 2) What methods were used to encourage and maintain participation from neighbourhood residents? Were any strategies used to target particular groups? Particular cultural groups?
- 3) What roles did neighbourhood groups and ethnic organizations play in the Community Visions process? Were there any important local actors/organizations that stood out?
- 4) Within your knowledge, have there been any differences in the City's approach to dealing with cultural diversity in the communities currently undergoing the CVP, compared to the approaches used in the pilot communities?

**C. COMMUNITY VISIONS PROGRAM – PRODUCT, EVALUATION**

- 1) What is the next stage in the Community Visions Program? What measures will be put in place to assist in the implementation of the vision? Any measures to assist cultural groups in implementation?
- 2) Are communities with Community Visions different from those without? What has changed in these communities, physically, socially, etc.?
- 3) Is multiculturalism different in the communities that have undergone the CVP?
- 4) In your opinion, how successful has the CVP been, both in terms of the product and the process?
- 5) Do you think the CVP is an effective tool for planning culturally diverse communities? What are your criteria for success? How do you measure success? What suggestions do you have?

**D. OTHER**

- 1) What are the relationships between the various Planning divisions/departments (CityPlans, Social Planning, Central Area)? What about other City departments? How closely do these departments work? What kind of communication takes place?
- 2) Is there anything else you want to tell me?

FIGURE 4.7: INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR COMMUNITY VISIONS PARTICIPANTS

**A. COMMUNITY VISIONS PROGRAM**

- 1) What is/was your involvement in the Community Visions Program?
- 2) Within your opinion, was the Visions Program a suitable arena through which you felt you could communicate your concerns to the City? Did you encounter any barriers in expressing your needs through this program?
- 3) What advantages do you see from the program?
- 4) What disadvantages do you see from the program?
- 5) How is your community different after having undergone the Visions Program? (physically, socially, etc.)
- 6) What about the ethnic communities in your neighbourhood? What do you think their opinion is in regard to the Community Visions Program?
- 7) Are there any issues in your neighbourhood that have cultural undertones? Was the Community Visions Program successful in addressing these issues? What are your criteria for success?
- 8) Do you think the needs of the “visible minority” population in your neighbourhood differ from the needs of the Caucasian population? How?
- 9) In your opinion, was the Community Visions Program a success, both in terms of *product* and *process*? What are your criteria for success?
- 10) Do you think the Visions Program is an effective tool for planning culturally diverse communities? What suggestions do you have?

**B. OTHER**

- 1) What are the general concerns in your neighbourhood? Planning concerns? What suggestions do you have?
- 2) Is there anything else you want to tell me?

## 4.5 LIMITATIONS AND DELIMITATIONS

Weaknesses of using a qualitative methodological framework that allows for flexibility include the inability to generalize from a sample to a population (Creswell, 1994), and the inability to compare responses triggered by the same stimulus (Babbie, 1995). However, it was not the goal of this exploratory study to make universal generalizations about planning in ethnoculturally diverse communities. Broad generalizations cannot be applied from this study due to the Vancouver's "situatedness" and its distinct ethnocultural profile. The aim of this study was to explore and describe a visioning process through examining Vancouver's Community Visions Program in four communities, each of which possesses a varied ethnocultural composition. The identification of effective planning methods and policies based on Vancouver's experience may guide planning staff and policy makers in communities that are experiencing comparable situations as global migration shapes their ethnocultural profiles. The tools and methods used in Vancouver's Community Visions Program may be evaluated to determine their potential use in planning within these communities.

Another weakness of qualitative study concerns the limited amount of information available. While the qualitative nature of direct interaction and communication with people encourages personal, substantial commentary, there was concern in the current study that a foundation for research was lacking. Relying solely on a qualitative methodology may result in perceptions of non-validity; an analysis of purely qualitative data may produce weak results. In this light, quantitative information such as population statistics and home language spoken was sought. Media reports were consulted to enhance existing information. Most importantly, a context to this research was provided by a critical analysis of relevant municipal planning documents.

The primary disadvantage of relying on interviewing as a data collection method is bias. While it is difficult to quantify and measure bias, categories of interview bias may include errors by the respondent, intentional subversion by the interviewer, and failure of an interviewer to probe or to probe properly (Neuman, 1997). In this study, some informants who had been involved in the pilot projects (1997-1998) acknowledged that memory was an issue. An interviewer's expectations, the social setting in which an interview occurs, and the interviewer's race or gender may also influence the interview (Neuman, 1997). Although the common tendency of observers to become personally involved in their field setting – in this case, the interview situation – has been identified as a threat to the quantitative emphases on reliability and validity, it may also be argued that these very characteristics are potential strengths in qualitative methods (Dooley, 1990).

Language barriers were encountered to a limited extent in the interviewing process, most notably in the case of recent immigrants who did not speak English, or who spoke a different dialect of Chinese than that of the researcher. As the study communities contained a large percentage of ethnic Chinese, language problems were mitigated by the researcher's ability to communicate in Cantonese-Chinese. The assistance of a lingual/cultural interpreter was invaluable in interviews conducted in Mandarin-Chinese, as well as during the information analysis stage. Interviews with members of other ethnocultural groups were successfully conducted in English.

Cultural barriers that may have arisen during the data collection process were similarly moderated by the researcher's own personal experiences as a visible minority person. When dealing with ethnocultural groups, some difficulty may be encountered in interpreting cultural customs. Similarly, attempts to generalize across ethnocultural groups may be inaccurate, as the groups are often heterogeneous in themselves. During the information gathering process for the current research, the researcher's cultural sensitivity and awareness led to an understanding of why, when some participants of ethnic background referred acquaintances to be interviewed, they preferred to initiate contact themselves. Conversely, interviewees who were not visible minorities had no qualms about referring people whom the researcher may contact directly. Other examples worth mentioning include an appropriate reaction when one interviewee remarked having filled out the Choices Survey from the end rather than from the beginning according to traditional Chinese reading, and when another superstitiously refused to sign the consent with a red pen. These experiences lend support to Córdova's (1994) caution that non-minorities who study minority communities need to honestly evaluate their ineluctable, privileged positions, lest "their research is shaped in the service of their own careers more than of the communities they claim to serve" (p. 243). That the researcher comes from an immigrant family was thus unquestionably an advantage in this current study.

## **4.6 CONCLUSION**

The limited amount of information available on multicultural planning and visioning, coupled with the intent of the current study to explore and assess multicultural components in Vancouver's Community Visions Program, suggested a need to embrace a qualitative methodology. Adopting a qualitative perspective enabled the researcher to take into account extensive description, to be flexible in research design, and to place importance on the valid opinions of key informants. These allowances were especially valued in working with diverse ethnocultural communities.



## **CHAPTER 5: FINDINGS**

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### **5.1 INTRODUCTION**

The City of Vancouver has demonstrated a consistent effort to address the increasingly diverse nature of its populace since the 1980s. Throughout its Community Visions Program, which commenced in 1997 and continues today, significant emphasis has been placed on multicultural outreach. This chapter commences by examining the components of the Visions Program multicultural outreach. A critical review of relevant planning documents from a multicultural perspective is then presented, proceeded by the opinions of City of Vancouver staff involved in the Community Visions Program, and by the perspectives of participants in the Program. Toward the end of the chapter, some comment is made on the overall success of the Community Visions Program, with lesser concern for its multicultural components. The majority of information this chapter was gathered through key informant interviews. The results from these interviews form the basis for evaluating the effectiveness of “visioning” in Vancouver’s multicultural communities.

### **5.2 MULTICULTURAL OUTREACH IN THE COMMUNITY VISIONS PROGRAM**

While the four communities involved in the Community Visions Program possess different characteristics, the tools and techniques used by City of Vancouver staff to reach out to ethnocultural groups in these communities during the Program were generally similar across the communities. Multicultural outreach had been a strong component of the CityPlan process that helped create a city-wide official plan between 1993 and 1995 (upon which the Community Visions Program is based). The CityPlan process was advertised in the ethnic media and promoted through extensive translations in seven languages. Similar methods were utilized throughout the Community Visioning process. The techniques used in the first two pilot communities (Kensington-Cedar Cottage and Dunbar) were honed and extended in the latter communities (Victoria-Fraserview/Killarney and Sunset) for greater effectiveness.

The original budget approved by City Council in 1996 for the pilot Community Visions Program was \$610,000. No specific amount was set aside for multicultural outreach, rather, those costs were included in the overall budget. Key informants revealed that the most significant cost of multicultural outreach throughout the pilot projects was the hiring of a “multicultural outreach worker” – who, in

the case of the pilot communities, was of Chinese background – to specifically target ethnocultural groups; the second most significant cost was translations. Thus, of the \$610,000 budget for Kensington-Cedar Cottage (KCC) and Dunbar,<sup>31</sup> approximately \$150,000, or 25%, was spent on these two components. Included in the \$150,000 figure was \$4,000 spent on advertising in ethnic newspapers and radio stations, as well as other costs related to additional language such as printing and distribution. The main translation cost pertained to the Choices Survey, a 10½ x 16½, 30- to 45-page document sent to all households in the communities undergoing the Visions Program toward the end of the visioning process. The Planning Department has long relied on a 10% threshold of mother tongue speakers of a non-English language in order to justify translation. Based on this figure, therefore, the Choices Survey was translated into Chinese in KCC, and distributed to households with Chinese surnames based on a list compiled by staff and an outside consultant. The survey was distributed only in English in Dunbar.<sup>32</sup>

The budget for the Community Visions Program in Victoria-Fraserview/Killarney (VFK) and Sunset was slightly higher, totalling roughly \$700,000. This figure includes the salaries of two multicultural outreach staff – one of Chinese background for VFK and one of Punjabi background for Sunset – for two years, but excludes that of existing staff assigned to the Program. Forty-two percent of this money, or \$296,800, was allotted for multicultural outreach. The translation costs for VFK and Sunset were significantly higher than that in the pilot communities, due to the translation of the Choices Survey and other documents into not one language, but two. Sunset documents were made available in English, Chinese, and Punjabi, according to the high proportion of people in the community who speak each of these languages as a mother tongue. VFK received documents in Chinese in addition to English. Translated Choices Surveys were once again sent to households with Chinese surnames in VFK, and those with Chinese and Punjabi surnames in Sunset. Multicultural outreach costs for these communities included \$39,000 for translation and typesetting, \$30,000 for printing, \$9,800 for advertisements, and \$3,000 for additional mailing costs. Translations – particularly into Punjabi – were carried out with the aid of MOSIAC, a non-government organization

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<sup>31</sup> Budgets for communities undergoing the Vision Program concurrently are combined, as opposed to separated for each community.

<sup>32</sup> Based on 1991 Canada Census data, the percentage of Dunbar residents who spoke Chinese as a mother tongue just reached 10%, while approximately 30% of KCC residents spoke Chinese as a mother tongue (City of Vancouver, 1998a). While city staff sensed that the Dunbar figure would be greater by the 1996 Census, no one knew whether the increase would be significant or not. Given the great expense in supporting a fully bilingual program, therefore, the decision was made to do so only in KCC, where there was clearly a significant Chinese population. Results from the 1996 Census were not available until late 1997 (CV08).

that deals with settlement issues and support to refugees. A staff member of the Community Visions team aided in overseeing and reviewing Chinese translations in-house.

Specific multicultural outreach strategies during the pilot projects were concentrated in Kensington-Cedar Cottage (KCC). One of the first actions taken by the Planning Department to address KCC's ethnoculturally diverse population was to hire a team of three who collectively spoke English, Cantonese, Mandarin, Spanish, and Portuguese. Team members contacted 26 ethnocultural organizations, including the Vancouver Chinese Alliance Church, the Cedar Cottage Neighbourhood House Vietnamese Group, and the Khalsa Diwan Society. Presentations on the Community Visions Program were given to 11 ethnocultural organizations in the early stages of the process. At the workshop stage, two workshops were held in Cantonese, and one in Vietnamese, with a total of 37 people attending. Whereas workshops in English addressed single issues like housing or transportation, the multicultural workshops were designed to cover as many topics as possible. Throughout the various steps of the Community Visioning process, newsletters including Chinese translation were sent to all households, advertisements were placed in the local Chinese and Punjabi community newspapers, and radio appearances were made by staff on Cantonese and Spanish interview programs. Finally, the Choices Survey and its subsequent results were fully produced in Chinese, and delivered with the English version to Chinese households based on a consultant database. A survey summary was available in Vietnamese, Punjabi, and Spanish. While neither the Choices Survey nor the Survey Results were available in Vietnamese, Punjabi, or Spanish, a note on the last page of the documents refers people to the City of Vancouver's multilingual "help lines" (Figure 5.1). Table 5.1 details the multicultural outreach methods employed in each stage of the Community Visioning process for KCC, as well as their uptake (participation). Multicultural outreach in Dunbar was limited to presentations/meetings with ESL classes, a church group, and a Chinese-Canadian group with some members residing in Dunbar (City of Vancouver, 1999a).

City staff interviewed concurred that multicultural outreach efforts were more successful in the latter two communities of the Community Visions Program, especially in Victoria-Fraserview/Killarney (VFK). The reasons for this appear to be twofold: firstly, the City built upon their experiences with the multicultural communities in KCC, enhancing the methods that worked and reworking those that did not. For example, city staff in VFK and Sunset placed greater emphasis on bringing their message directly to ethnocultural organizations, rather than encouraging them to come out to Program events such as the Visions Fair or workshops. As one informant put it:

FIGURE 5.1: REFERRALS TO THE CITY OF VANCOUVER'S MULTILINGUAL HELP LINES ON THE BACK OF THE KCC CHOICES SURVEY (IN CHINESE, PUNJABI, VIETNAMESE, AND SPANISH)



Source: City of Vancouver, 1998b

*Instead of waiting for them to come – we tried that and knew that that was not successful – we kind of knew right from the start that we would have to take our workshops out to them” (CV12).*

Moreover, one community outreach worker had been with the program since the pilot projects, and had therefore already established some contacts within the Chinese community. The second reason why the uptake on multicultural outreach efforts was greater seemed to relate to demographics. City staff suspected that because the populations in VFK and Sunset were better educated<sup>33</sup> and had higher average incomes than those in KCC, they probably had more time to participate in activities surrounding the Community Visions Program, and perhaps possessed a greater interest in the Program as well. Furthermore, VFK has a larger population speaking Chinese as a mother tongue (18 355 total) compared to KCC (13 945), in addition to many more organized ethnocultural groups.

<sup>33</sup> E.g. Thirty percent of Killarney’s population had some university education in 1996, while the same figure was 25% in Sunset. This is compared with 22% in KCC (City of Vancouver, 1999e).

TABLE 5.1: MULTICULTURAL OUTREACH METHODS IN KCC

Step	Outreach Method(s)	Participation
1. Get in Touch	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Multilingual staff hired</li> <li>• Newsletter #1 with Chinese translation insert sent to all households, businesses, absentee owners</li> <li>• Ads in local Chinese and Punjabi community newspapers</li> <li>• Mailing and telephone follow-up to MC organizations, societies, classes, and church groups, most of which operate more broadly than the area boundaries</li> <li>• In-person presentations and discussions at organization meetings</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 14 000 households</li> <li>• 3 MC* candidates for Liaison Group</li> <li>• 5 newspapers</li> <li>• Contact with 26 organizations</li> <li>• Presentations to 11 organizations</li> </ul>
2. Share Ideas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ads in local Chinese and Punjabi community newspapers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• MC attendance at Ideas Fair</li> </ul>
3. Develop Ideas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Workshops offered in Chinese, Vietnamese, Punjabi, Spanish</li> <li>• Ads for both regular and MC workshops in local Chinese and Punjabi newspapers</li> <li>• Radio appearances on Cantonese and Spanish interview programs</li> <li>• Flyers in Chinese, Punjabi, Vietnamese to businesses, community centres, neighbourhood house, etc.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1 workshop held in Vietnamese</li> <li>• 2 workshops held in Cantonese</li> <li>• Total attendance of 37</li> </ul>
4. Create Visions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Newsletter #2 with Chinese translation sent to all households</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 14 000 households</li> </ul>
5. Review Vision Directions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Choices Survey fully produced in Chinese, delivered with English version to all Chinese language households (based on consultant database)</li> <li>• Survey document has message in Vietnamese, Punjabi, and Spanish with reference to City's multilingual help lines</li> <li>• Survey summary available in Vietnamese, Punjabi, and Spanish</li> <li>• Outreach related to survey: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Presentations to 5 groups</li> <li>– Discussion sessions with 8 groups</li> <li>– Surveys dropped off for 6 groups</li> <li>– Multilingual outreach through schools</li> <li>– Newspaper ads and articles in community papers</li> <li>– 2 television interviews</li> <li>– Radio appearances in Spanish and Cantonese</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 14 000 households</li> <li>• 18% of returned surveys were the Chinese version</li> </ul>
6. Focus Vision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This step was "in-house" work, not public tasks</li> </ul>	
7. Unveil Vision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Vision Highlights and Survey Results document fully produced in Chinese, delivered with English version to all Chinese language households (based on consultant database); businesses; absentee owners</li> <li>• Referrals on document in Vietnamese, Punjabi, Spanish, and French to City's multilingual help lines</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 14 000 households</li> </ul>

\* MC: multicultural

Source: City of Vancouver, 1999a

Similar to the pilot projects, materials from the Community Visions Program were translated into various languages in VFK and Sunset, while the Program was once again advertised through the ethnic media (newspapers and television). The improvement may be seen, however, in the number of workshops/discussions held in Chinese and in the participation. Where two Chinese workshops were held in each of KCC and VFK, in KCC total attendance was less than 37,<sup>34</sup> while in VFK, it was 40 people in attendance at one workshop alone, and 46 at the second one (Table 5.2). Most importantly in VFK, six out of ten topical workshops included at least one Chinese-speaking discussion group. In Sunset community, two Chinese workshops were likewise held, but with a much lower level of participation. Workshops were also offered in Punjabi, but there was no uptake. Staff did, however, conduct a shorter version of a multicultural workshop with two Punjabi men’s groups, with a total attendance of 72. Table 5.2 provides a summary of participation in Community Visions workshops.

TABLE 5.2: PARTICIPATION IN COMMUNITY VISIONS WORKSHOPS

	Total workshops (total attendance)	Workshops with Chinese-speaking group(s)	Chinese-language workshops (total attendance)	Other multicultural workshops (total attendance)
Kensington-Cedar Cottage	~15 (185)	0	2 (37) <sup>34</sup>	1 <sup>34</sup>
Dunbar	~16 (164)	0	0 (0)	–
Victoria-Fraserview/Killarney	12 (339)	6	2 (86)	–
Sunset	10 (160)	0	2 (13)	2 (72)

As for the return rate of the Choices Survey, 22% of the surveys returned in VFK were the Chinese version, while the same figure was 20% in Sunset (Table 5.3). Conversely, only 5% of the total surveys received in Sunset were the Punjabi version. The relatively low survey return rate for the Punjabi surveys in Sunset contrasted with the return rate of its Chinese surveys, despite the Chinese-speaking outreach worker spending less time in that community. The total survey return rates for VFK and Sunset were 18% and 17% respectively. Staff now suspect that the Punjabi translation

TABLE 5.3: CHOICES SURVEY RETURN RATES

	Overall return rate	Chinese surveys*	Punjabi surveys*
Kensington-Cedar Cottage	8%	18%	–
Dunbar	23%	–	–
Victoria-Fraserview/Killarney	18%	22%	–
Sunset	17%	20%	5%

\* As percentage of overall return rate

<sup>34</sup> Total attendance from two Chinese-language workshops and one Vietnamese-language workshop was 37.

of the Choices Survey, completed by a non-profit immigrant services agency, was too technical and complex for the average Punjabi reader. Moreover, one community informant suggested that much of the older Punjabi speaking population was illiterate, based on experience at the schools where children would verbally translate written information in English into Punjabi.

### **5.3 MULTICULTURALISM IN PLANNING DOCUMENTS**

It is apparent throughout the planning literature that little research has been done as to how planning policies, regulations, and standards may be revised to accommodate the needs of diverse communities. Indeed, it has been argued that while Canada's metropolitan areas have accommodated culturally diverse needs on an ad hoc, case-by-base basis, their planning policies do not reflect cultural and racial diversity (Qadeer, 1997). To what extent is this valid in Vancouver's experience with CityPlan and the Community Visions Program? This question is addressed through a critical review of three sets of planning documents: 1) *CityPlan: Directions for Vancouver*; 2) the *Community Vision* policy documents for Kensington-Cedar Cottage and Dunbar; and 3) the Choices Surveys for Victoria-Fraserview/Killarney and Sunset, because at the time of the writing of this thesis, no *Community Vision* had yet been produced for these two communities. The information found in a community's Choices Survey is very comparable to that found in its *Community Vision*; the difference is that the latter is a policy document approved by City Council.

#### **5.3.1 CityPlan: Directions for Vancouver**

The City of Vancouver's concern for its multicultural population throughout the CityPlan process is only slightly perceptible in the resultant official plan document, *CityPlan: Directions for Vancouver*. The overall "vision for Vancouver" states that residents have created a plan that will lead to "a city where there is a sense of community for all ages and cultures" (City of Vancouver, 1995, p. 5). There is no other specific policy, or "Direction," within that promotes Vancouver as a multicultural city, or which celebrates its ethnoculturally diverse neighbourhoods and commercial areas. Rather, the city's multicultural character is given brief mention in only two CityPlan Directions, and in some of the background information. For example, the Direction for "New and more diverse public places" purposes to "ensure that the number and quality of the city's public places matches the needs of a growing and increasingly diverse population" (City of Vancouver, 1995, p. 26). The Direction entitled "Art and culture in a creative city" states an aim to: "make Vancouver a city where creativity is valued...and expand partnerships...that reflect neighbourhood needs, cultural diversity, and the

artist's role" (p. 24). Under a "Next Steps" subheading following the Direction for "Accessible, community-based services," it is suggested more plainly that the City should "distribute information more effectively by using local media and community organizations to reach the city's diverse communities" (p. 18).

While there are modest attempts to include culture in *CityPlan*, therefore, it may be demonstrated that most references to ethnocultural diversity – if that is in fact what they are – in the plan are implicit. The Direction entitled "People involved in decision making" is to, in part, "ensure a *broad constituency* takes part in city-wide decisions and neighbourhood planning" (emphasis added) (City of Vancouver, 1995, p. 42). Under the "City in the Region" section, population growth in the Greater Vancouver Regional District is implied through the presented information, but the characteristics/profile of the anticipated population growth is given no mention, neither is that of the existing population. Finally, a summary of the Direction for Downtown states: "Speciality character and heritage areas...and diverse plazas and open spaces will be welcoming public places for residents, employees, visitors, and tourists" (City of Vancouver, 1995, p. 38). A "multicultural" reading into this statement might bring up the "speciality character and heritage area" of neighbouring Chinatown. Indeed, several initiatives of the City, such as the Chinatown Millennium Gate and the Silk Road project, have recently targeted this historic Vancouver area.

### **5.3.2 Community Visions**

The Community Visions Program, which commenced two years after the adoption of the city-wide official plan, was meant to bring *CityPlan* to the local level. *Community Visions* are the result of two years of working with area residents to articulate how they see their communities in 10 to 20 years. The *Community Vision* documents for Kensington-Cedar Cottage (KCC) and Dunbar are 8½ x 11, approximately 45-page booklets that contain a wealth of information on the community and on the Community Visioning process. The bulk of the document pertains to the "Vision Directions" that were created throughout the process, and solicited for community input in the Choices Survey. The *Community Vision* addresses both the Directions that were approved and not approved by City Council, along with some explanatory notes. Vision Directions are grouped into eight themes in KCC and seven themes in Dunbar, based on general *CityPlan* Directions. Vision Direction themes include: shopping areas, traffic and transportation, new housing types, and greening and parks. Background information precedes the Vision Direction statement, while results from the Choices Survey proceed it. Some of the community's ideas are listed after the Vision Direction. Figure 5.2



exhibits the format of approved KCC Vision Direction 12.1, found under the topic “Traffic and Transportation,” in the *Kensington-Cedar Cottage Community Vision*.

FIGURE 5.2: APPROVED KCC VISION DIRECTION 12.1: KINGSWAY

### **Approved Vision Direction**

#### **12.1 Kingsway**

Even though Kingsway will remain a primary arterial, pedestrians, transit users, and bicyclists should have more priority than now, and the street’s image should be improved, by:

- adding more and safer crossings at key intersections
- adding and improving bus shelters
- adding more trees and other plantings
- providing better clean-up and maintenance along the sidewalks and boulevards.

Support %:81/10/9

#### **People’s ideas...**

##### **Pedestrian safety:**

- pedestrian-activated lights with shorter waiting times and longer crossing times; specially marked crosswalks; medians (concrete and planting strip in centre of street) to serve as a safe spot for pedestrians crossing
- more street trees; greening of the “triangles,” such as the green space at Windsor and Kingsway

City of Vancouver, 1999d

Insofar as this review concerns multiculturalism, only two approved KCC Vision Directions refer specifically to the community’s ethnocultural diversity. Vision Direction 2.1 states in part: “There should...be support and funding available to help organizations with basic communication and translation needs” (City of Vancouver, 1999d, p. 10). Similarly, Vision Direction 4.2 cites in part: “There should be more funding and support for multilingual communication” (City of Vancouver, 1999d, p. 13). Background information acknowledges KCC’s large and diverse population, one that contains many languages, ethnic backgrounds, and income levels. The community’s ideas under “Shopping Areas” reveal support for not just stores, but also cultural, recreational, and entertainment activities (City of Vancouver, 1999d).

The *Dunbar Community Vision* contains no Vision Direction referring to multiculturalism.

Background information states that the area is less ethnically diverse than the city average; this is exemplified through the high percentage of Dunbar residents that spoke English as a mother tongue in 1991 (78%). There is instead a notable focus on the aging Dunbar population, with several Vision Directions relating to increased housing choice and services for seniors. In contrast, one Vision Direction, 15.4, emphasizes the need for increased youth services and involvement in Dunbar (City of Vancouver, 1999c).

### **5.3.3 Choices Survey**

The Choices Surveys for Victoria-Fraserview/Killarney (VFK) and Sunset reveal a few more references to the communities' ethnocultural diversity. Proposed Vision Directions 10.2 and 11.1 in VFK's survey suggest improving city services by providing information in multiple languages. Vision Direction 11.3 clearly states, "Newcomers to the community should be provided with information on the community" (City of Vancouver, 2001j, p. 18). Furthermore, the background information to Vision Direction 22.1, "Other Housing Types," acknowledges that workshop participants suggested a courtyard form of housing common in parts of China. Considering that approximately 38% of the VFK population speaks Chinese as a mother tongue, it may be deduced that participants of Chinese background would have been the ones to propose the "*se hap yuen*," or courtyard, style of housing. That this suggestion appears in the VFK Choices Survey is a positive reinforcement of the validity of the Chinese-Canadian participants' perspective. However, the proposed Vision Direction is qualified with a note saying that this type of housing, along with houseboats and liveboards, would need to be further researched before being realized.

Akin to the VFK Choices Survey, Sunset's survey also contains a few indications of multiculturalism and diversity in its Vision Directions related to recreational facilities and services provided by the City. A unique characteristic of the Sunset survey, however, lies in its Section 23, which is devoted to the Main Street shopping area, or "Punjabi Market." Several Vision Directions explicitly refer to the Indo-Canadian character of the area and propose retaining that quality. For example, Vision Direction 23.4 poses, "The Indo-Canadian focus of the area should be strengthened by having mainly Indo-Canadian retailers and restaurants" (City of Vancouver, 2001i, p. 35), while Vision Direction 23.11 suggests, "The shopping area's appearance should be improved, and a distinctive 'Punjabi Market' character enhanced..." (p. 36). At the same time, Vision Direction 23.5 qualifies, "While having an Indo-Canadian focus, the area should also meet the basic needs of all local residents"

(p. 35). Multiculturalism is not the sole focus in this section, as is further evident through the Vision Directions concerning pedestrian safety, street trees, and the Direction outlining parking regulations, including for school/tour buses (City of Vancouver, 2001i).

In both VFK and Sunset, the community's suggestions under the heading "People's Ideas" include numerous references to immigrants, English-as-a-second-language classes, bilingual signage, and translations. Other proposed Directions incorporate cultural statements in the main text but not in the final "choicing." One example is Sunset's Vision Direction 9.5 on a Seniors' Centre:

Services should be improved for seniors with a variety of linguistic and cultural backgrounds. The enhanced services should be offered in: (note: you may select none, any, or all of the following options)

- a. Sunset Community Centre
- b. Moberly Arts Centre
- c. A larger dedicated seniors' centre serving all South Vancouver which may be located outside of Sunset

(City of Vancouver, 2001i)

In these instances, culture is implied but not distinguished; it may be hidden within a separate issue and its emphasis may be diminished.

## **5.4 CITY STAFF'S PERSPECTIVE**

Key informants from the City of Vancouver soundly acknowledged the need for multicultural outreach throughout the Community Visions Program. It was revealed that unprecedented multicultural outreach efforts have evolved and improved over the course of the Program.

Suggestions for further improvement in this arena were balanced with the reality of time, monetary, and resource constraints. City staff involved in the Visions Program ultimately maintained that the current model for multicultural outreach is effective overall, though recruiting and sustaining involvement from ethnocultural communities remains a challenge.

### **5.4.1 Community Visions Program and Planning Multicultural Communities**

In recognition of Census Data indicating that significant proportions of people do not speak English as a mother tongue in many Vancouver communities, City staff realized at the outset of the Community Visions Program that they would have to make special efforts to involve ethnocultural community members. Members of ethnocultural groups were recognized to be integral because they lived, worked, and owned property and businesses in the communities. This was particularly the case

in Kensington-Cedar Cottage (KCC), where 64% of the population spoke non-official languages in 1996, with 34% speaking Chinese as a mother tongue. However, one informant remarked that staff in the pilot communities were unsure in their approach toward not only the multicultural issues, but toward the entire Program itself:

*As a pilot, we really were feeling our way, particularly around the multicultural issues. In my knowledge, it was the first time we were actually trying to address those head on. I don't know that we had ever done workshops in another language before (CV07).*

Some difficulties were encountered throughout the initial multicultural outreach. The following comment demonstrates some frustration of testing a certain outreach strategy with an alternative:

*It was not good to have the separate [Chinese and English] workshops because people couldn't get together to talk about their opinions on the issues. But we tried integrated workshops and that didn't work either. Maybe if we had millions of dollars and simultaneous translations, we could do that.... (CV07).*

Informants also mentioned instances of residents calling City Hall with angry comments regarding translated documents, demanding that newcomers to Canada learn English and that City Hall stop wasting money on translations.

Key informants noted that the success of multicultural outreach efforts depended largely on certain characteristics of the community. Multicultural outreach in Victoria-Fraserview/ Killarney (VFK), for example, was enhanced by the existence of several established ethnocultural community groups that met regularly and that were comprised of area residents. This is in comparison with KCC, where, even though various ethnocultural groups held meetings, many attendees were not residents of the community, and were therefore less interested in participating in the Program (CV06). In addition, the VFK community at large displayed strong community leadership, a willingness to participate, and a general appreciation for diverse cultures. Moreover, there was not only a larger population in VFK, but also a larger Chinese-speaking population – 45% in Victoria-Fraserview in 1996 (31% in Killarney), compared with 34% in KCC. City staff informants further suspected that VFK residents had more time and resources, and were better educated than those in KCC.

Most city staff informants found community interests such as cleanliness, more park space, and increased presence of community police officers to be generally similar across cultures, rationalizing that geography – living in the same place – rather than ethnicity, determined the majority of issues of concern. Socio-economic status also seemed to play a role. Those informants who felt that needs and concerns differed across cultures qualified that the differences seemed more positive than negative.

By way of an example, one informant mentioned that parks were viewed by the English-speaking, mainstream population to be oriented around playing fields, but that some Chinese-Canadians desired the presence of more benches, gazebos, gardens, and plant pots. These latter suggestions from the ethnic Chinese were immediately adopted by everyone in the discussion group (CV10).

On the other hand, one informant demonstrated significant differences in ethnocultural perspectives. With regard to transportation in Sunset, the English-speaking mainstream population talked about scheduling and time delay problems, while the Indo-Canadian community proposed having bathrooms at bus stops/stations, and raised the need for more direct service to the community centre and the temple. Whereas the former saw housing as an important issue for seniors, the latter was concerned with more facilities, services, and language learning opportunities for seniors (CV12). Indo-Canadians' lack of interest in seniors' housing is perhaps indicative of the strong familial links in traditional South Asian society, and the tendency of elders to live with their children's family rather than to move into a home for seniors. Despite some differences, however, it is noted that the perspectives of both the mainstream and ethnocultural populations in these examples appear to be compatible.

Other city staff informants revealed that ethnocultural groups sometimes offered different ideas and solutions to problems, based on their various experiences. In a housing workshop in Victoria-Fraserview/Killarney (VFK), participants were split up into smaller groups to discuss housing types. The Chinese-speaking group proposed a distinct, new type of housing for the community based on a courtyard-style of housing used in Beijing. In the words of one informant:

*...it just happened. As we went along trying to answer the questions in front of us, that option simply popped up. [Now] it is out for people to vote on. They may vote it down, but at least they think about it.... It's certainly breaking ground, just the idea coming through the process (CV06).*

In a similar manner, an idea was brought up by an ethnocultural group in a public process outside the Community Visions Program in Kensington-Cedar Cottage regarding a park. The public process involved a significant number of Indo-Canadian male seniors who played cards at the park every day. They raised the idea of building a shelter where they could enjoy their game. The idea received support and a shelter was eventually built in the park (Figure 5.3).

On another positive note, some municipal key informants felt that Community Visions multicultural outreach efforts benefited communities by increasing citizens' knowledge in regard to multiculturalism and ethnocultural diversity. Particularly for members of the Community Liaison

Groups and individuals who were extensively involved in the Program, informants believed it inevitable that they possessed a heightened awareness surrounding diversity issues. To one extent, the communities may have become more cognizant of their similarities, despite differences in culture. As one informant explained:

FIGURE 5.3: SHELTER IN GRAY'S PARK, KCC



*Maybe that's what they have learned sitting around the table with each other, that they share the same values....Maybe they thought their neighbours weren't like them in the sense that they didn't like things being clean. Well they found out that everyone is complaining about garbage being strewn all over the place. In that way, they're pretty united as far as their interests, and that has to be a good thing (CV11).*

And although “some people will never change” (CV09), community residents at large should also gain a better understanding of and appreciation for the ethnocultural composition of their communities by accustoming themselves to the City’s efforts to communicate in languages other than English (CV14).

City staff informants exuded a cautious optimism in gauging the effectiveness of the Community Visions Program for planning ethnoculturally diverse communities. Informants admitted that they could not think of a better model for reaching out to and involving ethnocultural groups other than those strategies employed in the Program. The Community Visioning model was seen to be an effective technique because it encourages broad participation and allows for dialogue. In the words of one informant:

*The Visions approach casts a much broader net to attract participation initially, and then can be adapted to a variety of participation styles (e.g. small group discussions, existing ethnocultural association meetings) that make it much more comfortable and convenient to participate (CV08).*

Efforts to engage minority communities in the Visions Program were perhaps not reflected in participation numbers, but staff felt that they had given their best efforts. They have learned through working in the four communities that an intensive outreach approach that includes personal contact and telephone calls is vital in attracting participants. From the pilot projects, they have also learned that they need to approach ethnocultural groups directly, rather than sending them generic invitations to participate in the Program.

Suggestions from staff as to how to improve multicultural outreach in the Community Visions Program included more community development at the initial stages of the Program, more timely translation, hiring full-time staff that are reflective of the communities, and sustained face-to-face interaction throughout the implementation phase. However, it was simultaneously recognized that time, money, and resource constraints would continue to elude such actions. For example, staff were acutely aware of difficulties such as the logistics of translation – composing layouts, the subtleties of language etc. – as well as the phenomenal costs involved. In attempt to achieve a balance between what they would like to see and what is feasible, therefore, translated materials will have to suffice for personal contact, and lukewarm relationships for deeply established ones.

Another suggestion for enhancing the multicultural outreach component of the Community Visions Program centred on education. City staff informants felt that newcomers to Vancouver required a basic education on city services and processes. Those who come from different cultures and non-English speaking backgrounds should also be made to see the value in public participation. It was mentioned that the information is there on the part of the City, but that the education is not (CV06). Information from the City thus needs to be disseminated in a more effective fashion. Likewise, city staff themselves need to be mindful of the reality of ethnocultural diversity, and possess intercultural understanding.

City staff informants underscored that, ultimately, the success of multicultural outreach efforts depends on the willingness of the community to respond and participate. One informant, reflecting a majority opinion among colleagues, expressed:

*It's somewhat frustrating when a lot of resources, time, and money are spent [on e.g. translation], but the takeup is so slow. It's a learning process, but I think we should*

*persevere. I think it's worthwhile down the road. There will be more buy-in and more understanding of our city processes. If we can change people's cultural experiences, then I think we can get to a better place (CV14).*

City staff informants were well aware of the difficulties involved in conducting extensive multicultural outreach. Though the results of their efforts appeared discouraging at times, they all recognized the need for, and importance of, sustained and improved implementation of multicultural outreach strategies in planning Vancouver's diverse communities – not so much because the products will be different, but because the process is necessary if they are to allow for multiple voices to be heard in the planning process.

## **5.5 PARTICIPANTS' OUTLOOK**

The City of Vancouver employed various methods to reach out to ethnocultural populations over the course of the Community Visions Program. This section aims to commence discerning the effectiveness of those efforts from a participant's perspective, focusing on their experiences throughout the Community Visioning process. Key informants of both visible minority and non-visible minority background in each of the four study neighbourhoods were asked for their opinion on multicultural aspects of the Visions Program and of their communities. It is noteworthy, however, that of 19 community informants of visible minority background (out of a total of 41 informants), only six were immigrants who had arrived in Canada within the past ten years (see Table 4.2, p. 58 for a breakdown of participant interviews). The remaining 13 informants of visible minority background were either longer-term immigrants or second-generation members of an ethnocultural group.

### **5.5.1 Ethnocultural Involvement in the Visioning Process**

Key informant interviews in the communities of Kensington-Cedar Cottage (KCC) and Dunbar revealed that there was very little participation from ethnocultural communities in the pilot projects to the Community Visions Program. In KCC, the multicultural diversity of the community was repeatedly recognized by informants, but so was the fact that the involvement of ethnocultural communities “was not nearly representative of the community” (K10). One respondent felt that when the Asians were invited, “they seemed a bit nervous” (K01). Another informant admitted:

*Participants were quite white, middle-aged, classic-homeowner types. A large part of the energy of the Community Liaison Group was focused around trying to remedy that, to no avail. We didn't know what to do about it (K02).*



In Dunbar, all respondents noted that there was little ethnocultural involvement in the community visioning process, but only three out of nine said they did not think that was representative of the community. There was a general perception that the Chinese-Canadian population was not that large or visible in Dunbar, though one informant thought they were involved in shopping, and another noticed them especially when school let out for the day. It was mentioned that Dunbar “didn’t have anybody come to the meetings for whom English was not a solid language” (D09). As such, the few ethnic participants who were involved in the Community Visioning process were not seen to represent those who spoke English as a second language.

Informants in Victoria-Fraserview/Killarney were in accord that ethnocultural participation throughout their Community Visioning process was “pretty good.” This was viewed to have been a result of the availability of translated materials and outlets for participation in languages other than English. Nevertheless, one informant of visible minority background stressed that the Chinese community really wanted to participate, but the language barrier may have been too great (V01). They were able to participate only to their own ability (V08). Those who did participate expected to see more people at the events, not only from their own ethnocultural group, but also from the community as a whole. As one respondent stated incredulously:

*I went [to the workshops] with a few friends, but there were still not a lot of people there. We wondered whether it was representative of the community. The city staff told us that it was already a high level of involvement (V03).*

In the community of Sunset, informants likewise expressed that while involvement from Chinese- and Indo-Canadians was “not bad,” it still was not representative of their proportion of the population. There was a suspicion that members of ethnocultural groups were not fully informed about the Community Visions Program. One informant mused, “I think the ones who knew about it, supported the program” (S03). Language was pointed out to be a problem, especially for Sikh and Chinese elders. Conversely, at least one respondent mentioned that members of the Filipino cultural group (who comprise 6% of Sunset’s population) speak English, and they did not get involved (S04).

Another issue of concern most perceptible in Sunset was one of mobile identities and the ability of second-generation immigrants to represent their ethnocultural group. One informant of a non-visible minority background commented that there was participation from second- and third-generations, but “they do not represent new immigrants, who are the ‘true ethnic community’” (S05). The validity of this statement is revealed to varying degrees in the following quotations from Chinese-Canadian informants:

*I'm classified as Chinese, but I might not represent a typical Chinese, new immigrant (S06).*

*The funny thing is, I'm Chinese just because I look Chinese. But I'm actually very Canadian. Unfortunately, I don't represent the Chinese community because I am not at all involved in the Chinese community (S01).*

The former informant is somewhat uncertain of being able to represent the Chinese ethnocultural community, while the latter is quite sure that her situation does not reflect that of new immigrants.

Community informants revealed that the ethnocultural population sometimes participates at different stages in the decision-making process. Specifically, the consultation for most immigrant groups appears to be based on reactions to a plan as opposed to involvement from the beginning, while mainstream English-speaking groups are very adamant about participating from the beginning right to the decision-making level. In reference to ethnic business owners, one community informant stated:

*They don't show up for the groundwork, but once the groundwork begins to get laid, they complain if they don't like something (S07).*

City staff informants who are familiar with the planning process and who have had experience in this regard explained somewhat more sympathetically:

*[Ethnocultural groups] don't understand the process. [They say,] 'What do you mean we're talking about a variety of issues? Show me what you're talking about and then I'll comment.' Whereas the society here says, 'They should have spoken earlier. We have a process – why are they here? Are they saying they don't like the proposal' (CV14)?*

*The minute you draw 2 lines on paper, [the mainstream group] gets suspicious. [In one instance, they charged,] 'You, the planners, have already made up your mind. You are here to try and sell us on your take.' They said, 'Give us a piece of blank paper. We'll draw it out and tell you what we like.' We went and met with the Chinese group. They said, 'Don't waste our time. Tell us what you want, and what your plans are. Draw it on a piece of paper. We'll look at it, and tell you whether we like it or not. But don't give us a blank piece of paper and expect us to sit around' (CV02).*

On the one hand, ethnocultural groups are not familiar with the purposes of public consultation, neither are they familiar with the planning process itself. On the other hand, the mainstream population knows and respects the process, but cannot figure out why ethnocultural groups do not participate in the early stages of the process. As such, there appears to be a lack in education and in social learning on the part of both the ethnocultural population and the mainstream population.

### ***5.5.1.1 Reasons for Non-Participation among Ethnocultural Groups***

In all four study communities, city staff were highly commended by Visions Program participants for their efforts to involve ethnocultural groups in the Community Visioning process. It was acknowledged that the City used numerous methods to solicit participation from the general population, but especially so from the visible minority population. Interviews with both Program participants and staff revealed that exhaustive measures were employed in an attempt to realize a more representative participation. Indeed, when one city staff was asked what methods were utilized for this purpose, the response was, “What weren’t” (CV13)? Nevertheless, the profile of those who participated in the community visioning process remained a white, middle-aged, middle class majority, despite the City’s best efforts. Community key informants unveiled a host of reasons that may contribute to explaining why members of ethnocultural groups, particularly new immigrants, were largely absent from the visioning process.

Apart from the existence of language barriers, another practical reason for new immigrants not partaking in community activities is a difference in priorities. Recent immigrant families often have both parents working. Some struggle to work two jobs, likely with odd hours and split shifts. These families are first and foremost concerned with survival; even if they could spare the time, participating in a public planning process would be very low on their priorities. On the pressure to succeed, one informant talked about preoccupations:

*‘Come and see how big my brand new car is. Come and see my new house.’ They may be busy competing with each other (S04).*

Moreover, it was noted that new immigrants tend to stay within their own culture, getting involved with their own ethnic community and community organizations, which are often not geographically based. They may therefore be less concerned with, and affected by, issues in their immediate neighbourhood.

Several informants suggested that immigrants who come from totalitarian societies and places with corrupt governments may still possess a fear of the authorities. Further, newcomers are not familiar with the political system, and do not understand certain concepts. In one respondent’s experience:

*I find that people from cultural minorities, especially first-generation, have a problem related to some of the things we do, like going to City Hall and pushing buttons, or encouraging cajoling with the police in order to get them to do more” (K06).*

A recent immigrant from China echoed these thoughts:

*There is no overall policy for city planning in China. It's like making a piece of clothing. If they want a sleeve, they'll make a sleeve. If they want a collar, they'll make a collar. So the proportions do not match. Sometimes the sleeve will be too big, and the collar too small. It also depends on the government. [For example,] the mayor in Dalian is powerful and has a vision, so that results in good planning. In China, it depends on the person, not on the system (V07).*

It was also stressed that methods of citizen activism may differ in various countries. In underdeveloped countries, for example, door-to-door campaigning may be ineffective because of people's fear and distrust of government. In the Philippines, rallies and demonstrations are the preferred methods of expression. The people have greater faith in these methods compared with public meetings, which they associate with hidden agendas and high levels of corruption (S09).

Culture emerged as a key factor in affecting levels of community participation among ethnocultural groups. One informant explained that on the one hand, the ethnic Chinese are accommodating for the most part:

*They are not as picky as the mainstream population. The Chinese are taught to respect the [government] authority (V09).*

On the other hand, they are culturally not used to being asked their opinion:

*From their schooling in Hong Kong, they are taught to do what the teacher says. They are not to raise their hand and ask questions, otherwise, they would be told to leave the classroom because they were being too troublesome. A result of this type of schooling is that they cannot express themselves very well, as they were not allowed to (V09).*

Informant K06 further revealed that some cultures may not be comfortable with the idea of public debate, and of criticizing other people publicly. The difficulty of face-to-face contact for the older generation of Chinese, for example, is exhibited in how they might confront people:

*They'd be quiet, or they would say it in a roundabout way. The Asian way of doing it is what you tell your relative who tells a relative of that relative who tells the person that he heard that this is not a good thing to do. Nobody is named, nothing is really said...so they're not going to come face-to-face into a meeting or a workshop....Even if you have it done by a Chinese person, and done in their language, I think it's still quite foreign to them (S06).*

For Indo-Canadians, the issue might be restricted freedom:

*Indo-Canadians are patriarchal. Men don't allow women to go out when there is a real need for them in the home. The women may be fearful; they don't want to cause trouble to their family (S05).*

It was noted, however, that those who are educated and those who are second-generation are more likely to participate in public processes, both in India and in Canada (S02). Community informants

further indicated that Canada has a greater volunteer tradition than some cultures, where work is highly valued.

Informants ultimately recognized that it is always only a small percent of the population that participates in community activity. Those who do get involved are often involved in multiple groups or organizations. Moreover, participation is often issue-based, with citizens being more reactive than proactive. Planning processes are rarely fully representative or completely democratic. As such, an inherent difficulty in public participation processes lies in the extent to which results may be generalized to the population at large.

### **5.5.2 Neighbourhood Issues with Ethnocultural Undertones**

Apart from examining the ethnocultural participation in the Community Visions Program, this research sought to uncover neighbourhood issues of concern that carry ethnocultural undertones, and the extent to which informants felt the Visions Program addressed any aspect of these issues. Such concerns differed widely in each of the four study neighbourhoods. There were perceivably fewer issues with ethnocultural undertones in Kensington-Cedar Cottage and Dunbar compared with Victoria-Fraserview/Killarney and Sunset. This may have been due to the various ethnic make-ups of the communities, as well as to staff's lack of experience with multicultural outreach during the pilot projects.

#### **5.5.2.1 Kensington-Cedar Cottage**

In 1996, 64% of Kensington-Cedar Cottage's (KCC) population spoke non-official languages, including Chinese, Vietnamese, Tagalog (Filipino), and Punjabi. The main issue that emerged in KCC was a concern that newcomers to Canada were not given a good start, particularly within their neighbourhoods. There was a perception that little social learning was going on in minority groups and that they were therefore isolated and not socialized properly, resulting in unfamiliarity with social graces. One informant said about her Korean neighbours:

*I informed them that they had to keep their lawn cut, because for one thing, they never would have had a lawn in Korea (K01).*

Another informant commented that some Chinese-Canadian neighbours seemed to have trouble understanding the garbage/recycling program (K08). It was suggested that if a mandatory, intense orientation program were provided for newcomers to Canada, the tolerance level of newcomers

among the mainstream population would increase dramatically. Another recommendation was to provide a welcome wagon to greet new neighbours. One informant emphasized that minority groups needed to be informed on public processes, actively involved in them, and heard through the processes in order for the democratic process to work.

One issue that was raised in KCC that also pertained to the other study neighbourhoods was that of the big box, or “monster” houses. As discussed in Chapter Two, the monster house issue was particularly apparent in the wealthy Vancouver neighbourhoods of Shaughnessy and Kerrisdale,<sup>35</sup> where the existence of large lots facilitated the construction of the boxed-shaped houses that took up the maximal allowable building space during the late 1980s and early 1990s. Coupled with a surge in Chinese immigrants – many of whom occupied these houses – and propelled by the local media, the monster houses quickly came to be associated with the Chinese ethnocultural group. As such, though there appear to be relatively few monster houses in KCC, one informant expressed:

*If I had my way, there would be less of them, or they'd be smaller, or they would be designed in a more craftsman style fashion. But they are obviously very popular with Asian immigrants because they represent a large inside space for large families (K06).*

Another remarked:

*It wasn't completely along ethnic lines, but it tends to be. I think there's a bit of conflict around the aesthetics of a property and the plantings and the trees. But with the slowdown of the economy and the slowdown in immigration, this doesn't seem to be the same issue it was before (K10).*

An additional concern mentioned was that the recently emergent Vietnamese businesses along Kingsway Street did not cater to the general population living in the area, but rather to the city's Vietnamese community. Informants from KCC felt that the Community Visions Program did not capture any of these issues that carried cultural undertones.

### **5.5.2.2 Dunbar**

Dunbar's situation is unique in its proximity to the Musqueam Native Reserve;<sup>36</sup> the community's relationship with the Musqueam Natives was cited as a multicultural issue. As one informant

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<sup>35</sup> Although the monster house issue started to be a public concern of basic overlooking and overshadowing in the east side of Vancouver long before it became an issue in these neighbourhoods (A. McAfee, personal communication, March 27, 2002).

<sup>36</sup> The Musqueam Reserve is located in the community of Southlands (adjacent to the south of Dunbar), and was not part of the Dunbar vision area. The Reserve was formally dedicated by the Canadian Federal Government in 1879.

intimated, the questions surrounding this relationship – such as those regarding land claims – are contentious. There have also been changes in the relationship over the years:

*One of the things that you try to avoid in Dunbar is talk about the Musqueam. It is a very delicate issue, and I don't think we've come to grips with it. When [a local church] was run by the Jesuits, there was a mission for the Musqueam, and the parish priest did an enormous amount for them. I think we've lost that sense of responsibility to include them in the life of this neighbourhood. We're very suspicious of them, and there's already a lot of tension down there... (D03).*

Nevertheless, one informant recalled a Visions workshop where it was expressed that the Musqueam should be recognized in some way in the built environment. This suggestion was not considered in the Choices Survey, nor addressed in anything afterward. It was noted however, that native issues are under the purview of the federal, and not the municipal, government.

The second major issue in Dunbar with ethnocultural undertones related to the influx of ethnic Chinese to the neighbourhood, particularly within the past 15 years. The Chinese-speaking population in Dunbar increased from only 1% in 1971 to 18% in 1996 – still below the city average of 24.5% (City of Vancouver, 1999c; 1999e). However, Dunbar has traditionally been a very stable, Anglo-heritage neighbourhood, and it was revealed that Dunbar residents have had some difficulty in accepting people from Hong Kong and Taiwan. One long-term resident remembered how the first Chinese residents to the area were perceived:

*There was a lot of animosity toward the Chinese, with the impression that they were opium dealers, running the grocery store. It didn't matter to the kids growing up, but it was quite different for the parents (D01).*

There still appears to be some disdain, however, as indicated through this somewhat contradictory comment regarding culture:

*When it comes to multiculturalism, they're welcome to their culture as far as I'm concerned. I don't interfere with it. But I'm not about to change my culture to suit them. There should be a principle laid down that, when in Rome, do as the Romans. If you want to bring yourself to Canada, do what Canadians do. Don't try and import your own culture...(D06).*

It is evident that there are traces, however slight, of both racism and of the NIMBY (not-in-my-backyard) syndrome in Dunbar. One informant acknowledged that a misunderstanding of Chinese culture existed among long-term residents. This misunderstanding is beginning to be recognized at some local Dunbar events, such as one where an immigrant resident gave a lecture on Chinese gardens. Nevertheless, the language used in the following comment regarding this lecture implies a reluctance to accept the conventions of the “other’s” culture:

*We saw pictures of a city community's walled gardens that had not a stick of green anywhere around. It was quite shocking. By that, we begin to understand why so many come over here and don't want to have any gardens. They just don't want to deal with watering and raking leaves, which is dear to our hearts (D01)!*

On the other hand, it was noted that continued resentment toward the ethnic Chinese may stem not so much from racism, but from a resistance to change. One informant explained:

*For a vocal minority, the influx of ethnic groups into Dunbar – which is certainly not overwhelming by any means, but visible – is something which they don't like. It's something which is a symptom of the unacceptable side of change. I think it's not that they don't want minorities to move into the neighbourhood. They just don't want people to move into the neighbourhood. Perceived increase in crime, for example, is seen as a result of people moving into the neighbourhood who haven't grown up here (D09).*

Indeed, Dunbar was perceived by a few city staff and community informants to be an island unto itself. To this end, it is probable that a subtle racism exists among some Dunbar residents, but that it is also effectively concealed under the banner of NIMBYism.

The “monster homes” issue was once again cited to be “an enormous issue in Dunbar (D09)” in the late 1980s and early 1990s. Large houses which, in the opinion of Dunbar residents, did not fit in with the existing Dunbar streetscape (see Figure 5.4 vs. Figure 5.5) were vocally opposed.

FIGURE 5.4: DUNBAR “MONSTER” HOUSE





FIGURE 5.5: DUNBAR RESIDENTIAL STREETScape



Community informants noted that ethnic issues have not been a focus of late because everything seems to be operating on a status quo position, that is, there is not much going on at present. Nevertheless, Dunbar informants felt that multicultural issues were not addressed in the Community Visions Program, nor in the resultant *Dunbar Community Vision*.

### 5.5.2.3 *Victoria-Fraserview/Killarney*

The premier issue involving culture that emerged in Victoria-Fraserview/Killarney (VFK) concerned the shopping area located around 41st Avenue and Victoria Drive. In recent years, many businesses in the area have moved out or closed while new businesses with a Chinese focus have moved in. Victoria Drive between 41st Avenue and 49th Avenue is now comprised of an abundance of Chinese restaurants and grocery stores (Fig. 5.6). As a result, the area is quickly earning a reputation as a

FIGURE 5.6: CHINESE BUSINESSES ON VICTORIA DRIVE



“new” or “second” Chinatown. There is also a substantial Chinese-speaking population in the community: 45% in Victoria-Fraserview and 31% in Killarney (City of Vancouver, 1999e). Informants noted that the impacts of these changes on the community have been great, with some tensions also arising within the business community. However, one informant argued:

*Asian retailers have revitalized the pedestrian life in the area. The blocks where few Asian stores exist are as lifeless as they were decades ago....Non-Asian retailers [along Victoria Drive] are incorrect to blame Asian retailers for their problems. Why has London Drugs flourished and Shoppers Drug Mart closed? Why has the corner grocer floundered while Seven-Eleven has opened two stores in the area (V11)?*

It is apparent, therefore, that the neighbourhood’s recent transformation has garnered differing levels of support among the surrounding population.

Another issue that was raised in VFK was that of race relations. The ethnocultural diversity in VFK was frequently acknowledged, as was the fact that few problems existed between groups. It was emphasized that children in particular have no problems with ethnocultural diversity; many have friends from different ethnic backgrounds. Regardless, there were indications that some racial tensions did indeed permeate the community. One Chinese-Canadian informant said about the Caucasian population:

*Their way of thought is relatively narrow-minded. They say we have to accept the culture, and get involved in this society. We contribute a lot financially to society, and do a lot of other things. We should be able to speak our own language with our own people. Take the people who look European. They can speak their German and their Dutch. Why can't we? A few years ago at the community centre, there was a Caucasian man who said to myself and a group of friends, 'Speak English. This is Canada.' His daughter was playing on the slide, and my son was playing there too. I was just saying to my son, 'Don't go so far away. Be careful of falling' (V02).*

This comment reveals some differences in the way visible minority immigrants may be treated compared with non-visible minority immigrants. One informant admitted that the white people in VFK feel threatened to some degree by the various ethnocultural groups. Conversely, the same informant acknowledged that a lot of the Asians and South Asians likewise feel threatened.

One informant expressed the hope that there would be more community involvement from the ethnic Chinese population in VFK. Another believed that the South Asian population was protected in some ways by the temple, as both their society and religion revolve around the temple and temple activities. It was further mentioned that the needs of the Caucasians in the community may differ from those of the Chinese, as the former are mainly senior citizens, whereas the latter are relatively younger families. Differences may therefore be based on age, not culture. Some informants believed that the

Community Visions Program brought out a few of these issues, while others were skeptical that the Program could do anything to alter the existing subtle tensions revolving around race and culture.

#### 5.5.2.4 *Sunset*

It was perhaps not surprising that the community of Sunset, with its near equal distribution of English (27%), Chinese (27%), and Punjabi (24.5%) mother tongue speakers, pointed to several significant issues related to culture. First, informants noted that South Asians were perceived to be the dominant group in the community, despite the mother tongue figures. One informant explained:

*Visually, [the community] looks more like it's 75% Indo-Canadian. Indo-Canadians are very visible on the street because of their dress. They're dressier, even the young people. Women wear saris and men wear shirts and trousers. They stand out more so you notice them more (S01).*

The presence of the South Asian population in Sunset is further pronounced through the Punjabi Market (Figure 5.7) and a Sikh temple at the foot of Ross Street, both of which are highly visible features in the community.

FIGURE 5.7: PUNJABI MARKET, SUNSET



Photo Credit: City of Vancouver

It was noted that this perception of Sunset consisting of a majority South Asian population was not helping the community's case to get a new community centre built. Although the Sunset Community Centre is one of the oldest and smallest in the city, one informant said that there is some resistance for replacing it, stemming from a perception that a new community centre would serve only the South

Asian ethnocultural group. The informant also felt that there was great difficulty in bringing out ethnic volunteers to speak with the City on the matter. Thus, whereas Sunset also contains a sizeable Chinese population, there appears to be more discrimination toward the South Asian population in that community.

Another important issue in Sunset that has fallen along ethnic lines concerns the Business Improvement Area (BIA) along Fraser Street. Some Indo-Canadian shop owners in the area were opposed to the formation of a BIA because of the extra taxes they would have to pay to realize projects such as security enhancements, street banners, and street furniture. One informant described the frustration that BIA proponents face:

*When things start happening that don't work for the ethnic business owners, they complain and make it very difficult, instead of getting involved in the process beforehand. They don't show up for the groundwork, but once the groundwork begins to be laid, they complain if they don't like something. It is a great stonewalling experience with the ethnic business owners, because a few individuals who know the issues influence those who don't. It's blind ethnic mobilization (S07).*

A BIA was eventually created and a Board elected, but a “renegade” group soon appeared and voted a new Board in. The BIA continues to exist legally, but the new Board has chosen not to put a budget forth to the City to receive money for area improvements. It was revealed that the old Board consisted of an ethnoculturally mixed group, though they were educated and very western. The opponents of the BIA were more traditional Sikh shop owners, influential with members of their ethnocultural community. The degree of their control is illustrated through this comment:

*Some very influential East Indian business people who were property owners very clearly said to the other East Indian people who were just renting shops that [the BIA] was a bad idea. I think that influence had a strong effect (S10).*

It was further mentioned that politics and definite power struggles were involved within the Indo-Canadian community itself.

Other ethnocultural issues referred to in Sunset by informants – though not necessarily specific to the community – included monster houses,<sup>37</sup> little ethnic involvement in the community, and the fact that numerous Indo- and Chinese-Canadians do not speak English. The segregation between these groups and the Caucasian population outside of schools was once again indicated, and the status quo position implied:

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<sup>37</sup> Interestingly, “monster houses” in Sunset were associated with both the Chinese and South Asian communities.

*Everyone goes on in spite of each other. I wouldn't call it harmonious. It's just co-existence (S08).*

Moreover, one informant felt that Statistic Canada's definition of "family" did not reflect the tendency of Indo-Canadian families to include several generations or even families under one household. The reliance on such statistics for determining the required services and facilities for the community may therefore be faulty, as actual numbers could be inaccurately depicted.

Sunset informants felt that the Community Visions Program tried to address cultural issues by soliciting participation from minority groups, and by having a culturally diverse staff. It was acknowledged that great efforts were made to ensure that everyone was included. The successes of these efforts, however, were less clear. There was consensus among informants that no issues arose throughout the Community Visioning process that dealt explicitly with culture, save perhaps the Punjabi Market as a shopping area. While the issue of the Business Improvement Area did surface, one informant sensed that it was not something the Visions Program could directly address. Invitations for Community Visions events were extended to the business community, but even then there was little response.

### **5.5.3 Concerns of Ethnocultural Population vs. General Population**

Informants possessed varying opinions as to whether the needs and concerns of the ethnocultural population in their community differed from those of the general, or mainstream, population. It was argued that on the one hand, concerns such as property crime and clean streets, as well as basic living needs, may not be culture-specific. On the other hand, it was discovered that culture does appear to have certain effects on the outlook and lifestyle of ethnocultural groups, particularly for those members who are recent immigrants. At a more intermediate level, some informants suggested that the needs of the two populations may differ only in how the solutions appear.

Many issues were cited by informants to be similar across cultures. For example:

*We all want to get rid of the drug dealers and make the neighbourhood safe. We all want good transit, good businesses, and good community services (K04).*

Other issues placed in this category include traffic and personal safety. Access to a swimming pool emerged as an important issue in three of the four study neighbourhoods. Indeed, one informant in Kensington-Cedar Cottage (KCC) stressed that the swimming pool was the only common facility at

the community centre that crossed cultural boundaries. Libraries were also seen to be beneficial to all. In terms of basic needs, one Dunbar informant expressed:

*I don't think the needs of newcomers are that different. You still have to eat, sleep, and live. Why would your needs differ (D02)?*

Several informants remarked that needs do not necessarily differ across cultures, but ethnocultural groups may experience more difficulty in fulfilling them. Language was perceived to be a large barrier to accessing everyday services. One informant explained:

*For a Caucasian person who is shopping at a grocery store, they won't have that many problems communicating if the cash person is also Caucasian.<sup>38</sup> But if you're Punjabi and can't speak English that well...you still have a need to communicate, but it just might be harder. So needs may seem different, but they're really the same (S03).*

This remark from a Chinese-Canadian informant further revealed how great of an impact a lack of knowledge, in addition to a lack of language, may have on the experience of a newcomer:

*When we first came here, we prayed that we wouldn't get sick, because we wouldn't have known where to go. We had a family doctor, but if there would have been an emergency in the middle of the night, we wouldn't have known what to do. And we didn't have a car back then (V03).*

As such, while basic needs may essentially be similar across cultures, they may be perceived to be different because of some ethnocultural group members' increased difficulty in fulfilling them.

Needs may also appear to be different across cultures because the solutions are different. One informant illustrated this thought with the example of childcare:

*A woman from China was saying that childcare here is so bureaucratic. You have to register for it. In China, women have to work, so there is always somebody in the neighbourhood who looks after the kids. Culturally, it is much more acceptable in China for women to go out to work (K07).*

In this case, the issue is childcare; the difference is in the expected provider. It was further suggested that ethnocultural groups may require a greater sense of cultural community. Newcomers in particular need to be able to go places where they feel comfortable shopping in their native tongue, with people who have a common background and a common experience (K06).

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<sup>38</sup> This informant implies that all Caucasians speak English fluently. It is noted that this might not be the case for recent immigrants from Eastern Europe, for example.

One issue raised by informants that exemplified the distinct impact of culture was that of density. Informants revealed that density garnered different opinions among different ethnocultural groups. One informant articulated:

*The mainstream community isn't ready to accept things that people from other cultures might. The acceptable thing to say about density is, 'We don't want more density. We'd like everyone to have big houses and big yards.' But I'm thinking of a woman from New Delhi and another Chinese woman who were saying just how difficult it was to live in this neighbourhood. The houses were so far apart, and they didn't know their neighbours. It just didn't lend itself to natural, get-to-know-your neighbour situations. They were much more comfortable in increased density situations (K07).*

Another informant explained:

*In Hong Kong, apartments would be rented out to several different people per unit, who would have to learn to be tolerant of each other and live together in a small space. Also, in their upbringing, the Chinese learn to accommodate other people's needs better. They cannot be so picky. The mainstream population is picky about everything (V09).*

Informants held that it was not uncommon to find a dozen people and up to four families living in one house among the South Asian population in Vancouver. The ethnic Chinese were also noted to favour multi-generational living for increased nuclear family support.

In an issue closely related to density, some informants expressed that Asians are overwhelmed at the amount of space wasted in Vancouver. It was explained:

*The Chinese don't understand why you need so much lawn in the front and backyards. It is a waste of space. Better to build a bigger house, or subdivide the lot and build another house. That way, you would also not need to mow the lawn. People don't have lawns or gardens in Hong Kong (V09).*

The effect of culture was further evident when interview responses revealed Caucasians to be concerned about trees, parks, beautification, preserving the character of houses, and preserving the status quo. It was very apparent, on the other hand, that Chinese-Canadians are primarily occupied with the well being of their children. Children's education stood out as being a strong priority among the Chinese ethnocultural group. They also utilize parks for practising *tai chi*, a form of exercise, and enjoy playing badminton at the community centre. For the South Asian community, work emerged as a priority. In one Sunset informant's experience:

*That community has a strong work ethic. A majority of them [at a food processing plant] had more than one job. Many of them had two or more houses as well. There was a focus on houses and cars. Those were very important things for the community to do with their earning power. Leisure was not a priority (S10).*

Indo-Canadian men, particularly seniors, play cards at the park, while the youth often partake in basketball as a form of recreation. Overall, it was felt that new immigrant populations are first and foremost concerned about employment and overall survival.

Community informants underscored that these are broad characterizations of ethnocultural groups, and that they do not apply homogeneously to entire ethnocultural groups. The outlook of longer-term immigrants or those born in Canada appears to deviate significantly from that of recent immigrants. The result, therefore, is instances of “culture clash” not only between ethnocultural groups, but also within them.

Aside from cultural differences, informants also saw socio-economic status as contributing to differing needs. One informant explained that in Dunbar:

*It's a fairly affluent community...the ethnic minority here are also fairly affluent and have similar needs and similar wants to the English-speaking majority. I can't really discern that there would be a huge amount of difference, except that perhaps a few more services or signage are required (D09).*

This comment by a Chinese-Canadian informant in Victoria-Fraserview/Killarney also suggests that perceptions may differ within ethnocultural groups according to one's socio-economic status:

*Maybe [the Chinese] in the west side [of Vancouver] who have more money don't like this community. But most of us are middle class, and we don't want to leave (V02).*

Likewise in KCC, where a greater range of income levels exists among residents, one informant believed that different economic levels had a greater impact than ethnicity on affecting housing, job, and childcare issues.

#### **5.5.4 Community Visions Program and Planning Multicultural Communities**

Community informants regarded the Community Visions Program overall as a “somewhat effective” technique for planning ethnoculturally diverse neighbourhoods. The inherent difficulty in mobilizing a community over a planning process was underscored, as was the perceived and actual reticence of minority groups. As such, many informants felt that the way the Visions Program was carried out was “better than nothing.” They saw it as a positive indication that the City was proactive in attempting to involve visible minorities in the process. One informant acknowledged that the Community Visions Program may not have been the best way to deal with the ethnocultural community's concerns, because while he found some ethnocultural groups to be reticent:



*These processes are, by their very nature, biased in favour of those people who are willing to come forth (K06).*

It is inevitable, therefore, that a vocal minority is heard in typical planning processes, though their voice may not be representative of the majority. However, this respondent also felt that the Visions Program could not be focused solely around ethnocultural groups.

Comments from Visions Program participant interviews suggested that not only were multicultural outreach efforts requisite to varying degrees in different communities, but they were also effective to varying degrees. For example, whereas one Dunbar informant felt that the Visions Program could have shown more awareness of the different cultures in the community, several others thought that Dunbar did not require more multicultural outreach due to its relatively low level of diversity. On the other hand, the Sunset community's experience with the Program included frank recognition of the multicultural population, and consideration of diverse viewpoints. The multicultural outreach efforts in Sunset appeared to garner a favourable response, judging from this remark:

*People liked that the survey was in Punjabi, especially the seniors. It was good to have surveys at the temple because the seniors always pick up newsletters at temples. And some really want to be involved in the community (S03).*

Community informants further emphasized that the Program may only be effective where ethnocultural groups are fairly well educated and familiar with the political system.

Conversely, some informants were of the opinion that the Community Visions Program did not go far enough to capture and address ethnocultural diversity in Vancouver's neighbourhoods. The Choices Survey, for example, was mentioned as being too lengthy and too complex, particularly for newcomers. Another feature was that of limited resources:

*I get the feeling that there are one or two official translators or this much budget to translate, and the alternative is that if there happens to be a staff person who speaks that language and they happen to be free that night, then you drag them out to a meeting....It sounds like they are at a minimum (K08).*

On a note related to city staff, one informant stated:

*The training and practice wasn't there for some of the city staff. I was absolutely astounded at the jargon that they were spewing out. When I was in the workshops, I found myself playing a role explaining to people who weren't familiar with [the process] and who had English as a second language. People started to identify me as the person to find out things from because they weren't finding out from the staff....it was an indication that the staff weren't able to meet that need (S08).*

Some responsibility is thus placed on the planner; informants felt that some planners needed stronger non-bureaucratic, people skills.

Informants suggested that newcomers who come from countries with corrupt governments may be skeptical of “open” public processes such as Community Visions. Workshops and open houses may not be the best methods to reach those individuals. In parallel, this Kensington-Cedar Cottage (KCC) informant explained how the Community Visioning process may have excluded even those ethnocultural members of the community who did participate:

*Community Visions didn't do a good enough job of thinking of individuals, and individual needs. So what they never got to was, what do you need? It was always, what does the community need? And they couldn't see that probably the majority of our community couldn't think that way, because they weren't ready to. They're working on their basic needs.....They weren't able to articulate their needs to fit within the framework of Community Visions (K07).*

It appears, therefore, that some of the questions asked in the Visions Program may have been relevant for only a disproportionate section of the population.

Community informants called for the City to find more effective and timely ways to distribute information about municipal policies and services, particularly to newcomers. It was underscored that newcomers to Canada receive inadequate support and information from the City. Many rely instead on ethno-specific immigrant services groups such as The United Chinese Community Enrichment Services Society or the Filipino Canadian Support Services Society. Informants also proposed that some fundamental barriers to participation may be hindering the effectiveness of planning processes such as the Community Visioning process. Barriers include poverty, racism, limited or no access to transportation, lack of childcare, intergenerational conflicts, lack of services for refugees, and the changing role of the family in a different country. On the other hand, it may be argued that these are immigrant settlement issues that are out of the purview of the Planning Department and of the Community Visions Program. That is, the absence of ethnocultural participation in the Program should not necessarily be attributed to the efforts of planning staff, but to an inadequate address of broad, basic needs by other branches or levels of government. Holding to this perspective, some informants claimed that it was not the Program's mandate to explicitly take up ethnocultural issues. The Community Visions Program aimed rather to create a physical plan for the community for the next 20 years.

#### 5.5.4.1 Suggestions

Community informants were opinionated on potential improvements to multicultural aspects of the Community Visions Program. Many of their suggestions actually echoed the intended actions of city staff, possibly inferring that there was a communication gap between the staff and the community. Examples of these suggestions included: increased advertising, especially through the ethnic media; holding meetings at different times and places; having a staff that is ethnically representative of the community – better yet, having staff who are members of the community; and decreasing the amount of planning jargon throughout the process.

Language was underscored as the most important component of multicultural outreach. Informants once again emphasized the need for city staff who speak the mother tongue languages of ethnocultural groups. More workshops in Chinese and some in Punjabi were desired, despite the latter strategy having failed to attract any participants in Sunset. In addition, the import of personal contact and personal invitations was discerned through comments such as this one from a Chinese-Canadian informant regarding volunteer opportunities in the schools:

*Some staff [at the school] feel that having too many volunteers at the school would be a threat to their positions. So sometimes we don't really get involved, unless it's Sports Day, and they send a form asking us if we would like to participate. Then we would say yes. If they ask, we will go (V03).*

Personal contact seems especially useful in portraying the City's want of broad participation, ably expressing the value of participation in cases where individuals feel that their voice is unnecessary or unwanted.

Informants emphasized the value of increased community development at the early stages of the planning process. Diverse groups and stakeholders should be brought together and made aware of the issues in the community. One informant felt that, without the vital component of extensive community development, it is inevitable that certain biases would emerge throughout planning processes. For example, in the case of the Community Visions Program:

*...opinions were so biased against particular groups....With social housing, for example, there were residents who felt that we have enough resources. You don't even want to bring up the idea that we could probably entertain the idea of more social housing, because it just wouldn't be a pleasant conversation (K07).*

The need for planners who have expertise in community development was recognized, leading to a proposal for stronger links between the Planning and Social Planning Departments at the City. Further, strong facilitation and mediation skills were deemed crucial. The City might consider having

private consultants, rather than city staff, facilitate at Visions workshops and events. Working closer with established groups such as neighbourhood houses on an organizational rather than an individual level may also improve community development relations.

Several key community informants advocated stronger links with leaders of ethnic communities. One informant suggested more direct contact with reticent groups and implied that a greater intercultural understanding is required:

*No one went to the people who were new in Dunbar, who lived in the houses that the old residents criticized, and asked, what did you want to find when you came to Dunbar? Why did you go for this more expensive area? When it gets down to it, they don't want their property devalued. They probably didn't like... people criticiz[ing] the way their houses were built...(D05).*

Another informant requested more overheads, graphics, and definitions of words while the planners were talking, as many concepts were new and unfamiliar to participants. There appears, therefore, to be a need not only for the Community Visions Program to ask different questions, but also to ask and explain them in different ways.

Informants had many suggestions for improving the Choices Survey. While the lengthy documents were deemed substantive and comprehensive, nearly all community informants remarked that they were a chore to complete. It was suggested that two mini-surveys covering fewer topics could be sent to the community, rather than one large one being sent at the end of the visioning process. In addition to taking less time to complete, the two shorter surveys would also provide greater continuity throughout the Community Visions Program. Some informants referred to the complexity of the language, noting that unfamiliar planning terms and concepts rendered the document difficult to understand, particularly for recent immigrants. The design and layout of the survey appealed to some, but others regarded it as too “flashy,” and a waste of money. Suggestions concerning distribution of the survey included sending out the translated surveys concurrently with the English ones,<sup>39</sup> and sending it with recognized City correspondence such as a property tax bill. It was suggested that the local community newspaper, with which the Choices Surveys were sent, may be perceived as junk mail by some residents.

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<sup>39</sup> City staff had intended to deliver the translated versions of the Choices Surveys in VFK and Sunset a few days after the English ones to enable people to make the connection between the two. However, because of difficulties such as the large number of surveys to be distributed, a limited number of delivery people, and addresses not being consecutive or sequential but rather scattered in pockets, this took up to about two weeks (CV14).

Community informants felt that the benefits and value of civic participation had to be explained better by the City, particularly to ethnocultural groups. Another recommendation was for the Mayor and City Council members to be more visible throughout the Community Visions Program. Their presence at Visions events would signal support for the Program; this may be especially beneficial in light of the Chinese ethnocultural group's respect for authorities. Planning staff may also consider hiring local community people to help with multicultural outreach, in the manner of Census Canada and Elections B.C. It was discerned through key informant interviews that visible minority individuals have extensive networks of friends or acquaintances within the community, often formed through their children's schools. They may have more incentive to solicit participation for public planning processes if they were paid. Moreover, several informants noted the remarkable mobilization of the Chinese ethnocultural group in government elections. Liaising with politicians – particularly those from visible minority backgrounds – from all levels of government may contribute to an increased awareness of the Community Visions Program among ethnocultural groups.

Community informants essentially underscored the necessity of intercultural understanding. Both planners and participants in planning processes need to be aware of the various priorities and perspectives of diverse community groups. Understanding the Chinese focus on education, for example, may lead to new ideas and insights. This informant proposed:

*If there were a Visions Program on schools or education, no doubt there would be a high Chinese turnout (V09)!*

Increased emphasis on education throughout the Community Visioning process could invariably benefit all stakeholders involved.

Finally, informants recognized the difficulty of attracting any participants to public planning processes such as the Community Visions Program, regardless of whether or not they are members of an ethnocultural group. In the words of one informant:

*I don't have any suggestions on how to get more involvement. I think the city planners did a great job in trying. It's the bigger theoretical question: How do you involve people in community planning (S10)?*

### **5.5.5 Overall Success of the Community Visions Program**

Though this research focuses on determining the effectiveness of the Community Visions Program in planning multicultural communities in Vancouver, and not on ascertaining the overall success of the Program, some comments on the latter point are still warranted. This section demonstrates how

Visions Program participants regarded the Program as a tool in planning the future of their communities – with lesser concern for its multicultural components – based on certain criteria.

Visions Program participant informants held that broad community involvement was one indicator of the success of the Program. In this respect, informants overwhelmingly agreed that the tireless efforts of the Community Liaison Groups and city staff in attempting to achieve representative participation contributed to the success of the Community Visions Program. They also commended the availability of different avenues for participation, including fairs, workshops, and the Choices Survey. However, participation rates and Choices Survey return rates were still considered low by some, especially by ethnocultural group members (see Tables 5.2 and 5.3, p. 69). Kensington-Cedar Cottage, for example, had only an 8% survey return rate, 18% being the Chinese version.<sup>40</sup> It was noted that the Community Visioning process was long and the lags between meetings/actions deflating. As such, the difficulty of maintaining participation – especially among the ethnocultural population – throughout the implementation stage was recognized. The Community Visions Program may therefore be considered successful in *allowing* for broad community involvement; it may be less successful in actually *achieving* it. Nevertheless, informants ultimately lauded the overall success of the Community Visioning process, citing staff's expert conduct, their concern and approachability, and the provision of relevant information.

Community informants were generally in accord that the information contained in the Choices Surveys and *Community Visions* represented the views of those who participated in the Community Visions Program. This aspect of the Program was thus perceived to be successful, though many informants were unsure of whether or not their views were representative of those who were absent from the visioning process. Apart from the question of representation, however, many informants felt that the survey questions were too broad in scope and not difficult to answer, as evidenced through these comments:

*The survey is set up so that you're a fool if you don't answer yes to everything. 'Why wouldn't I want that?' It doesn't leave much room for alternative perspectives (S08).*

*I think what got handed to us was a survey where the questions were asked in a way that you all agreed. Of course we agree. Do you want good housing? Do you want a safe, nice neighbourhood (K04)?*

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<sup>40</sup> Conversely, a comparison with surveys distributed in regards to the City of Seattle's Wallingford Neighbourhood Plan revealed that, with five separate surveys being distributed over a period of three years to 8000 households, the highest number of surveys returned was 217, or 3% (City of Seattle, 1998).

This was in spite of city staff's insistence that Vision Directions are not "motherhood" statements, and that there is an emphasis on citizens making choices. City staff further stressed that the Community Visions Program is meant to bring CityPlan activities into as many Vancouver communities as possible within a tight time frame. The details of implementation are to be fleshed out in a subsequent process.

In terms of the broad concept of the Community Visions Program, informants were leery about it representing only one point in time. Kensington-Cedar Cottage (KCC) informants expressed that some issues in the neighbourhood today, such as increased prostitution and a growing Vietnamese business community, are far different than those five years ago, when the community underwent the Program. Another salient example in Victoria-Fraserview/Killarney pertained to special needs residential facilities (SNRF), or halfway houses. Between the time that the Choices Survey was compiled and interviews were conducted for this study, there was an incident in the community that involved an individual living in an SNRF in the community driving a car into a house. Informants were noticeably disturbed by this incident and were opinionated on the topic of SNRFs, but lamented that they could not give further input into the Choices Survey. That planning processes are only snapshots in time is an inherent problem that has yet to be solved.

Community informants underscored that the most significant determinant of success was timely implementation of the *Community Vision*. While informants were uncertain of the planners' influence back at City Hall in achieving this, they felt that the City was still responsible for helping communities realize their vision of the future. In particular, participants wanted to see physical outcomes, ranging in scale from the addition of garbage cans and pedestrian signals to community centre improvements. To this end, many KCC informants have been disappointed by the City's inaction, and were hard pressed to identify any major physical changes to the community since the completion of their Community Visioning process in 1998. Informants in all communities had further difficulty identifying those changes that resulted directly from the Visions Program, rather than from typical community lobbying. One KCC informant echoed the neighbourhood's concern by stating:

*If there have been changes they're small, and I'd really have to worry about the amount of money and time that was put into this for the amount of success that we got (K05).*

The most successful outcome of the Community Visions Program for KCC was noted to be a traffic calming project around an elementary school, which incorporated street narrowing, a raised crosswalk, and street planting (Figure 5.8). Informants were disappointed, however, that not more

has been done surrounding a flea market and parking lot (Figure 5.9) that they had voted to see transformed into a vibrant neighbourhood centre. The realization of this neighbourhood centre would be central to implementing KCC's *Community Vision*.<sup>41</sup>

FIGURE 5.8: KCC: TRAFFIC CALMING, STREET BEAUTIFICATION



FIGURE 5.9: KCC: VISION OF A NEIGHBOURHOOD CENTRE?

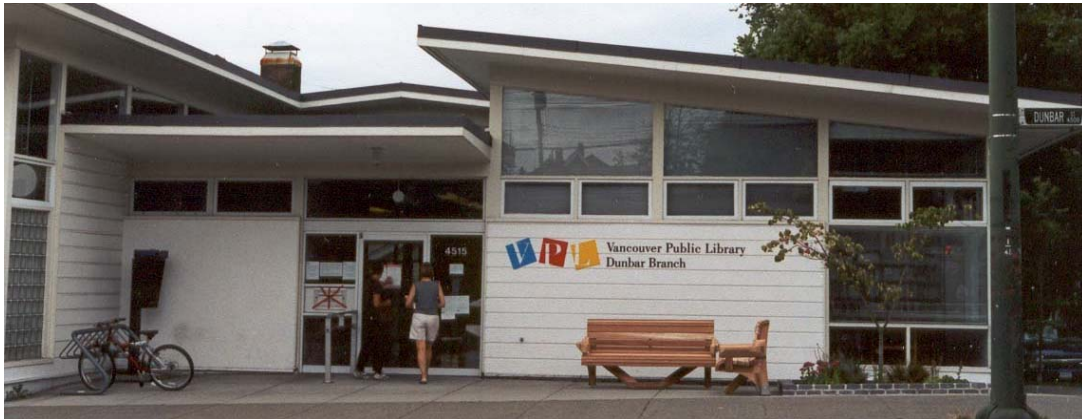


<sup>41</sup> City staff are currently in the process of creating a Neighbourhood Centres Delivery Program to address implementation of Vision Directions concerning neighbourhood centres, including those pertaining to KCC. It was anticipated that a draft Program would be completed by early 2002 (City of Vancouver, 2001b).



Similarly in Dunbar, informants felt that not much has changed since the community underwent the Visions Program. Limited street beautification has occurred, such as that in front of the Dunbar Public Library (Figure 5.10). More significant, from the community’s perspective, were the features

FIGURE 5.10: DUNBAR PUBLIC LIBRARY



that remain unchanged, as illustrated by this comment regarding the erection of mixed-use commercial/residential buildings:

FIGURE 5.11: DUNBAR’S “MONSTROSITY”



*Unfortunately, every [C2 zoned] building that has been built – and it has tapered off because the economy hasn't been as good – has been the massive block style, ugly, flat-faced building that overshadows the street, just exactly like we've said we don't want (D09).*

One such building, termed a “monstrosity” (D02), is exhibited in Figure 5.11. Some Dunbar informants believed that the visioning process had been directed by the City rather than being truly initiated by the community. Others accused the City of not anticipating what the community was going to say, and therefore of not being prepared to follow through on the *Community Vision*. On the other hand, Dunbar’s visioning process was fraught with quarrels among a community split between those who supported the existing, influential Dunbar Residents Association and those who did not. Combined with an adamant animosity toward the City, this community dynamic led some informants to blame residents, and not the City, for the failure of the Community Visions Program in Dunbar.

The majority of participants in the latter communities of Victoria-Fraserview/Killarney and Sunset were satisfied with the overall Program to date, but qualified that if the City did not promptly follow through on the resultant *Community Vision*, then it will not have been a success. Some positive social changes were perceived in all four communities subsequent to undergoing the Visions Program, including community spirit building, the formation of connections within the community, and increased familiarity with the Visions Program, planning staff, and the City as a whole. On the other hand, some participants, particularly in the pilot communities of KCC and Dunbar, felt further skeptical of and disillusioned by the City after having undergone the Program. Once again, it should be noted that these sentiments may not have resulted directly from the Community Visions Program.

## 5.6 CONCLUSION

Information for this study was gathered through a critical review of planning documents related to Vancouver's Community Visions Program, and through semi-structured interviews with key informants from the City of Vancouver and from each of the four study communities. It was discovered that staff involved with the Visions Program made conscious efforts to involve and encourage participation from ethnocultural groups throughout the Community Visioning process. Regarding the resultant products in the form of policy documents, some general references to multiculturalism and diversity were found at the municipal (*CityPlan*) level, while some more specific references were found at the neighbourhood (*Community Visions*, Choices Survey) level. In terms of the Community Visioning process, community informants offered their insights on relatively low levels of ethnocultural involvement, on neighbourhood issues that carry cultural undertones, and on the perspectives of the ethnocultural population compared to the mainstream population. Implementation of the *Community Visions* demonstrating tangible results was cited as the most significant determinant of success of the Community Visions Program. Both city staff and community informants ultimately maintained a cautious optimism vis-à-vis the effectiveness of the Community Visions Program in planning Vancouver's multicultural communities.

## CHAPTER 6: DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

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### 6.1 INTRODUCTION

Drawing upon the results found in the previous chapter, Chapter Six addresses how visioning – as carried out in Vancouver – has been used to plan ethnoculturally diverse neighbourhoods, and how the technique might be improved to better fulfill this purpose. Reflections on the Community Visions Program’s *products* and *process* are presented, along with some recommendations aimed at planners at both the City of Vancouver and other municipalities wishing to engage in “multicultural planning.” First, product is discussed within the context of policy and physical and social outcomes. Process is then considered through an examination of multicultural outreach strategies, participation, and ethnocultural vs. mainstream perspectives. Toward the end of the chapter, some comment is offered on the place of Vancouver’s Community Visions Program in the broader “visioning” discourse.

### 6.2 PRODUCT

As reflected upon in the literature, one indicator of multicultural planning is the extent to which the typically marginalized voices of ethnocultural groups are manifested in policy. A second indicator may be the tangible results – witnessed on the ground as land use change – of planning policies and programs. These products of the City of Vancouver’s Community Visions Program reflect culture in different ways and to varying extents.

#### 6.2.1 Policy

Policy in Vancouver is quite different from policy in most municipalities. The statements in the city’s official plan – which are not bound by law – are broad, strategic-like “Directions” rather than specific policies. *CityPlan: Directions for Vancouver*, the official plan, provides a basis for other, more specific, policies at the municipal level, including the *Transportation Plan* and the *Greenways Plan*. Within the context of the existing policy framework, a review of planning documents relevant to the Community Visions Program revealed few direct references to ethnocultural diversity at the municipal (*CityPlan*) level, but a few more references, and more specific ones, at the neighbourhood (*Community Visions*, Choices Surveys) level.

### 6.2.1.1 City-Wide Policy

Though the CityPlan process had allowed for broad participation from the ethnocultural community, only two out of fifteen “Directions” (or “policies”) in the resultant official plan give any mention to cultural diversity. One Direction refers briefly to Vancouver’s increasingly diverse population; the other acknowledges the city’s cultural diversity. The overall “vision for Vancouver” states that *CityPlan* will lead to a city where there is “a sense of community for all ages and cultures.” These general statements, coupled with other implicit references to cultural diversity such as those speaking to a “broad constituency” and “speciality character and heritage areas,” convey a timid willingness on the part of the City to include and recognize difference. At the same time, they exemplify how planning standards and criteria continue to be based largely on unitary conceptions of citizens’ needs (Qadeer, 1997). Based on the rational-comprehensive outlook on planning as a technical, neutral activity, many policies are also neutral, and assumed to reflect the views of the “public interest.” A recent study on ethnocultural diversity and planning in Ontario, Canada found that that province’s *Planning Act* and municipal official plans likewise say little about culture (Milroy & Wallace, 2001).

In a postmodern era where the vernacular is a discourse of difference, and especially in regard to places with fast-growing immigrant populations, it has been repeatedly proposed that the “public interest” must encompass multiple, rather than single, interests (Burayidi, 2000; Sandercock, 1998).<sup>42</sup> As demonstrated in Chapter Two, the reality of different cultural groups living together can sometimes result in conflict arising through the planning process. It is important, therefore, for governments to acknowledge the ethnocultural diversity of their populace through policy where ethnocultural diversity exists, as it is in those instances where culture is likely to affect both the planning process and its outcomes. A review of Ontario Municipal Board (OMB) decisions suggests that official plans containing provisions for social and cultural matters may be a legitimate means to link the authority provided in the *Planning Act* with by-law provisions, as official plans are subject to public notice and appeal (Smith, 2000).

To this end, and especially considering that Vancouver’s policies are not subject to appeal through an independent tribunal such as the OMB, one would expect Vancouver’s *CityPlan* to contain some statistical information and projections on the cultural diversity of the city’s population. The plan could further articulate a separate Direction that requires respect for diversity, in addition to

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<sup>42</sup> Of course, the definition of the “public interest” may also be critiqued vis-à-vis discrimination on the basis of class (Davidoff, 1965), gender (Beall, 1996; Milroy, 1991), and sexuality (Ray & Rose, 2000; Valentine, 1993), among others.

acknowledging it. Such a statement would, at the least, oblige policy makers to consider equity in the formulation of subsequent policies, and perhaps to reconsider the assumptions upon which the formal planning process has traditionally been based as well. Moreover, statements that stand on their own in acknowledging ethnocultural diversity speak louder than those put forward within broader contexts.

The recommendations for city-wide policy are thus as follows:

- Include stronger statements in support of diversity.
- Acknowledge the ethnocultural composition of the populace.
- Present statements supporting diversity on their own.

#### **6.2.1.2 Neighbourhood/Community Policy**

While policies at the provincial and municipal level should contain some reference to ethnocultural diversity where it exists, it seems particularly appropriate for policies at the neighbourhood or site level to address ethnoculturally-related issues, as the outcomes of planning process are most readily perceived at those levels (e.g. Punjabi Market, Asian-theme malls). Based on the *Community Vision* policy documents resulting from Vancouver's experience with community planning and visioning through the Community Visions Program, some lessons for realizing multiculturalism in neighbourhood/community policy emerge. Three important points might provide a framework for carrying out multicultural planning through the formulation of neighbourhood policies.

First, as in the case of city-wide policy, there needs to be recognition of a community's ethnocultural profile in the policy. In contrast to culturally generic policies such as those described in the Community Visions Terms of Reference (see p. 42), policies should employ a "cultural" vocabulary that includes references to specific groups where appropriate. This is particularly important in communities with notable diversity, such as Kensington-Cedar Cottage and Sunset in Vancouver. Acknowledging the presence of visible minority groups appears to be a fitting first policy step in demonstrating that the thoughts and actions of those groups are valued. Where Vancouver's *CityPlan* neglects to provide details on the city's ethnocultural diversity, its *Community Visions* and Choices Surveys contain a brief statistical breakdown of certain ethnocultural groups living in each community, as identified by mother tongue language. The *Kensington-Cedar Cottage Community Vision*, for example, shows that 66% of the community's population spoke English as a mother tongue in 1971, compared with 43% in 1991. It is also shown that the percentage of Chinese mother

tongue speakers in the community increased significantly from 8% in 1971 to 30% in 1991. To make an even bolder statement about existing ethnocultural diversity, the policy document could provide statistics on all mother tongues spoken in the community. Sunset residents might like to know, for example, that while almost equal shares of its population speak English, Chinese, and Punjabi (about 25% each), another 3% speak each of Tagalog (Filipino), German, Hindi, and Vietnamese (City of Vancouver, 1999e).

Ethnocultural diversity not only needs to be recognized in policy, it also needs to be respected. This second point is exhibited in the Choices Surveys for Victoria-Fraserview/Killarney and Sunset, which include statements supporting translations and inclusive programs:

The services of Fraserview and Champlain Heights Branch Libraries should be modified to better serve the public based on a review of factors such as opening hours, collections, translation of instructions... (City of Vancouver, 2001j)

All recreational programs should encourage the participation of newcomers and non-english [sic] speakers (City of Vancouver, 2001i).

Respect for ethnocultural diversity is implied through these statements, standing out stronger in the second one than in the first. Indeed, allowing culturally related statements such as the latter one above to stand on their own in policy documents demonstrates a greater commitment to respecting difference, rather than including them within larger contexts. Similarly, the incorporation of specific culturally related matters such as Sunset's Punjabi Market shows a consideration for diversity by substantively enhancing the cultural content of policies. Neighbourhood policies such as *Community Visions* must seize like opportunities to go beyond the broad, generic framework of city-wide policies such as *CityPlan*.

A third lesson for multicultural planning through policy pertains to the language of discourse. Though the final *Community Vision* policy documents were not fully translated, the preceding Choices Surveys were made available in Chinese in three of the four communities, with Sunset also receiving a Punjabi version of the survey. Providing materials – or at least summaries of materials – in the mother tongue languages of residents once again validates their opinions, and is a conscious effort in the promotion of equity. In this respect, the City of Vancouver's anticipated *Translation and Interpretation Policy* will be a useful vehicle in facilitating efforts to acknowledge diversity across all city departments. Even so, *Community Visions* could recognize the ethnocultural voice more explicitly by reporting Choices Survey results by ethnocultural group/language rather than, or in addition to, as a single collective.

It is evident, however, that the City of Vancouver is beginning to recognize the distinct ethnocultural makeup of its communities through its *Community Visions*, policies at the neighbourhood level. The City is beginning to validate the different perspectives and practices of minority groups, thereby making strides toward promoting equity through the planning process.

Based on Vancouver's experience with the Community Visions Program, the following actions are recommended for neighbourhood/community policy:

- Employ a “cultural” and “culture-specific” vocabulary according to the ethnocultural composition of the neighbourhood.
- Acknowledge the presence of ethnocultural groups through a statistical presentation of their composition in the neighbourhood.
- Demonstrate respect for cultural diversity in policy statements.
- Provide translations and/or summaries of policies in mother tongue languages of residents.

### **6.2.2 Outcomes of the Community Visions Program**

Aside from policy documents, other products of the Community Visions Program are the physical and social outcomes that result from the visioning process. Participants in Kensington-Cedar Cottage and Dunbar are unsatisfied with the physical outcomes of the Visions Program. According to key informants in these communities, there have been few notable physical outcomes to date, to their chagrin. Informants had especial difficulty attributing any changes in their community directly to the Program. As such, it is not surprising that no physical outcomes possessing a distinctly ethnocultural character have been realized in these pilot communities, particularly considering that their *Community Visions* contain little in regards to culture. Key informants in Victoria-Fraserview/Killarney and Sunset similarly warned that if no physical outcomes are perceived subsequent to the approval of their *Community Visions* by City Council, the Visions Program will be perceived as having been a failure. It is clear, therefore, that the City needs to guarantee some tangible results that can be seen in communities soon after they have been “visioned.” Providing tangible results would be the greatest statement in recognizing participants' effort and input in the Community Visioning process.

There is a caveat to all this, however. Despite the ethnocultural presence being stronger in the latter communities compared to the pilot communities, participants of the Community Visions Program did not indicate strong preferences for major changes to the physical landscape to reflect culture through



either Visions workshops or the Choices Survey. This result implies that the majority of physical outcomes to planning process such as traffic calming, street beautification, and increased density housing are largely culturally generic. Planners can expect some difference stemming from cultural influences to arise, but more importantly, they should be aware that incorporating the views of ethnocultural groups does not necessarily result in different outcomes.

Conversely, physical outcomes that appear to be culturally generic may become less so as a community evolves over time. One example is the area of Victoria Drive and 41<sup>st</sup> Avenue in the community of Victoria-Fraserview/Killarney (VFK), where Chinese businesses and services have become increasingly visible as they replace other failing businesses – businesses that may have appeared to be culturally generic, but could be argued originated from a British or European culture. One could not have foreseen the metamorphosis of Victoria Drive twenty years ago, and planners likewise did not intentionally plan for it. The change was rather allowed for through “neutral” planning policy. It has been demonstrated in Chapter Two that even the most technical of planning issues can quickly become cultural issues if preferences clash. In instances such as Victoria Drive where culture gradually emerges, therefore, planners must acknowledge that technical and legislative requirements have largely been based on narrow cultural assumptions (Milroy & Wallace, 2001). This acknowledgement should then encourage planners to effect incremental changes as the need arises with regard to policy, and especially with regard to process. Should VFK residents and merchants desire increased density to reflect cultural preferences for example, the proposal should be respected and implications and alternatives examined just as with any other planning issue. And if citizens choose to strengthen the Indo-Canadian focus of the Punjabi Market in Sunset, the City might review its zoning by-law to consider special cultural zoning, and offer tax breaks to attract additional businesses with a similar Indo-Canadian focus.

The social outcomes of the Community Visions Program, as identified by key informants, are largely positive. Regardless of culture or ethnicity, it appears that participants appreciated the opportunity to create neighbourhood networks, get to know city staff, become familiar with city processes, and voice their opinions. Through multicultural outreach efforts, city staff felt that participants gained a greater understanding of, and appreciation for, the various ethnocultural groups in the communities. These social aspects of the Community Visions Program are unquestionably valuable, as they contribute to social learning while building community capacity and human capital.

In the four Vancouver communities studied, cultural influences were not particularly obvious in either the planning policies or physical outcomes resulting from the Community Visions Program, though the *Community Visions* at the neighbourhood level are beginning to recognize ethnocultural diversity. It is acknowledged that the outcomes of planning process are, for the most part, culturally generic. Nevertheless, there are indications that explicit recognition of ethnocultural groups in these outcomes may promote equity by making them feel appreciated, and uphold democracy by validating their participation in the planning process.

Recommendations concerning the outcomes of visioning exercises such as Vancouver's Community Visions Program are:

- Guarantee and provide timely implementation of vision plans in the form of tangible results in the communities.
- Be cognizant that incorporating the views of ethnocultural groups does not necessarily result in different outcomes.
- Facilitate incremental changes as the need arises through neighbourhood evolutions, particularly with regard to culture.
- Recognize that the social outcomes of "visioning," including the creation of neighbourhood networks and increased knowledge of city processes, are largely positive.

### **6.3 PROCESS**

The intricacies of the planning process – and specifically in this case, interplays that take place through the visioning process – must be examined because of their role in determining product. This is especially pertinent in Vancouver, where City Council has placed an emphasis on the value of people's ideas. The question of how "cultural" policy and product outcomes of the Community Visions Program are influenced by process is now addressed within the context of multicultural outreach strategies, ethnocultural participation, and the perspectives of ethnocultural and mainstream populations.

The central question here is why there has been a relative absence of culturally related issues emerging through the Visions Program. Is it because there simply have not been any, or because the ethnocultural voice has not been heard? How have the opinions of ethnocultural groups been considered, and are their opinions drastically different from those of the mainstream groups anyway?

Through consideration of these issues, one can begin to ascertain whether, and how, developments in the visioning process are reflected in its products.

### **6.3.1 Multicultural Outreach**

Community Visions Program participants interviewed in this study remarked that, overall, the visioning process was well conducted, as were staff's efforts to reach out to typically underrepresented groups such as ethnocultural communities and youth. Respondents generally appeared satisfied with the degree of multicultural outreach throughout the process. In Dunbar, for example, where Visions materials were seldom translated into Chinese,<sup>43</sup> respondents did not call for increased translations. On the other hand, respondents in Victoria-Fraserview/Killarney did not disparage the fact that all Visions materials were fully translated into Chinese. Multicultural outreach efforts received a slightly greater response in the latter two communities compared with the pilot communities, as seen through attendance at multicultural workshops and return rates of non-English Choices Surveys (see Tables 5.2 and 5.3, p. 69). City staff informants noted that this success is certainly due to them becoming more comfortable in working with ethnocultural communities, and their honing of methods used to work with those communities. The Community Visions Program has therefore been a positive learning experience for the City of Vancouver.

Planners involved with the Community Visions Program said that multicultural outreach is essential in many Vancouver communities because of their ethnocultural profiles. Without such outreach, staff acknowledged that they would be neglecting a significant portion of the population, specifically, those who speak English as a second language. Hiring multicultural outreach workers and producing translated materials in these communities invariably raised Program costs substantially. However, these actions signify a commitment to recognizing the reality of ethnocultural diversity, and reinforce the notion of a multiple, rather than single, public interest. It appears that accommodating ethnocultural participation as a planning approach is becoming more standard in the City Plans Division of the City of Vancouver Planning Department, based on the Community Visions Program.<sup>44</sup> As such, the City is actively promoting equity through the planning process.

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<sup>43</sup> Chinese is the second most common mother tongue language spoken in Dunbar, after English.

<sup>44</sup> Materials for the next two communities to undergo the Community Visions Program (Hastings-Sunrise and Renfrew-Collingwood – where 38% and 39% of the population speak Chinese as a mother tongue respectively) will also be translated into Chinese.

There is a risk, however, that accommodating ethnocultural participation in planning might be viewed as tokenism.<sup>45</sup> One clear example of a token gesture appears to be the phrases in various languages that are placed on the backs of many envelopes containing information from the City, en lieu of fully translated materials (Figure 6.1). Information in these envelopes might pertain to, for example, a road closure, a sewage pipe upgrade, or garbage collection. The most recent work in the Community Visions Program is distinguished from this gesture in that multicultural outreach efforts were both

FIGURE 6.1: IMPORTANT INFORMATION: PLEASE HAVE THIS TRANSLATED

<b>IMPORTANT INFORMATION</b> Please have this translated	重要資料 請找人為你翻譯
<b>RENSEIGNEMENTS IMPORTANTS</b> Prière de les faire traduire	これはたいせつなお知らせです。どなたかに日本語に訳してもらってください。
<b>INFORMACIÓN IMPORTANTE</b> Busque alguien que le traduzca	알려드립니다 이것을 번역해 주십시오
<b>CHỈ DẪN QUAN TRỌNG</b> Xin nhờ người dịch hộ	ਜ਼ਰੂਰੀ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਵਿਰਧਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਕਿਸੇ ਕੋਲੋਂ ਇਸ ਦਾ ਉਲੰਘਾ ਕਰਵਾਓ

visible and substantial. Significantly, the multicultural outreach workers hired to encourage and facilitate ethnocultural involvement were of visible minority background. Visions materials were fully translated, events were advertised through the ethnic media, staff approached ethnocultural associations, and even made personal telephone calls. These efforts closely reflect the grassroots-like approach that some writers on multicultural planning have been advocating for (Sandercock, 1998). Moreover, the uptake on multicultural outreach efforts such as workshops in languages other than English and translated surveys was favourable, indicating that ethnocultural communities appreciated rather than scorned such opportunities for participation. This sentiment was also expressed through community informant interviews with members of ethnocultural groups.

Nevertheless, the risk of multicultural outreach efforts being viewed as tokenism may arrive in outcomes, or lack of outcome. To this end, the City might need to recognize the ethnocultural voice more distinctly. The value of participation, and ethnocultural participation in particular, should be heralded through the ethnic media and followed up by personal letters of appreciation. Ethnocultural participation rates for Visions events and responses rates for the Choices Surveys should be noted in the resultant *Community Vision*. Vision Directions that are “undecided” due to an unclear level of support may be separated into English vs. non-English responses to determine cultural preferences and to guide future community consultation; this is especially pertinent for Directions that relate to

<sup>45</sup> The same could also be said of citizen participation in general (Arnstein, 1969; Hodge, 1998).

cultural issues (e.g. Chinese courtyard housing, Punjabi Market). Finally, and most importantly, multicultural outreach efforts must be sustained and ethnocultural participation continually sought and recognized through the implementation phase.

Another critical aspect to the Community Visions Program's multicultural outreach component is the competence of city staff. Despite being a largely homogeneous Caucasian group in terms of visible appearance – particularly among senior staff – most, if not all, key informants displayed some knowledge of, and appreciation for, multicultural and diversity issues through their responses. For instance, many respondents emphasized the importance of broad multicultural outreach, but acknowledged that some ethnocultural communities – especially recent immigrants – may have greater immediate priorities than planning the future of their neighbourhood. Another planner pointed out that in a workshop setting, he would ease the anxieties of non-English speaking discussion groups to give presentations by allowing an English-speaking group to present first, thereby demonstrating that even native English speakers have difficulties presenting, sometimes stumbling over words. Some staff further expressed a desire to learn more about the various ethnocultural groups themselves, as they felt they still had little interaction with those groups due to it being a significant part of the multicultural outreach worker's role.

At this point in time, most of the staff at the City of Vancouver's Planning Department (City Plans Division) appear to possess some appreciation for ethnocultural diversity, and display a sensitivity to "difference" in their work. Their *understanding* of various cultures may be developed further, however, and this is why the City must continue to offer and require diversity training. Staff should learn to communicate in a simple language, for example, and limit their usage of planning jargon. A deeper understanding of culture would encourage planners to more actively probe for suggestions from reticent ethnocultural groups throughout the planning process. Furthermore, staff's desire to gain cultural knowledge indicates an opportunity to undertake a more transactive planning process, where both planners and citizens contribute valuable information to the process, thereby resulting in reciprocal education and mutual learning (Friedmann, 1973; Godshalk, 1967).

To the extent that writers have argued for greater cultural sensitivity among planners in order to realize communicative, mutually accommodating processes, (Ameyaw, 2000; Sen, 2000) the City of Vancouver is heading in the right direction with its planning staff. All the same, the municipality might heed Hoch's (1993) call for the hiring of minority planners, as there are currently no senior planners in the City Plans Division of visible minority background. Such planners should possess an

inherent cultural sensitivity due to their personal experiences as visible minority persons. Their appearance alone may serve to further enhance a multicultural planning process by attracting additional participation from ethnocultural groups – especially if they speak the language – and by further validating the opinions of ethnocultural groups. Having said this, another caution must be issued: that minority planners are hired based on their skill and expertise, and not on their ethnic background alone.

The recommendations regarding multicultural outreach are, in summary:

- Adopt an intense, deliberate, and visible multicultural outreach strategy with a focus on personal contact, such as that used in Vancouver’s Community Visions Program.
- Recognize and appreciate the ethnocultural voice through policy, the media, follow-up letters, and sustained outreach efforts throughout the implementation phase.
- Provide and encourage diversity training for staff. Undertake a more transactive planning process.
- Hire minority planners who speak the languages of community residents based on their skill and expertise.

### **6.3.2 Participation**

As discussed in Chapter Five, levels of ethnocultural participation in the Community Visions Program differed across the four study communities, according to the variables of pilot project status, ethnocultural makeup, size of ethnocultural population, education, income levels, and number of ethnocultural community groups/associations. Participants of visible minority background were often noted to be either longer-term immigrants or second-generation immigrants who might not have represented the views of more recent immigrants. A main reason for the latter two communities to undergo the Program, Victoria-Fraserview/Killarney and Sunset, achieving higher levels of ethnocultural participation appears to be staff’s heightened understanding not only of the Program itself, but also of the goals of its multicultural components. Staff have become familiarized with the challenges of translation, for example, and have gained confidence in working with ethnocultural groups. This is evidence once again of the learning achieved between the initial pilot projects and the subsequent ones.

Several staff and community informants mentioned that the level of ethnocultural participation throughout the Community Visioning process was not indicative of their ethnocultural groups’

proportion of the population. Few South Asians were present at Vision workshops in Sunset, for example, though they comprise at least 25% of the community's population. If the views of longer-term or second-generation immigrants differ from those of newly arrived immigrants (as several community informants suspected), the latter voice was especially silent throughout the visioning process. However, the ethnocultural voice – particularly the Chinese one – was demonstrably stronger in the Choices Survey. Eighteen percent of the Choices Surveys returned for Kensington-Cedar Cottage were the Chinese version, when 34% of that community's population spoke Chinese as a mother tongue in 1996 (see Table 5.3, p. 69). Twenty-two percent of the surveys returned for Victoria-Fraserview/ Killarney were the Chinese version, compared with the 45% who spoke Chinese as a mother tongue in that community. It may therefore be deduced that at least 50% of the Chinese-speaking population in these communities responded to the Choices Survey. Some Chinese-Canadian residents likely would have filled out the English version of the survey. In comparison, less than one-quarter (23%) of Dunbar's English mother tongue speakers (70% in 1996) filled out the Choices Survey, which was available in English only. These figures perhaps also speak to some informants' remarks that the ethnic Chinese prefer to play a bigger role in the decision-making part of the process, rather than the earlier ideas-generating stage (see quotes in Section 5.5.1, p. 81).

Thus, it could be argued through Choices Survey return rates that the level of participation among the mainstream, English-speaking population was not representative of their population either. Indeed, the issue of “representativeness” has been recognized as an aspect in citizen involvement that can never be fully resolved (Hodge, 1998). Both city staff and participant informants in the current study acknowledged the fundamental difficulty of getting people involved in community planning. To this end, city staff expressed that the *quality* of participation in the Visions Program was generally high – in that participants were sincere, knowledgeable, and cooperative – regardless of the *quantity*. In a similar vein, some writers have cautioned against participation becoming an end rather than a means (Seelig & Seeling, 1997). Far from attempting to achieve representativeness, therefore, it should be recognized that through public participation, “...those who do get involved bring the views of truly interested citizens, and these are valid in and of themselves” (Hodge, 1998, p. 415).

Nevertheless, there are two issues that should be considered in view of relatively low levels of ethnocultural participation through the public consultation portion of planning processes such as the Community Visions. While the results from this study show that ethnocultural groups generally appreciate the process, it has been informants' experience that some groups do not get involved at the initial stages of the process. This can lead to conflict at later stages in the process, as was evidenced

in the case of Indo-Canadian business owners in Sunset. Ethnic South Asian business owners were accused of not participating when the groundwork for a Business Improvement Area was being laid, and of sabotaging the process at a later stage when work was starting to become a reality.

Situations that are conflictive increase animosity between groups while decreasing the effectiveness of the planning process. Education on the parts of both the ethnocultural and mainstream populations would lessen barriers to a sound planning process. Education is particularly crucial for recent immigrants, many of whom initially grapple with understanding basic immigration and settlement issues, not to mention understanding political systems and planning processes. As citizens are most attuned to matters at the local and community levels, the City of Vancouver is well placed to inform ethnocultural communities about the planning process and the value of their participation, and educate the mainstream population on issues of intercultural understanding. Such efforts at social learning need not be conducted outside the planning process, but may be integrated into sustained levels of multicultural outreach. Perhaps an early workshop could include an overview of the planning process and of the public consultation process. Such a strategy would benefit not only ethnic and racial minorities who are unfamiliar with the system, but all citizens, as one cannot assume that even those who have grown up with the system are acutely familiar with it. At the same time, planners must be cognizant of cultural contexts where they exist. Incorporating “new ways of knowing” (Sandercock, 1998) such as storytelling, listening, interpreting visual and body language, and involving children and youth within the planning process may further serve to educate both participants and planners on the intricacies of culture.

Two main recommendations regarding participation are therefore:

- Provide education for citizens on civic issues, and on the value and merits of participation in recognition of varying cultural perspectives regarding public consultation processes.
- Encourage intercultural understanding among planning staff. Incorporate “new ways of knowing” in the planning process to support and accommodate different cultural viewpoints.

The second issue to be considered regarding participation is whether the ethnocultural voice – however weak it may be – is heard through the planning process. It has been established to date that culture is not markedly discerned in either the policies or outcomes resulting from the Community Visions Program. But is this because ethnocultural and mainstream views were the same, because no



culturally related issues arose, or because some voices were ignored? The following section addresses these issues.

### **6.3.3 Ethnocultural vs. Mainstream Perspectives**

The information gathered from key informants in this study revealed that many planning-related needs and concerns are similar across culture, particularly for those who live in the same geographical area. Due to a language barrier, differences were perceived to be more acute between the mainstream population and immigrants who could not speak English, compared with longer-term and second-generation immigrants. Among some groups, the influence of culture was distinguished through various preferences regarding density (Chinese-Canadians were more likely to favour high density), the need for gardens and landscaping (Caucasians highly favoured), and residential living arrangements (Indo-Canadians living with multi- or multi-generational families). No major clashes emerged through the visioning process studied here, however. Indeed, though concerns sometimes differed across groups, they were often compatible if not complementary. The Indo-Canadians' request for washrooms at major public transit locations and a mini-bus service, for example, is compatible with the mainstream population's concerns with bus scheduling and overcrowding. A strong multicultural statement could be made if these different perspectives are noted in an encompassing policy.

It needs to be recognized that culture clashes are more likely to surface over some controversy at the project- or site-specific level. One example that might emerge through Victoria-Fraserview/Killarney's visioning process concerns the proposed Vision Direction on a housing type based on Chinese courtyard-style housing. Should the Vision Direction be approved and some developers propose to build such a type of housing in the community, they could be met with a significant NIMBY (not-in-my-backyard) response, particularly among the non-Chinese. Implementation teams for *Community Visions* need first to be cognizant of such potential conflicts and understand the cultural contexts if they are to deal equitably with the situations when they arise.

Various issues with cultural undertones were identified in each of the four study communities. Some issues, like housing type (e.g. Chinese courtyard housing) and ethnic commercial districts (e.g. Punjabi Market), were acknowledged in the resultant *Community Vision* policy documents. Insofar as most of the *planning* issues – such as traffic calming and clean streets – raised by participants in the Community Visions Program appear to be culturally neutral, the Visions Program was

accommodating. However, special attention must be paid to those issues that are distinguished by cultural influences, and efforts made to include them in the Choices Survey. The City has begun to realize the latter point. As an example, however, a further suggestion might be to present the Victoria-Fraserview/Killarney proposal for Chinese courtyard housing as its own Vision Direction, rather than embedding it within a broader Direction that also suggests houseboats and liveaboards as alternative housing types. Responses to the survey might also be categorized by language to distinguish possible cultural preferences. Should it be proven that respondents to the Punjabi survey in Sunset strongly favour enhancing the cultural character of the Punjabi Market while English respondents favour it less so, the City would be able to conduct further consultation on this topic while bearing in mind the fundamental difference in opinion.

Other cultural neighbourhood issues that emerged in key informant interviews, such as race relations and the Musqueam Natives in Dunbar, were not incorporated to a large extent in the Community Visions Program. Similarly, some concerns raised by ethnocultural informants, including education, employment, and basic immigrant settlement and integration issues, were not fully addressed through the visioning process, neither were they directly incorporated into the policy documents. Some staff and participant informants noted that these issues were out of purview of the municipal planning process, and more specifically, of the Community Visions Program. These informants emphasized that the Program was meant to address physical, rather than social, planning issues. Indeed, Social Planning at the municipal level has neither the mandate nor the funding to provide social services. The contention that the work of planners has traditionally been anchored more to “things” than to “people” (Milroy & Wallace, 2001) is thereby underscored.

It could be argued on the other hand, as the Ontario Court of Justice did, that “[I]and use practices are made by human beings, by people, and are made with human beings in mind as well as a concern for land resources” (Smith, 2000). In the words of one informant in this study:

*The focus of the [Community Visions Program] was not social issues. They were physical issues. I can't think of one without the other. We have not really examined the social issues very well, and they're quite complex (D03).*

As such, issues that emerge through a planning process such as the Community Visions that are either not considered to be traditional planning issues, or are out of the purview of the process, nevertheless need to be addressed. The call to redefine urban planning to include social planning (Nicholson, 2000) is even more salient in a multicultural context, where newcomers in particular are concerned with employment, education, and identity and integration issues. Short of redefining the

responsibilities of various jurisdictions, however, planners must cooperate with all levels of government to soundly address immigrant settlement issues such as employment, housing, and education. Intergovernmental relations (i.e. municipal-federal, municipal-provincial) can be improved, particularly with agencies that fund social services. Planners also need to form closer working relationships with social planners. With regard to the Community Visions Program, for instance, staff informants noted that there was minimal contact with social planners, who work in a separate department in a separate building. Cooperating with social planners and other community development workers might help all involved to get beyond a fear of the “other,” thereby leading to improved race relations within the communities. In addition, it would complement a further recommendation to carry out greater community development prior to the official start of a planning process, in order to determine the existing community dynamic, identify any pressing issues, and gauge initial opinions. Furthermore, planners must not limit themselves to using traditional, technical zoning and policy tools, but must attempt to incorporate “new ways of knowing” in their work.

Recommendations to assist planners in balancing ethnocultural and mainstream perspectives are, in summary:

- Recognize that culture inevitably influences various planning-related preferences, but that preferences may be compatible and even complementary. Acknowledge and accommodate compatible concerns through encompassing policies.
- Seek to understand cultural contexts in order to facilitate an equitable handling of “culture clashes” that are most likely to emerge at the project- or site-specific level.
- Include “cultural” issues in policy.
- Categorize survey responses by language/ethnocultural group to distinguish cultural preferences.
- Move toward redefining urban planning to include social planning: cooperate with different levels of government; work with social planners; increase community development; incorporate “new ways of knowing.”

## **6.4 COMMUNITY VISIONS PROGRAM AND VISIONING**

It was determined in Chapter Three that visioning in the City of Vancouver, based on the CityPlan and Community Visioning processes, consists of 1) looking toward the future; 2) providing numerous outlets for broad public involvement; 3) citizens making choices about what they want to see in the future, which leads to 4) a policy document of future directions. The Community Visions Program,

while similar to visioning exercises conducted in other North American municipalities, was developed uniquely for Vancouver's situation. It is one way of doing visioning. The shortening and honing of the Community Visioning process since the initial pilot projects further suggests that it is ever evolving, and that a clear-cut process still cannot be provided. Rather, visioning in Vancouver has been a learning process of a new way of doing planning; it incorporates best practices from the past but places the process under a new name. Significantly, visioning at the neighbourhood (*Community Visions*) level does produce policies more tangible than those found at the city-wide (*CityPlan*) level.

What has not been discussed to a large extent in the visioning literature, but which emerged through this study, is the critical importance of implementation and outcomes – particularly tangible outcomes – subsequent to public consultation. It has been proven through comments from key informants in this study that “[w]hen planners and politicians cannot deliver..., those who participated are left feeling cynical and bitter” (Seelig & Seelig, 1997, p. 21). Even those informants who were familiar with invisible outcomes – such as the rejection of development applications for a gas station and a drive-through restaurant on what Kensington-Cedar Cottage (KCC) residents wanted to see become a neighbourhood centre – downplayed their significance when compared with the visible outcomes they really desired, such as cleaner streets and more vibrant commercial districts.

Based on the disillusionments of many KCC informants, as well as on the hopeful sentiments of Victoria-Fraserview/Killarney and Sunset participants, city staff in conjunction with citizens must develop clear implementation strategies as soon as possible after Council approves the *Community Vision* policy documents. Even if the City cannot deliver outcomes as soon as the community would like, detailed estimated timelines should be provided and updated often throughout the implementation process. Some money for “upfront” delivery should also be earmarked early on. In parallel, communities need to be made aware of budget and resource constraints, and forewarned about anticipated time delays. Changes to the community that are direct results from the Community Visions Program should be noticeably recognized as such, perhaps through signage at the site and through the media. Indeed, the Community Visioning process must not come to a dead halt once the Choices Surveys have been distributed; ongoing events and newsletters providing regular updates should be sent to the community.

With regard to the Community Visions Program representing only one point in time, community members should comprise part of the implementation team. They would be able to “watchdog” the

implementation process by monitoring any major changes or events in the community and relaying the community's concerns back to the team. At the same time, community members need to be supported by city staff who are able to exert some influence back at City Hall. In the implementation stage of Vancouver's Community Visions Program, a planner is assigned to the communities that have been "visioned." The citizens in these communities need to be regularly updated on the activities at City Hall, and shown that their concerns have been given some priority. Ultimately, they need to be assured that someone within the municipal bureaucracy is on their side.

The Community Visions Program must also attempt to get away from "motherhood" statements in the Choices Surveys and *Community Visions*. To the extent that the Program's mandate is to get some CityPlan activities in as many Vancouver neighbourhoods as possible, as quickly as possible, it should be stressed that the development of detailed secondary plans is not the goal. Nevertheless, the Choices Survey should allow citizens to make more specific decisions along the lines of locations for new housing types and types of community services, rather than on broad principles such as clean streets and safe neighbourhoods. Specifically, people should be able to have some input into the ideas that follow the proposed Vision Directions in the survey. In regards to retaining a supermarket in Sunset, for example, a three-point scale might be provided for people to rate the people's ideas on relaxing parking requirements, providing shared parking, and creating a mixed-use development that includes a supermarket on a larger site (City of Vancouver, 2001i).

An alternate suggestion would be to distribute two surveys throughout the course of the Community Visioning process, instead of distributing one large one at the end of the process. Such a strategy would allow for more specific "choicing" on fewer topics while providing continuity throughout the visioning process. The first survey might address traffic and transportation, existing single family areas, and new housing types; the latter might address safety, community services and facilities, shopping areas, and the environment. Keeping the language simple and avoiding planning jargon would also help clarify what it is the City wants to portray. Some final suggestions regarding the Choices Survey are to clearly indicate that it is a document from City Hall, simplify the layout, and place the survey fill-in form at the front rather than at the back.

Essentially, the main recommendation for planners regarding visioning as carried out in Vancouver is to:

- Develop clear implementation strategies with detailed estimated timelines as soon as possible – perhaps in conjunction with the public – and inform the public. Ensure that there is some money available for “upfront” delivery.

Further recommendations pertaining to implementation and visioning generally include:

- Explicitly announce changes in the community as direct results of the visioning process.
- Include community members on the implementation team.
- Assure residents that planning staff assigned to the community are respected and capable of exerting influence at City Hall.
- Attempt to get away from “motherhood” statements in policy. Use simple language and avoid planning jargon. In the case of Vancouver’s Community Visions Program, distribute two surveys for community input throughout the visioning process rather than one large one at the end.

## **6.5 CONCLUSION**

The City of Vancouver has been relatively progressive in acknowledging and respecting the ethnocultural diversity of its populace. An examination of the City’s Community Visions Program revealed that it is beginning to recognize diversity in both product (policy) and process (multicultural outreach). While visioning exercises undertaken in other North America municipalities in recent years have claimed to be inclusive and accommodating of broad public involvement, Vancouver’s Community Visioning process has exhibited conscious and deliberate efforts to reach out to typically underrepresented groups such as visible minorities and youth. Though multicultural outreach efforts were received to different extents in different communities according to situational characteristics, it is evident that the visioning process – as used in Vancouver – is capable of being a useful technique in carrying out multicultural planning.

Nevertheless, there remain some bold strides for planners working with Vancouver’s Community Visions Program – and planners working in other municipalities – to take with regard to promoting equity through the planning process. A critical analysis revealed the import for municipalities to distinguish and respect cultural diversity in policies, particularly those at the neighbourhood level. The formation of such a basis is particularly salient if cultural sensitivity and good communication throughout the planning process is insufficient in addressing cultural differences (Qadeer, 2000). Planners must also sustain an intensive and personal multicultural outreach approach throughout the

visioning process, and into the implementation stage. Insofar as planners do not have the tools or the authority to deal with social change in communities (Qadeer, 1997), they may be able to discourage the advent of potential conflict related to culture by developing close working relationships with social planners and other community development workers across all levels of government. To this end, municipalities must also provide and require diversity training for staff, and offer civic education for its citizens with an emphasis on newcomers' concerns.

Finally, the importance of program implementation must be recognized. Putting tangible results on the ground in "visioned" communities and proclaiming them as products of the Community Visions Program would not only demonstrate the Program's success, but would also help participants realize the value of their participation. The literal meaning of "vision" as "sight" should be manifested in physical outcomes; fulfilled physical outcomes that reflect cultural influences would further speak to the appreciation and inclusion of diverse ethnocultural perspectives in the planning process.

## CHAPTER 7: CONCLUSIONS

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*Civilizations should be measured by 'the degree of diversity attained and the degree of unity retained.'"*

(W.H. Auden, 20th-century English poet)

### 7.1 PLANNING VANCOUVER'S MULTICULTURAL COMMUNITIES

The immigration processes associated with the larger globalization trend have affected Canadian cities in unprecedented ways over recent years. "New" cultural influences have led to some changes in urban form, but more significantly, they have created distinct social characters of "difference." As administrators of municipal policy and programs, planners are beginning to realize that they have an important role to play in understanding, anticipating, and managing the needs and issues that emerge out of these diverse urban environments.

The ways in which "visioning" has been used in planning practice within the past 15 years indicate a potential to help realize "multicultural planning." Insofar as the visioning process attempts to involve broad public participation and represent diverse interests, it fulfills the principles of promoting equity and facilitating democracy. These principles underlie any attempts to plan for diversity, including efforts to plan communities that contain a varied ethnocultural makeup.

Vancouver, B.C. is a multicultural city that is trying to deal with growth and change resulting, to a large extent, from immigration. The municipal institution has exhibited conscious efforts to recognize and appreciate the cultural diversity of its populace through various policies and programs since the mid-1980s. The potential for Vancouver's version of "visioning" to include ethnic and racial minorities has been clearly demonstrated in this study through an examination of the City's Community Visions Program.



## **7.2 EFFECTIVENESS OF THE COMMUNITY VISIONS PROGRAM**

The City of Vancouver should be commended for its deliberate efforts to include ethnocultural groups through the Community Visions Program, which entails citizens working with city staff to develop neighbourhood plans. Overall, the multicultural outreach strategy employed in the Program, which included personal contact, extensive translations, and workshops offered in languages other than English, garnered favourable responses amongst both the ethnocultural and mainstream populations in the four study communities. In these respects, Vancouver's Planning Department has been progressive in recognizing the ethnocultural diversity of the city's inhabitants, and in taking specific measures to reach out to them. There is also evidence that the planners have learned a great deal from engaging in "multicultural" planning as a result of previous experience, as seen in the increased success of outreach in the latter two communities to undergo the Program. On the other hand, the success of Vancouver's version of visioning as a technique to carry out multicultural planning should be qualified, in that there is room for improvement, and also room for more debate on this topic within the profession. The Visions Program could further demonstrate a respect for and sensitivity to "difference" by incorporating greater civic education into the visioning process, with particular concern for ethnocultural group needs and multicultural issues. Working together with social planners and community development workers in providing and promoting such education should serve to improve race relations among community members, and enhance intercultural understanding between citizens and staff alike.

To date, there appears to be more general satisfaction with the inclusive visioning process than with the end results of the Community Visions Program, which produced little change in either policy or land use. In order to make a bolder statement supporting multiculturalism and diversity, the City of Vancouver needs to explicitly recognize ethnocultural participation in policy. More significantly, timely implementation of *Community Visions* in the form of tangible outcomes in the communities would be the strongest indicator of the Program's success. Tangible outcomes would portray an appreciation for, and validation of, participation in the visioning process. This is required to acknowledge participation from both ethnocultural and mainstream groups. In recognition that implementation has been slower than desirable, the City of Vancouver is currently incorporating Vision implementation into the next three-year Capital Plan, which should assure that some funds are available.

Due to the exploratory nature of this study, its results cannot be generalized. It has been demonstrated that the various characteristics of Vancouver's communities affect the workability of the Community Visions Program within. As such, the visioning process as used in Vancouver is not guaranteed to work in any particular way, but is somewhat flexible and can be catered to individual circumstances. While certain aspects of the visioning process, such as the tools used to encourage public involvement, can be applied to other planning processes, neither the resultant policies nor physical outcomes can be. Other municipalities – and multicultural ones in particular – intending on utilizing visioning as a planning tool can rather build upon Vancouver's experience, and apply the lessons learned to their own context.

### **7.3 DIRECTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH**

A number of suggestions for future research can be made based on the results of this study. First and foremost, this study demonstrates the significance of case study research, particularly at the neighbourhood or community level. The field of multicultural planning would benefit from additional in-depth empirical studies that document what planners have done with regard to acknowledging and incorporating diversity in the planning process – whether they pertain to “visioning” or not. While public consultation processes need to be explored for innovative, practical ideas on multicultural outreach strategies and “new ways of knowing” (Sandercock, 1998), policies at all levels especially need to be examined for sound portrayals of equity, and possibly revised to speak explicitly to recognizing and respecting cultural diversity. Comparative studies to these effects would further be valuable.

Insofar as this study looked at “visioning” within the context of multicultural planning, and found Vancouver's Community Visions Program to have effectively engaged ethnic minorities in some instances, one might wonder how Vancouver's version of “visioning” would work in other situations. It has been determined in the literature that planners have understood “visioning” to mean different things (Shipley & Newkirk, 1999), and so have accordingly employed visioning to fulfill different objectives. It has been discussed to a lesser extent whether this must be so. *Can* “visioning” be generalized, and can it be generalized to plan with ethnic and racial minorities in particular? A practical study could explore the generalizability of Vancouver's Community Visions Program – including its multicultural components – by applying the four-step Community Visioning process and a similar multicultural outreach strategy to other planning contexts. Such an exercise could be carried

out in relation to, for example, neighbourhood plans, regional official plans, or city-wide transportation plans.

The results of this study also prompt further research into the inclusion of minorities throughout the implementation phase of planning processes. Building upon the emphasis on physical outcomes placed by community informants in this study, more research could be conducted on how ethnocultural groups are involved at the critical implementation stage, and whether or not their views are reflected in tangible products. Such a study could essentially monitor multicultural outreach efforts at this stage, and gauge their effectiveness in planning with diverse communities.

Where this study relied on key informant interviewing to discern perspective differences between ethnocultural and mainstream populations regarding community planning, a survey approach could gain greater insight into this topic due to its ability to achieve a larger sample. In a similar vein, an analysis of the Community Visions Choices Survey results by language answered (English, Chinese, or Punjabi) may be helpful in verifying the results of this study – that most planning-related concerns or needs are generally similar across culture. Perspectives within ethnocultural groups themselves might also be researched further. What are the discrepancies between first- and second-generation immigrants, for example, and for how long must immigrants be resident before their views either are, or can be, considered “mainstream”? It is important to note, however, that because citizens react most strongly to contentious proposals in their “own backyards,” perspectives are unlikely to deviate greatly – including across and within culture – if things are operating according to a status quo position.

Finally, it would be worthwhile to investigate the extent to which broader political and economic processes within municipalities have an impact on planners’ work with multicultural and diversity issues. More research should be generated on the connections between Planning Departments at various governmental levels, as well as with other departments at the municipal level with regard to managing a culturally diverse populace, and on their mandated roles and responsibilities therein. The links between planners and social planners especially need to be articulated.

## APPENDIX A

### **CityPlan Community Visions Terms of Reference (text only)**

(City of Vancouver, 1999b)

*Approved by City Council July 30, 1996*

#### **CONTENTS**

- CityPlan Directions in Summary
- Background
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- Additional Information - Roles; Selecting communities; Other aspects of visions

#### **CITYPLAN DIRECTIONS IN SUMMARY**

*(adopted by Vancouver City Council, June 1995)*

- ...create or strengthen neighbourhood centres in all neighbourhoods as a place where people can find shops, jobs, and services close to home; where there are safe and inviting public places; and which help strengthen neighbourhood identity and sense of community
- ...increase housing variety in neighbourhoods that have little variety now, and focus the new housing mainly in neighbourhood centres, to help meet the housing needs of neighbourhood residents as they age, and to work toward regional goals of reducing sprawl and auto use
- ...maintain and improve neighbourhood character, by retaining greenery and heritage, and by maintaining or creating a built character that identifies the neighbourhood
- ...target community services to need; make services more accessible to people who may face difficulty receiving services; and involve people in planning and delivering services
- ...prevent crime and improve unsafe social and physical conditions through community policing and other initiatives
- ...provide more affordable housing
- ...broaden neighbourhood art and cultural activity and identity
- ...provide for park space to meet current or expected deficiencies, and increase the variety of types of design, and ways of using, streets and other public places
- ...encourage jobs to cluster in neighbourhood centres where they will be close to residents and well served by transit
- ...increase walking, biking, and transit in the neighbourhood and betweenneighbourhoods, and reduce single- occupant car use in neighbourhoods, the city, and region
- ...help to improve air quality, improve and conserve water, and reduce waste
- ...find new ways to involve people
- ...gradually reallocate resources to achieve CityPlan

#### **BACKGROUND**

##### ***CityPlan***

In June 1995 City Council approved a city- wide plan for Vancouver. CityPlan provides a framework for deciding City programs, priorities, and actions over the next thirty years. It includes directions on a range of

topics from transportation to arts, from housing to community services.

CityPlan emerged from a process that involved thousands of people submitting their ideas and making choices about Vancouver's future. The resulting directions will affect the future of Vancouver communities how they meet their needs, how they stay the same, and how they change.

CityPlan directions do not provide detailed maps and programs. The next step of CityPlan is to work with communities to bring CityPlan's broad city- wide policies to the neighbourhood level. The following Terms of Reference describe the public program which will be used to develop community visions. Community visions will provide an opportunity for each community to look into the future, to determine their needs and aspirations, and to set a course that incorporates CityPlan directions.

### **Other CityPlan Initiatives**

Community Visions are one of many initiatives which will help to make CityPlan happen. Other programs include Greenways, the Transportation Plan, the Industrial Lands Strategy, Community Policing, Integrated Service Teams, and new single- family zoning with more control over design and landscaping.

## **SUMMARY**

*A community vision program to follow through on CityPlan*

An overview of the community vision program is provided below. Subsequent sections provide more detail on each topic.

### **Purpose**

- The purpose of this program is to have communities, assisted by staff, develop visions that incorporate a wide range of community interests and describe common ground for moving in CityPlan directions. The program asks each community to implement CityPlan directions in a way and at a scale and pace that suits the community.

### **Ground rules**

- A set of principles underlie the program which require that each community vision address CityPlan directions and that the process involve the broad community.

### **Product**

- Each vision will be a document which uses words, drawings, pictures, and maps to show how the community proposes to meet its needs and move forward on CityPlan directions over the coming decades. A vision will identify what people value and want to protect as well as those things that will change.

### **Process**

- Two streams: a community visioning process and a city-wide process.
- Community visioning is an eight-month, seven-step process that leads from the identification of community needs, ideas, issues, and opportunities on all the CityPlan topics, to the creation of vision options, and then to the selection of a preferred vision.
- Each step provides a variety of ways for people in the community to be involved in creating, reviewing, and deciding on their vision including kitchen table meetings, workshops and discussion groups, community events and festivals, brochures and surveys. The process also provides for an on-going Liaison Group made up of people from the community. Within the general framework of the seven steps, a communications and outreach strategy is tailor-made for each community. In an eighth step, the community works on setting priorities for vision implementation.
- Two communities prepare visions simultaneously.
- A concurrent city-wide process helps link communities across the city with each other and with city-wide interests, using a number of formats, from City Forums, to media, to events and activities that bring a city-wide commentary into each community's visioning process.

### **Roles**

- **The community**, which includes residents, property owners, workers, business owners, and community organizations, generates the ideas, issues, and solutions that create the vision options; they also select a preferred vision.
- **CityPlan staff** organize and facilitate the community process, undertake outreach and communications, help explore vision possibilities, and document and illustrate material generated by the process. They provide information on community, city, and regional needs and CityPlan directions, ensure that vision options move in CityPlan directions, and advise on the relationship between vision options and CityPlan. CityPlan staff do not invent or delete vision options, or select or advocate a preferred vision.
- **The Liaison Group**, with representatives from a wide-range of community interests, brings continuity and a "watch-dog" perspective to the process and provides a core group of participants and contacts. This group may also take on priority-setting, monitoring, and action roles after completion of the vision.
- **"City Hats"** are a small group of respected and knowledgeable individuals drawn from across the city who comment on how far each vision option moves toward achieving CityPlan directions and the consequences of each option. Their review is a part of each community vision process and it is incorporated into the community's consideration of the vision options.
- **City Council** approves the resources required to undertake the vision program, endorses the visions, and approves City initiatives to implement the visions.

### **Pilot project review and program timing**

- This program was developed to be able to reach the whole city, for the first time, in a systematic way, within several years. However, because this is a major City initiative that can set new ways of planning with communities, the first two visions will be considered a pilot project.
- The first two communities will start their visioning process in January 1997, to be completed in September. The completed visions will be submitted to City Council for endorsement within the context of the review.

## **1. GROUND RULES**

### *Setting expectations for visions*

The community vision program is designed to allow communities to consider city-wide CityPlan directions, to explore their needs and aspirations, and to generate visions which move in CityPlan directions. Like the process which led to CityPlan, the vision program will incorporate new ways of bringing a wide range of participants into the process of creating individual community visions. To help ensure that the program meets the needs of City Council and the community, a set of ground rules (expectations or principles) underlie all aspects of the program.

The content ground rules are:

- Visions must include all CityPlan topics.
- Each community must consider information on CityPlan directions that define local, city-wide, and regional needs.
- Vision options must be derived from community ideas, opportunities, and desires.
- The consequences of vision options must be described to the community while considering the "rights" of the neighbourhood and its "responsibility" as part of the city and region.
- Vision options and the preferred vision must move the community in CityPlan directions (see inside cover of this document for summary list of CityPlan directions).

The process ground rules are:

- The process must provide a variety of ways to be involved that are meaningful to participants of various ages, cultures, interests, and parts of the community.
- Participants and staff must respect all points of view and all community members, from residents, to owners, to business people.

- The process must seek common ground.
- The choice of a preferred vision must reflect the feelings of the broad community, not a small portion.
- The vision must be delivered within the approved time and resource limits.

## 2. THE PRODUCT

*A vision to guide each community's future*

### ***What is a community vision?***

A community vision is a document which expresses in words, drawings, photographs, and maps how the community proposes to meet its needs and move forward on all CityPlan directions. It talks about community concerns including who will be living in the community and what their needs will be in terms of housing, services, jobs and recreation; how the community will address environmental issues including how people will get around; what the character and open spaces will be like. In short, a vision will describe how CityPlan will be implemented over the next couple of decades in a way that suits each community.

In order for all communities in the city to develop comprehensive visions within a reasonable time, the visions cannot provide the level of detail that has been traditionally contained in a community plan. A vision will generally not include new zoning bylaws, design specifications for community greenways, or the locations of bus stops, traffic circles or speed bumps. It will set directions, guide decisions, lead to actions, and identify priorities for further work.

### ***Why do a vision?***

The purpose for doing a vision is for the community to articulate, within the framework of CityPlan, where it wants to go in the future and how it wants to get there. A vision will identify what people value and want to protect and those things they want to change. A vision will increase certainty about the future and give both the community and City Council a clear idea of what needs to be done and where energy and resources need to be focussed.

### ***How will visions be used?***

Visions will be used to guide actions and decisions on all levels, from the individual to the senior governments, for example:

- **private actions** like clean-ups, landscaping, keeping porch lights on, or getting to know neighbours;
- **community programs** such as recycling initiatives, community gardens, Business Improvement Associations or traffic speed patrols;
- **City initiatives** that direct spending and/or resources to community priorities such as public art, greenways, further land-use planning, or parks and recreation facilities, or that respond to private development proposals and rezoning applications;
- **provincial programs** including health and social services, retail facade improvement grants, and lottery funding of community facilities.

The section below provides more examples of what a community vision would do.

### **A Community Vision Could Include:**

A community vision will include all CityPlan topics, it may go into more detail on some topics than on others. A vision would be expressed in words, drawings, photos, and maps. Following are examples of what a vision would include:

### ***Transit, Walking, and Biking as a Priority***

- indicate ways to make it easier, safer, and more interesting for pedestrians and cyclists to get around including traffic calming and development of community greenways
- identify traffic issues and solutions

- identify ways to improve transit service

#### ***Accessible, Community- based Services***

- identify particular community service needs in the neighbourhood and barriers that prevent people from obtaining services they need
- suggest ways to better provide community services, including ways to make them more accessible
- identify actions to improve neighbourhood safety

#### ***Neighbourhood Centres***

- locate the neighbourhood centre(s) (but not necessarily the centre's exact size and boundaries)
- identify the kinds of community shopping, service, and job needs the centre could fulfil, and ways to make these happen
- identify types of housing to be included in the centre, to meet what needs
- generate ideas for streetscape, open space, and character for the centre
- describe the differences between centres, if there is more than one centre in the neighbourhood

#### ***New and More Diverse Public Places***

- identify park needs of current and future residents
- suggest a variety of types, character, design, uses, and locations, of parks, streets and sidewalks, and other public places
- provide ideas for how to obtain park land where needed, and priorities

#### ***Housing Variety and Cost***

- identify the housing needs of neighbourhood residents now and as they age
- identify ways to increase housing in the neighbourhood to meet these needs; include types, character, scale, and general locations of new housing (can include both agreed- on housing ideas for the short term, and a range of future possibilities where there is not full agreement now)
- define under what conditions rezonings could be considered for this housing
- identify requirements for affordable housing

#### ***Distinctive Neighbourhood Character***

- identify aspects and areas of neighbourhood character to be retained, including heritage, landscapes, and other important elements of neighbourhood character
- suggest ways to preserve important elements of neighbourhood character
- identify the desired character of new development and how to make sure it is neighbourly
- identify the desired character of the neighbourhood centre(s) and how to make centre development fit well with the neighbourhood

#### ***Financial Accountability***

- identify priorities, phasing, and costs of actions

#### ***Other CityPlan Topics***

- The vision would also include all the other CityPlan topics, e.g. Arts and Culture, Environment.



### 3. THE PROCESS

The community visioning program has two interconnected streams: the community vision process and a concurrent city- wide process. Initially, two communities will simultaneously participate in separate community vision processes, each concentrating on the local perspective. The city- wide process provides an overview, a linking of communities, and a city- wide/regional perspective.

#### A. THE COMMUNITY PROCESS

##### *Steps for the community to prepare its vision*

The community vision process has seven steps done over an eight- month period; it involves the community, CityPlan staff, and others. A subsequent step to set priorities is completed by the community. The steps described below are a broad outline within which details can be tailored to meet community circumstances. After the first visions, which are a pilot project, there will be a public review of the program which will be reported to City Council along with the visions for endorsement.

##### **Step 1: Get in Touch**

(about 8 weeks)

- Improve general public awareness of CityPlan, CityPlan directions, the visioning process, and provide information ("food for thought") about the community in relation to the CityPlan directions.
- Contact key people and organizations in the community.
- Customize outreach, communications, and events strategy in consultation with the community.
- Identify additional information that people will want when working on visions.
- Involve people in activities that start them thinking about their community and its vision their hopes, needs, values, ideas, opportunities (e.g., kitchen table discussions, neighbourhood portraits, neighbourhood mapping, school programs, newspaper contests, etc.).
- Invite volunteers to consider sitting on a Liaison Group.
- Gather and package information prior to and during Step 1 for use throughout the process.

##### **Step 2: Share Ideas**

(about 3 weeks)

- Generate interest, ideas, and provide inspiration with a "kick- off" event, e.g., a community fair, exhibit of material from step 1, community forum, a guest speaker from another visioning program, etc. (also involve the other community that is starting its vision at the same time).
- Increase awareness about CityPlan directions and community needs.
- Provide additional opportunities for people to add to hopes, needs, values, ideas, opportunities.
- Sign up to participate in events in Step 3.
- Confirm Liaison Group membership and establish the group.

##### **Step 3: Develop Options**

(about 4 weeks)

- Assist community members and the Liaison Group to work through a series of events, activities, workshops to create the directions for the future that will be developed, in Step 4, into community vision options. Utilize the ideas and other information generated by the community in Steps 1 and 2 and information provided by CityPlan staff about the community, city, and region.
- Organize events around CityPlan topics or groups of topics. Generate maps, photos, drawings, and words to summarize discussions and use in later steps.
- Produce a variety of alternatives which move in CityPlan directions and go forward to the next step (agreement among community members is not required, as material will be used, in the next step, to create more than one alternative community vision).

**An example of information to be provided in the community visioning process**

One of the CityPlan directions is to increase housing variety in neighbourhoods that have little variety now, and focus the new housing mainly in neighbourhood centres, to help meet the housing needs of neighbourhood residents as they age, and to work toward regional goals of reducing sprawl and auto use.

Information provided to vision participants will help them answer the following questions:

- Who lives in the community now and what might their housing needs be in the future? For instance, how much and what types of housing might older adults in the community look for as they age, and as children grow to be young adults and start families. Does the community have the housing to meet these needs?
- What types of housing does the community have now, and how much and what types of housing could be built in the future under existing zoning?
- How much housing does the regional plan ask the city to have in the future and why?
- What are the various ways that the housing proposed by the region could be distributed among communities? What would the numbers look like using each way of doing it?
- What might be the community service and infrastructure needs of different amounts of future housing? Does the community have surpluses or deficiencies?
- What kind of tools could the City use to guide housing, such as setting the rate of change, controlling the design, charging developing cost levies, etc.?
- Pictures, drawings, and self-guided tours to show: what do various types of housing look like?

Comparable information would be provided on all the other CityPlan topics.

**Step 4: Create Alternative Visions**

(about 5 weeks)

- Develop, in consultation with the Liaison Committee descriptions of vision options ("design briefs") which are comprised of directions that emerged from Step 3.
- Design and illustrate the vision options described in the "design briefs" during a public "design workshop" weekend. Record pros and cons, including in relation to CityPlan directions.
- Create displays, brochures, survey questions, etc. to take the vision options into the Step 5. Liaison Group reviews products as they develop.

**Step 5: Review Alternative Visions**

(about 4 weeks)

- Hold a public event to initiate the review and discussion of the vision options. Introduce the vision options that have been developed in Steps 3 and 4. Invite discussion groups to review and provide comments on the vision options.
- Provide a broader city-wide and regional perspective on each vision option through a review by "City Hats" (a city-wide group of widely respected individuals evaluating the options against CityPlan). Invite people in adjacent communities to comment on the impacts of the visions options on their area. Add this commentary to the displays, summaries, and pamphlets describing the vision options.
- Use a travelling display to take the vision options to several locations in the community where people normally gather.
- Encourage newspaper/media coverage to bring wide attention to the options.
- Distribute a brochure of the vision options to all households in the community, include a response form.
- Conduct a random telephone survey to test community support for each vision option.

**Step 6: Focus on a Vision**

(about 5 weeks)

- Review responses from Step 5 to find common ground on a preferred vision or vision elements.
- Identify, and discuss with the community, areas of strongly divergent opinion (if any).
- Develop a description ("design brief") of the preferred vision which includes additional or revised elements supported in the review.
- Illustrate the preferred vision and prepare materials for final review. Include ranges or alternatives for some topics for which there remains a major split in community opinion.
- Involve the Liaison Group in all activities in this step to ensure the community responses from Step 5 are appropriately reflected in the preferred vision.

**Step 7: Confirm the Vision**

(about 6 weeks)

- Ensure there is broad awareness and support of the preferred vision.
- Prepare, exhibit, or distribute displays, brochures, etc. of the preferred vision (as in Step 5 including media, surveys, etc.).

**Total time**

Total weeks: 35 weeks, or approximately eight months. Because August and December are not good months for involving the public, the community vision process does not include these months. Hence, the elapsed time will often be nine months.

During Steps 1 through 7, there will be a planning team assigned full- time to the community to facilitate the creation of the vision. The next steps happen after the vision has been created.

**Setting vision priorities**

The community, possibly led by the Liaison Group, develops a strategic action plan for the vision to identify priorities for the next steps and actions (where required, the City may provide funds for a facilitator to assist in this task).

**Endorsing the vision**

City Council will consider approval of the community visions as part of a review of the program after the first visions have been completed. (The review process is described in section 5.) Once the vision is endorsed, a variety of activities will occur over an extended period of time to implement the vision. City initiatives include capital expenditures, more detailed planning, rezonings, and redirecting of many existing programs to make the vision a reality (greenways, local area improvements, traffic calming, etc.). The Liaison Committee may choose to take on an active role in coordinating city and private initiatives to implement the vision.

**B. THE CITY-WIDE PROCESS**

*Linking communities and bringing a city- wide perspective*

At the same time that two community vision processes are underway, a concurrent city- wide process will occur. The city- wide process will help to: provide a city- wide and CityPlan perspective, develop a sense of mutual accountability and fair share among communities, provide inspiration, share ideas, develop tools, and improve general public awareness.

The city- wide process includes:

- Public City Forums which welcome participants from communities involved in vision processes and from other areas of the city and region to share ideas on possible directions and review the progress and achievements of the vision processes.
- Sessions to identify or discuss tools for implementing or financing visions.
- Opportunities for public input on the City's response to the region's Livable Region Strategic Plan and other city- wide issues.
- News stories, news releases, internet information, a regular cable t.v. program, and a series of speakers combine to make the general public aware of the program, report on the progress being made in community visions, and provide information about issues and ideas.
- A panel of respected experts wearing "City Hats" to provide comments, to each community, from a CityPlan perspective on the community's vision options.
- Events that bring together the two communities concurrently involved in vision processes in order to share ideas, get inspiration, etc.
- Information packages and kits for community visions that include CityPlan directions and community information, as well as ideas and examples from other places.
- Consultation with groups that represent city- wide interests (rental housing, environment, seniors, etc.) to explore ways for these interests to be part of community visioning.

The city- wide process will be managed and facilitated by CityPlan staff.

#### **4. ROLES**

##### *Making responsibilities clear*

There will be many actors involved in the community visioning process. This section describes the roles of key participants. (More detail is provided in the last section of this report, "Additional Information.")

##### ***The community***

The community has two key roles. First, to generate the ideas, values, desires, and needs that create the vision options. Second, to select the preferred vision. The community includes residents, property owners, workers, and business owners participating as individuals, community groups, and/or as members of the Liaison Group (see below). The vision depends on broadly based community participation and support.

##### ***Community liaison group***

A Community Liaison Group will be formed for each vision program. It will be a large group, made- up of volunteers from the community that are drawn from a wide range of groups, interests, cultures, sub- areas, and demographic characteristics.

Its key roles will be to provide continuity throughout the process and to be a "watch- dog" of the process on behalf of the community, ensuring that community input from each step is carried into subsequent steps. The Liaison Group will also provide a core group of participants and help to customize and expand outreach efforts. They will provide advice to staff throughout the process.

The group's role will not be to revise or delete vision options or to select the preferred vision.

##### ***CityPlan team***

The role of CityPlan staff will be to facilitate the community in exploring and creating vision options that are moving in the broad directions of CityPlan. To this end, the CityPlan staff role includes organizing events, doing outreach, illustrating and documenting material from the process, and providing information about community needs and about the CityPlan directions.

These terms of reference call for producing visions that are consistent with CityPlan directions. CityPlan staff will provide comments and advice on CityPlan directions. However, it is not CityPlan staff's role to create their own vision options; to delete options; or to advocate, negotiate for, or select, a preferred vision.

The CityPlan staff will form into three teams: a Community Team for each community vision; a City- Wide/Information Team; and a Communications/Events Team. Staff from many departments will be

included on these teams.

### **"City Hats"**

Individuals who are widely respected from a city- wide and community point of view will be appointed by City Council to wear a "city hat". Their role will be to provide commentary on how well the vision options generated by each community are meeting CityPlan directions. This commentary will be part of the information available in the community when people review their vision options and select a preferred vision.

### **Special interest groups and other communities**

People from outside a community may have a special interest or expertise that is consistent with CityPlan directions, such as heritage advocates, bicycle users, affordable housing groups, environmentalists, etc. These individuals or groups will have opportunities to provide information or innovative ideas to communities doing their visions. Other communities may also have information to share or interests to advocate. However, the role of these groups is not to edit or negotiate the community's preferred vision.

### **Other City staff**

While the CityPlan team will manage the Vision Program, many other City staff from a variety of departments will be called upon to provide information or advice in the vision process. Where possible, they will also work to solve immediate community problems through existing programs. City staff other than the CityPlan team may also have a special interest to advocate, such as the City's Housing Centre. However, as with special interests above, the role of staff is not to edit or negotiate the community's preferred vision.

### **City Council**

City Council's role is to allocate resources to undertake this program and to implement visions. Final approval authority for visions rests with City Council. Council members will be invited to be "active observers" during community visioning.

## **5. PILOT PROJECT REVIEW AND PROGRAM TIMING**

### *Taking stock of the first two visions*

The community visions program has been developed as a program which could reach the whole city, for the first time, in a systematic manner, within several years. It is a new venture. Although grounded in the City's long experience in community planning and refined through the input of interested residents, the process is somewhat experimental. Therefore, as a major new initiative that can set new ways of planning, the first two visions will be a pilot project, with two visions starting concurrently in January 1997, to be completed in September, for review.

Process questions that the review could address include:

- Does the process successfully maximize involvement, broad decision making, and effective use of resources?
- How many visions can or should be done simultaneously, to reach all of the city sooner?
- Are there things that communities can do themselves to prepare their own vision, or get started sooner?

In addition, one of the experimental aspects of the community vision program is that communities are being asked to move in CityPlan directions in a way that suits them. There is a pre- set direction to travel in, but no pre- set targets to reach. From the city- wide point of view, this raises the question, "will community visions move far enough to create the type of city that Vancouverites said they wanted in CityPlan?" From the community perspective, the associated question is "Will City Council endorse our vision?" Questions that could be addressed in the review include:

- Are the visions addressing all the topics in CityPlan?

- When added together, what kind of future are the visions adding up to? Is it like the city people said they wanted to create in CityPlan? Are communities moving toward CityPlan directions at a rapid rate, or more slowly?
- How do the communities compare with each other in the ways they are addressing the directions, remembering that each community will have unique needs and issues?
- Are the visions making more progress towards achieving CityPlan directions than previous planning processes?

Additional questions will become apparent when the first visions are complete and during the review process. Many questions will require a collective judgement. Although the final decision on the program rests with City Council, staff and Council will seek broad public advice.

Highlight of the schedule are:

- Fall 1996: First City Forum, includes discussion of selection of first two communities for pilot project.
- January 1997: First two communities begin their community visions, following the seven steps outlined in this document over an eight- month period. (Due to the difficulty of sustaining public involvement programs in August and December, these months are not counted as part of the eight- month period.)
- Concurrent: A city- wide process, including City Forums will take place concurrently with the community processes.
- Fall 1997: Review of first two community visions.

After the review, the program could be continued without change; all communities in the city would then have completed a vision within about six years from the start of the program. Or, the review may find ways to speed up the process; create an alternative process for areas with recent plans; and/or lead to decisions to provide additional resources or materials to allow the remaining communities to complete their visions sooner. The review could also lead to a decision to change the objective of completing general visions for all communities in a short time frame.

## **ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

### **ROLES**

*More detail on the roles of the community, liaison committee, and CityPlan staff*

#### ***The community***

- Provide information
  - Provide information on local conditions, issues, and trends
- Generate ideas, values, desires, and needs
  - Identify hopes, concerns, values, ideas, opportunities
  - Create directions and material which will be assembled into vision options
  - Provide information to help evaluate visions
- Review options and select a preferred vision
  - Review, discuss, and comment on vision options
  - Select preferred vision
- Monitor and participate in vision implementation
  - Identify priorities for vision action
  - Maintain awareness of the vision and progress toward it

#### ***Community liaison group***

This is a large group from the community who volunteer to participate in the community vision process from start to finish. They may also chose to assist in setting priorities for follow- up actions and continue to be involved in the on- going implementation of the vision.

- Continuity
  - Provide continuity of involvement through all steps in visioning process
  - Monitor vision after it has been produced (possible role, if group wishes)
- 'Watch- dog'
  - Help to ensure that a broad cross- section of the community has opportunities to participate and comment
  - Help to ensure that materials are provided to the community in a way that is meaningful, understandable, and unbiased
  - Ensure that a wide range of alternatives and points of view are represented in events and materials for the rest of the community to see and comment on
  - Make the process, and the CityPlan team's activities in the process, more transparent and public
- Outreach
  - Suggest ways to increase participation
  - Encourage other people and groups to participate.
- Creativity
  - Bring a wide range of voices, knowledge, interests, and experience to assist the community's creation and evaluation of vision options
- Other
  - May help facilitate discussion groups
  - All work open to public
  - May set priorities, with the community, for vision implementation

*The Liaison Committee's role is NOT to:*

- advocate, delete, or select vision options CityPlan team

***CityPlan staff (includes staff from Planning and other departments)***

- Organize
  - Organize logistics for events, meetings, displays, surveys, etc.
  - Co- ordinate input from city departments
  - Manage budget and staffing, as approved by City Council
- Facilitate meetings, events, and ideas
  - Chair/facilitate meetings, workshops, etc. to ensure the purpose of meeting is achieved, there is a full discussion, and all perspectives are included
  - Encourage the community to put forward a wide range of alternatives and points of view, especially at the beginning of the process, to create and to evaluate visions
  - Help find common ground as the process unfolds and on a final vision
  - Call in outside facilitation and/or mediation where/if useful
  - Assist in developing innovative approaches to include in a vision
- Outreach and communication
  - Consult with existing groups, key informants, and others on ways to help increase participation and communication
  - Strive for broad and inclusive communication, participation, dialogue, and input throughout all steps in the process
  - Incorporate participation and communication on a variety of scales and formats
- 'Watchdog'
  - Make sure that each step in the process is followed
  - Check that all CityPlan topics are included
  - Ensure that vision options are consistent with CityPlan directions
- Illustrate, document, and prepare displays and reports
  - Document information and material generated by participants at each step of the process, as a basis for subsequent steps
  - Illustrate vision options and the final vision by creating displays, brochures, etc.
- Based on material generated by the community

- Prepare required reports, including reports to City Council
- Information and technical advice:
  - Provide information on the CityPlan directions, and on neighbourhood, city, and regional needs in relation to the CityPlan directions
  - Provide information, ideas, and advice that can help people explore possibilities and create a wide range of vision options
  - Provide information to help people evaluate vision options; this is information that compares each vision option to the CityPlan directions and to community needs, as well as any other pros and cons identified by participants

*The CityPlan staff role is NOT to:*

- invent, advocate, delete, or select options

## **SELECTING COMMUNITIES**

*Size, boundaries, and priorities*

### ***Setting the size of the area for each vision***

The program described in this document will be delivered generally at the scale of a "local area" as currently used by the City. These "communities" have about 10 - 20,000 people or 5 - 10,000 households. This scale is small enough to provide some sense of cohesion and familiarity, while large enough to allow people to consider broader patterns, such as bus routes, neighbourhood centre location(s), community facilities, etc. In a few cases, large local areas could be divided into two parts or small local areas combined with adjacent neighbourhoods.

Each local area or community contains more than one "neighbourhood" as people commonly use the term. The program will recognize and respect these neighbourhoods in several ways:

- the program will not rely on a single "central" location in the community for displays, outreach, and events but will be designed to reach people in all parts of the community, at the places that people go, and through material they receive
- familiarity with all parts of the community will be important in creating visions, and therefore the Liaison Group will have members from all parts of the community
- the visions will recognize neighbourhoods by allowing different vision directions for different areas. For example, there may be more than one neighbourhood centre, development character, design of public places, etc.

### ***Deciding exact boundaries***

Existing local area boundaries make a good starting point because:

- many boundaries are at the edges of Vancouver or their borders correspond with a major land use change
- most do not go through the middle of a neighbourhood shopping street which are likely
- locations for a neighbourhood centre
- they are approximately the scale at which community centres operate
- there is specialized Census data available for these areas

However, for community visions, local area boundaries will serve as guides rather rigid boundaries. That is, people can redefine the edges of a local area by participating in a vision that they feel relates to them.

For a small number of local areas, mostly around the middle of the city, the existing local area boundaries will likely require significant adjustment to be workable for a vision. Addressing this problem is a topic for exploration at a future City Forum.



### **Determining priorities for visions processes**

The following criteria will be used to determine which communities are eligible for early visioning:

- communities that have never had a comprehensive community planning program; or
- communities that are primarily single family, so that all CityPlan topics fully apply, including housing variety.

Other factors that will come into play include timing relative to major public or private investments (e.g., proposed transit line); the community expressing an interest in participating in a visioning program based on these Terms of Reference; and having communities on both the east and west sides of the city participating at the same time.

Considering the above, several communities are likely to be equally eligible for early visioning. Therefore, picking the first communities will require either weighting some criteria or using a lottery to establish the final priority. Selection will be discussed at a City Forum in Fall 1996 with the final decision resting with City Council.

### **OTHER ASPECTS OF VISIONS**

*Differences in visions; existing plans; targets, impacts; rezonings; a 30 year horizon; the status of visions; vision implementation*

#### ***Differences in vision process and content***

Some aspects of the vision process will be custom designed for each community but they will all follow the same basic steps. There will also be differences in the content of visions. Although all communities will address all CityPlan topics, each will move in those directions in its own ways. For example, communities that already achieve some CityPlan directions will likely focus their visions on other CityPlan topics. Some communities may be able to develop more detail on some topics.

In the Central Area (in and around the downtown peninsula), there are already many detailed plans in place or underway. As a result, it may be appropriate to revise the process described in these terms of reference. However, this will need more discussion and public input.

#### ***Visions and existing plans***

A community with an existing plan will probably want to use that plan as a basis for at least one vision option. Where the plan is consistent with CityPlan directions, it will likely mean that the community can develop a more detailed vision than communities which start with no pre-existing plan. If the plan was prepared as part of a City planning program, the neighbourhood is unlikely to be a candidate for an early vision process because the criteria for selecting neighbourhoods give preference to those which have never had planning services.

#### ***Visions and population targets***

There are no regional population targets for neighbourhoods. The regional strategy (the Greater Vancouver Regional District's Livable Region Strategic Plan) is to reduce sprawl and auto dependency by concentrating future population growth in areas already urbanized.

As described throughout the CityPlan process, the region has indicated that it would be beneficial if the city could accommodate 160,000 more people over the next thirty years. The city's existing zoning will accommodate about 100,000 more people when it is all built out. City Council has agreed to work toward the goal of adding zoning for another 60,000 people, but has not set targets for neighbourhoods or neighbourhood centres, nor included targets in the CityPlan document.

CityPlan participants said they want more opportunities to stay in familiar neighbourhoods as their housing needs change, and this means additional housing. The City expects that community visions will move toward meeting these needs, but there are no preset targets which must be met.

***The impact of visions on development and density***

Community visions are expected to support the CityPlan direction of increasing the variety of housing in neighbourhoods that don't have housing variety now. In single-family parts of the city, adding housing variety will involve redevelopment and more density in a way that each community feels reflects their neighbourhood and its needs.

The vision process will provide each neighbourhood with information on its needs and on city and regional needs. It will help each neighbourhood determine where, how much, and what type of additional development it will accommodate in the future, and the preconditions for new development. People will be able to review and consider their own neighbourhood's housing needs, created by the people in the neighbourhood as they go through different stages of their lives.

But visions are not focused on housing. They are about the full sense of neighbourhood and community. They will be equally concerned with all the topics that CityPlan participants said are important, including development character, safety, transportation, and parks and public places.

***Visions and rezoning requests***

Rezoning applications are made across the city on a regular basis. It is not reasonable to halt all applications until all visions are complete in about six years. Neither is it reasonable to consider rezonings which could prejudice a community vision before, or while, the vision process is underway.

For this reason, City Council has adopted a "rezoning policy for before and during neighbourhood visioning." The policy is to continue to process rezoning applications or inquiries that were underway on January 18, 1996. Rezoning applications will also be considered where Council-approved plans or policies support rezoning, as well as for heritage, social or affordable housing, and public or non-profit facilities. Other rezonings would be assessed to determine if they set significant new directions or foreclose options for a community vision. If so, the policy calls for them not to be considered, unless the risk of development proceeding under the current zoning would even more seriously jeopardize a vision. Normally, staff will provide this advice to inquirers, noting, however, that an inquirer retains the right to make a formal rezoning application and have Council directly consider how it fits into this rezoning policy.

As part of the vision itself, each neighbourhood will need to give guidance as to what rezonings could be entertained after the vision, and under what conditions.

***Visions have a 30 year time horizon***

The community vision program asks communities to look 30 years ahead. Communities will be given information to help them consider both the short-term and the 30 year future. But it is not necessary to plan now in detail for a 30-year end point for each CityPlan topic. The vision is a framework, it will need to be revisited and revised over time as the communities and their needs, conditions, and ideas change.

***The status of visions***

Normally in Vancouver, policy statements are approved by City Council and used to guide decisions. Visions would be adopted like other policy statements. However, questions have been raised about the status of adopted community visions. In other municipalities, community plans are considered through a formal public hearing process and included as part of their Official Community Plan. Significant changes to directions in an OCP require a new public hearing process. The Vancouver Charter does not include provision for an Official Community Plan. Staff will review options for vision adoption and report to City Council.

***Action plan for vision implementation***

Implementing visions may draw on existing City programs or funding sources, such as, traffic calming, beautification, neighbourhood matching fund, greenways program, and social and cultural grants. Where new development is anticipated, residents will set priorities for the use of development cost levies and community amenity contributions. Visions may also identify new funding sources and other ways people can help make the vision happen. A specific budget for CityPlan implementation is not included in the upcoming 1997- 1999 Capital Plan. Rather, as priorities are identified through community visions, these will provide guidance to work undertaken through established capital budgets.

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