

**Downtown Community Plan Review
Ideas Fair Book**

Appendices

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Appendix A

Ideas Fair Participants

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 Downtown Building Owner; Community
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Politicians

Wayne Wright, Mayor
Calvin Donnelly, Council Member
Chuck Puchmayr, MLA

Appendix B

Ideas Workshop Notes

Part 1: General Topics

The following notes are complete notes from the working materials generated at each roundtable at the Ideas Workshop held May 31, 2008.

Roundtable 1: Living

- *Very little discussion about the basic housing questions. Instead, focus was on the waterfront and views; the lack of vitality/retail/amenities; and connectivity.*
- *Message is that the fundamentals need addressing before you can talk about housing types/location/etc. Connection to water, shops, vitality, community space, services, leisure, it's all lacking. People can't conceive of the housing variables because of the magnitude of the other missing pieces.*

Housing-Specific

- Reason people moved here is affordability, don't lose that.
- Parking standards need to be re-evaluated because of Skytrain.
- Already 2080 units in Quayside and there is potential for more.
- Huge change in Downtown residents, more families with/without children, seniors are moving out.

- Look at the location of halfway homes, homeless shelters and soup kitchens and determine where saturation (map them out to see where they are concentrated) has been reached and cap it or spread them around the rest of city as many who use these places lounge around in the downtown core.
- Downtown is where the City's growth concentration should be.
- Concept for Columbia Street-- commercial with residential above.
- Need to plan where children living in the downtown will go to school.
- If building for families, need to plan for school sites in the downtown.
- If small business investors are wanted, the City needs to provide the population to support the businesses.
- On Columbia Street, younger people are not as concerned about safety but need something to do at night.

Need for Vitality and Amenities

- There is no draw to the downtown core for its 4000 residents.
- More like Yaletown.
- Nowhere for people to go to meet, need more amenities, indoor public meeting space.
- Community meeting space is needed, like the Roundhouse in Vancouver.
- Arts must be put back into the downtown.
- All amenities should be available in the downtown.
- If more people are going to be living downtown, there needs to be facilities for people to shop for basic services, not just wedding shops.

- Whyte Avenue in Edmonton used to be unsightly but now is a nice place to walk/shop/eat.
- In order to bring people downtown, there needs to be something to draw people downtown at night, give them something to do in the evening, provide eyes on the street.
- The downtown needs exciting shops, restaurants and cafes at street level.
- The loss of the Burr Theatre is huge, the Burr gave a reason for restaurants and businesses to stay open, Columbia Street was livelier.
- Front Street should be an entertainment district.
- Need more animation on Columbia Street.
- The closing of the Burr Theatre killed the downtown, services in the downtown are mainly for bachelors and brides.

Need for Connectivity

- Access is a challenge between Columbia Street and the waterfront - the train tracks and the truck route.
- The overpass is hard to navigate, needs better access for wheelchairs and strollers between Columbia Street and the waterfront, safety and accessibility are huge issues.
- Would like to see better accessibility to the Quay from Columbia Street, perhaps a elevator/lift at Hyack Square.
- Need safe and accessible pedestrian connections to the downtown from Sapperton Landing and from the West End and a walking connection to the downtown from the rest of the downtown.
- Skytrain station is a negative— scary and rough people around it.

Land Use Structure

- Downtown has multiple streets - Front Street could be the gritty entertainment district, Clarkson and Carnarvon Streets could be the service district for residents, and Columbia Street the commercial retail district.
- Because of slopes, a linear shopping and entertainment district is needed.
- Incorporate second level shopping with skywalks, creating accessible covered areas.

Larco Site and View Issues

- Remember why people moved here in the first place, keep access to the waterfront.
- Many residents chose to move to Quayside for the views of the water and that the housing is more affordable compared to other places in the Lower Mainland.
- Having a riverfront heritage, there is an unconscious connection to the waterfront with views.
- Don't want corridors of towers.
- Coal Harbour has incorporated towers well into their waterfront. Townhouses at ground level are at a more human scale, then towers set back coming out of the townhouses. Towers are well-spaced.
- Towers are nice and have their place, but not right on the waterfront (i.e. Larco) or where they will further disconnect the downtown with the waterfront.
- Provide places for people to congregate, business, and active spaces along the waterfront instead of walling off with buildings.
- Look to Coal Harbour - community centre, wider waterfront path with lots of room for bikes, people and cafes - people spilling out onto the pathway.

- The width of the open esplanade by the Quay market would be wide enough to provide access to bikes, people, and commercial space.
- Turn Larco site into a park, tragic if it is developed for high rise buildings.
- Connection to the river is important-- new downtown development would inhibit waterfront access and take away existing views.
- Losing access to the waterfront for rest of city by walling it off with high-rises.

Roundtable 2: Working

- *Around the table, people felt a sense of optimism and great potential for the Downtown-- that it was at a turning point.*

Negatives

- No schools, parks, daycares, seniors care in downtown.
- No class A office space and a lack of parking.
- Lack of jobs for high school students.
- Not enough commercial space in new buildings, such as the Trapp.
- Autobody shops at 10th Street & Royal Avenue and Lower 12th Street are an odd fit and the area is grungy. High tech offices aren't going to want to look out on crack addicts.
- To attract office workers, they need to be able to feel safe walking from Skytrain to their offices.
- Need pedestrian overpass to link Skytrain to Quay Market.

- Columbia Square is a suburban strip mall in the Downtown— a wasted opportunity.
- We have heritage buildings but we don't have the actual space to put employers in.

Ideas/Strengths

- Create more public access to the waterfront— within Larco site and other new projects. This is a key piece in our ability to market Downtown to new office employers and their knowledge workers.
- Ledcor uses Inn at the Quay as a regional training centre, due to its central location and Skytrain. This type of niche role has strong potential. When people attend all-day training, they spend money on their lunch hour, and at day's end.
- Douglas College— use it as an economic building block. Lobby for university status (most other colleges are getting this, why aren't we?) Students/employees have no places to go on lunch-hour. Trapped in complex. No retail spinoffs from students— school supplies, etc.
- Potential for offices very close to Skytrain.
- Yaletown high tech is a model. There is this kind of niche office demand out there, but we don't have the right spaces for them. They have to go to business parks with no lunch places. Yaletown is pricey, we can compete. We need to go after them, understand their location decisions. Look at the economics and our price point. City should facilitate this.
- Wall Centre, Shangri-La as model: residential on top with high value views, then lower floors for office.

- Chicago's Greektown is an example of the revitalization of a drug dealing area in a heritage district.
- Need higher employment density along 6th Street also.
- Need to balance the local serving and the regional serving.
- Use the city-owned Gyro health site to lobby for a crown corporation to come to Downtown.
- The core downtown area is too small to be a Regional Town Centre. Expand the boundaries up the hill to create a larger downtown, even above Royal Ave.
- Do not allow tall high-rise residential on the Larco site.
- Our efforts will be constrained by the real estate market, but we can be more aggressive than we are now.
- Focus on region-serving niche markets within healthcare— such as DNA testing.
- Microsoft-type knowledge workers are the people who want to be in a character place like this. We could get the next major software HQ.
- Use tax incentives. If we're getting more business density, this could enable a lower tax rate, since businesses are tax revenue positive.
- River oriented businesses— fish and farmers market.
- Current business mix needs to change to meet demands of future. Need services for new residents moving in— drugstores, grocery. Stores that don't close at 5pm.
- Large employers needed— senior government, City Hall, corporate head offices.
- Shops and coffee places open later. Places to go for dessert in the evening.

- Basic “lunch-hour” type services: insurance, hair salon.
- Museum/info centre to communicate our history/identity to office workers on their lunch hour, and plant the seed about New Westminster to wider audience.

Traffic-related

- Lack of traffic flow on Columbia Street, among the worst in the region. Reverse angle parking is awkward, involves trial and error, slows the flow. Deters people from shopping Downtown. Royal Avenue is backlogged in the afternoon also.
- BIA lobbied hard for reverse angle parking. It has greatly improved retail sales and tamed the speeders.

Roundtable 3: Sense of Place

Words that mean Downtown: Mostly neutral terms... transport functions and physical form (i.e. defined, river, main street) or simply “urban”. Secondly, negative terms (i.e. shabby, disconnected). Lastly, positive terms (having identity, walkable).

Heart of Downtown: More spoken of as *potential* heart, not current heart. Sites include Plaza 88, Quay, Columbia Street, and new Civic Centre.

What's Positive About Downtown: Most comments refer to views, natural setting.

What Downtown Needs:

Transport-related/Linkages: Mixed messages— more parking vs. car-free spaces/wider sidewalks and getting rid of parkade. Emphasis on seamless connection between Columbia and river.

Types of places: Emphasis on parks, plazas, and outdoor spaces. Less so emphasis on community centres, theatres.

Views: Significant discussion about maximizing views, protecting views, creating pocket viewpoints.

Key Words That Mean “Downtown” To You:

- Most adjectives are neutral, neither inspiring nor pessimistic. Most relate to physical form or transportation.

Neutral—transport related

- Big trucks
- Skytrain
- Railroad tracks
- Transportation

Neutral—physical form related

- Heritage
- Main Street
- River
- Contained
- ‘Densified’

Neutral—other People

- The ‘urban experience’
- Urban

Negative

- Shabby
- Disjointed
- Disconnected
- Poor people

Positive

- It has a clear identity as a downtown.
- ‘Walkable’

What is the Heart of the Downtown?

- Most responses are future-oriented— describing a future heart and not an existing heart.

Future-oriented

- Plaza 88
- New Recreation centre
- Quay (could be the heart, like Granville Island)
- Columbia St needs its heritage buildings to look good.
- The edge of the ‘Heart of Downtown’ can’t just be the SkyTrain stations, there needs to be a soul, something to relate to.

Current

- Douglas College
- Columbia St between the 2 SkyTrain stations.

Positive Aspects of the Downtown:

- Great emphasis on views.
- Views to the river and the mountains.
- Views of the bridges.
- Views looking at New West from the bridges.
- Views along Columbia and parallel avenues to it.
- Beautiful geographic setting.
- Good public transportation, only area served by 2 SkyTrain routes.
- The Downtown is a wonderful community.

What the Downtown Needs In Order to Make it Better:

Transport

- Cut traffic on the weekends for a few hours to allow pedestrian-only experience.
- Better parking, mini or pocket parking areas
- Add trolley down roadway.
- Need better transport to link upper and lower sections of City (trolley, shuttle buses)
- Get rid of parkade.
- Get rid of parking along Columbia Street and widen the sidewalks to allow for restaurant patio seating
- The Rail Road (RR) is a part of our heritage, but it needs to be made attractive.
- Maybe put a clear tunnel over Front Street and grow ivy over it
- The RR offers a type of urban energy (feel and hear trains go by).

Pedestrian/ linkage

- Reconnect Royal Avenue to the rest of downtown.
- There needs to be a seamless connection between

- Columbia Street and the waterfront, connect with pedestrian bridges and plaza to draw people there.

Specific places/types of places

- A place to hang out.
- Parks and plaza.
- Movie theatre.
- Small shops/café.
- Need a recreation centre (full service).
- Need a tourist attraction (like a Miniature World).
- Hyack Square should be greener.
- Put mini plazas throughout downtown. Sitting areas.
- Outdoor patios for restaurants.
- Community gardens (but not on the Quay).
- But, some said that community gardens do not represent an urban experience.
- Put an urban plaza at the bottom of Sixth Street (Larco site).

General concepts

- Safety
- More fun
- Hidden treasures
- Places to explore.
- Overcoming bad reputation.
- It needs to be advertised properly.
- Lots of heritage.
- Have weekend events every month (or biweekly).
- Needs to be contained along the edge.
- River is a working river; offers energy through its working boats and activity.
- Important to be able to do lots of things in one place.

- Make it more 'liveable'.
- I want to shop without needing to use my car.

Views

- View corridors might work.
- Stagger the tall buildings to allow for views in-between.
- The main view corridors are the end of streets, make it like San Francisco where the view lines along the streets to the water are unobstructed, and put in vehicle and pedestrian access to water's edge.
- Places to stop/enjoy views (benches, view 'tower')—pocket look-out experience.
- Tall buildings on the river will be a shock to people, block views from above, unfair to people above.
- People appreciate the views mostly when walking rather than when driving.

General Comments:

- The good needs to creep in so that the bad can creep out.
- New development will change the perception from negative to positive.
- People like to walk.
- The geography of downtown divides the upper from lower portions of downtown.
- New West has much potential.
- This is my downtown and I want it to attract me.

Roundtable 4: Playing

Types of Places

- Albert Crescent Park looks terrible but has great potential as a view spot.
- Need more range of places to go on the waterfront for dinner.
- Needs a street market on Columbia Street, farmer's market shouldn't be at City Hall.
- Need outdoor cafés where people can come and visit with each other and watch other people.
- Social people places—streetscaping, park benches close together so you can talk.
- Child friendly spaces make the community.
- Heritage Grill is the only real restaurant in the downtown, pleasure side of downtown needs to be addressed.
- Still need schools and other amenities in the neighbourhood.
- Farmers market should be at Hyack Square, in the downtown, not by City Hall!!
- Waterfront walking—parkade serves this function right now.
- There are enough sidewalk cafés and there aren't more because of our weather.

Concepts

- Thinks downtown should be called Old Town, not downtown.
- Serve people that live there first.
- Summer— should have street entertainment to draw arts and culture to the downtown.

- Needs to service local first, but needs to service a regional role as well as it has a true downtown core.
- It's not just about population density, it's about how it's done— the Quay Market thought they had a captured market with Quayside but it didn't work and has created a stigma.
- Really need to brag about Heritage Tourism.
- Making use of streets as activity space— arts first, local serving first.
- Child friendly space will improve overall safety and activity on streets.
- Needs to be local first.
- Agrees with child friendly spaces, to make it more friendly and safe.
- Needs commercial space to bring people, foot traffic.
- Need services and amenities that people need.
- Need to engage local community first, then regional.
- Create a place that the citizens want to go then other people will come.

Arts/Culture

- City needs to have much better communication for activities/events.
- Burr Theatre and Paramount should be movie theatres to draw people Downtown, especially the younger crowd that are moving into the new towers.
- Needs a medium theatre to draw people.
- Burr Theatre could be a concert arena, like the Commodore, in the downtown for the younger crowd.
- Burr Theatre needs to be restored/reopened.
- Burr Theatre needs to be redone for Vagabond Players.

- Arts first and then retail, this will draw people. We need galleries, theatres and events need to be longer.
- Need more festivals, more music concerts.
- Need to attract arts people and younger people.
- If you create arts atmosphere then others will come, if the City supports it financially and in spirit, the money will come back to the City in a circle maybe not at the theatre but in taxes, support of other retail/restaurants along Columbia.

Development/Land Use-Related

- Create small cruise ships docks/marina, & dock for visiting small pleasure boats.
- Front Street is currently ignored with no access to the retail along Front Street. Columbia Street needs to be a main high street of shops.
- The City needs to deal with NFPR so that people can get through to the riverfront.
- Doesn't want the Downtown to become "False Creekified".
- Create eclectic, cultural enclave around FRDC, new Multi Use Civic Facility.
- Western part as retail hub and eastern part as the entertainment hub.
- Doesn't agree with demolishing parkade, needs to be a plan to provide alternate parking first.
- Parkade needs to be demolished and Front Street needs to be daylighted and opened, can move parking up the hill/street a bit.
- Need to pay attention to the immediate- need to avoid dead zones such as Front Street, around Construction projects (Plaza 88), side streets, these

- can be made more vibrant with amenities and lots of on street parking.
- Limit high towers in the downtown core to allow light into the street and keep the heritage aspect.
- Thinks the Downtown is becoming height densified too much which will create wind tunnels.
- Haven't created any new business/office space and that is what's needed to keep the street busy and for business people to go out for lunch. Need businesses that aren't only stores.
- Need new business incentive- a tax break or something to help them stay afloat the first year or so.
- Suggests tax incentives and leasing help to support artists.
- Shouldn't take the residential development boom for granted— need to make downtown attractive for more residential.

Roundtable 5: Getting Around

The Parkade was a much talked-about issue. No consensus on what to do.

Wider Questions that Guide Parking Need

- Who is the development directed at? Local people? Or are we trying to get people to come here? When Eaton's, etc. was here, Columbia Street was very busy and very convenient. People wouldn't have been shopping here without the parkade.
- Will the people using this space be coming from the region or from the new local residential development?

- We have such great transit and there will be an increase in residential units. There will be a huge increase in local customers.

FOR keeping the parkade and assuring other parking supply

- The parkade was used a lot more when we had more shopping. What happens when we do a better job of bringing people here? With all the new stuff being built, more people will come and the parkade will be busy again.
- We may not like the look of the parkade but we still do need to provide parking.
- Right now, parkade is vital to survival of Downtown businesses. BIA opposes demolishing it. Paint it, add signage/lighting, and make it less ugly. Attract more businesses to Front Street. People going to new Irish pub and cafes at the Trapp need parking. We don't want tenants to fail. Encapsulation is a long way off, need to look at shorter term solutions. Artistic walls with windows, glass blocks, and art. Think beyond Columbia Street. Downtown includes Front Street and other areas.
- Put extra parking under the new condos. Available pay parking for retail customers separate from the residential parking. Will create huge amount of parking. Now people have 2 cars per family, but this is changing.
- Victoria Hill doesn't have enough visitor parking— hard for people to visit. Don't repeat this Downtown. Can't eliminate parking. Need to tactically locate it.
- Need a parking strategy.
- Make use of the pre-existing bus bays in the parkade.

AGAINST keeping the parkade and FOR re-assessing the need for parking

- Getting ride of the parkade would add sunlight.
- It seems like it is mostly empty/not fully utilized, even during special events.
- People could park in other facilities.
- What about downtown Vancouver? People still go there even though there is less parking. There is a critical mass. Get people visiting without over parking.
- In Vancouver people expect to pay and walk. People in NW expect to park right out front. People are reluctant to use the parkade because it doesn't feel secure and safe. It feels dark.
- Do we want a car oriented community? What about long term. Don't we want to get away from this?
- There is opportunity for co-op cars. Facilitate and encourage this.
- Right now Front Street is so dark and dirty.
- Removing it would open up the waterfront.

NFPR-Related

- Love the original Larco idea extending street over an encapsulated Front Street. The street would go right over and connect to Larco. It would all be level with Columbia Street with parking below.
- Waterfront greenway should be a primary focus. Create a park cantilevered over the water.
- NFPR: Could bring much more traffic but could also enclose and fix air quality. Is NFPR a positive? It is good for the trucks but is it good for Front Street?

- How does the grade change affect the Front Street merchants?
- Larco won't build until the profit is there. What we do in the meantime? As an owner, would like to see free 2hr parking like in North Van.
- Encapsulation won't happen in the next 10 years.

Quay & Waterfront

- Chicago has great waterfront redevelopment: [Believe Chicago](#).
- The Quay is considering becoming a sustainable mall with all green related businesses. Right now downtown is a destination for wedding/antiques. People come for this and then drive off again. Everyone whizzes though. We need a greater variety of businesses and more things for people to do while they are here.
- We need a new branding of New Westminster downtown starting with the Quay. The new owner is providing a good opportunity.
- There is great waterfront opportunity. Would like to create a green waterfront rather than condos.

Rail-Related

- Consolidate surplus rail track. This is not a good place for a switching yard.
- Have to rebuild the train bridge anyway, can it go in a better location. Think about emergency response routes and access to all of Quayside. Moving the lines would help rejuvenate Quayside and facilitate commerce.
- The design of the existing over passes is strange.

- Tracks here to stay, how to mitigate them? They are New Westminster businesses that are paying money to be here and they were here first.
- Railway means industrial jobs which are important.
- Most of the complaints are about the switching yards. Need a deal between the 5 users to consolidate the tracks.
- Need an extra pedestrian link which can be an evacuation route. Could be a new overpass. What about at Hyack square? They may expand the McInnis overpass or create a pedestrian link to it from Skytrain so that you don't have to go down to Carnarvon Street and come back up.

Walkability/Accessibility

- We need to think about people with groceries or strollers and seniors.
- We need more shuttles. Our community shuttles have high floor and are narrow. It is hard for seniors or people with a lot of stuff to get on so the shuttles need to wait for people which slow down the transit system.
- All shuttles were to be low floor for accessibility. This has not been done on our shuttles.
- We need a trolley car.
- We paved over the tracks but they are still under the pavement.
- Need tourist transit.
- It is easy to walk to the Skytrain.
- Transit is only effective if you have empty hands. Hard if you have a lot of purchases and such. Hard with strollers because they are getting wide. Not only

is it hard to get on the Skytrain there are no elevators to the platforms.

- The bus service is very good downtown.
- Want a trolley system up the hill.
- Seniors move downtown so that they can walk. The City is only walkable in regions. Hard to walk from one area to another.
- Hard to get to the Quay if you have stroller.
- Connect bike paths, especially Sapperton Landing to Columbia Street. Better integration of the bike/pedestrian paths. Right now you have to be very careful and watch out for trucks.

General Observation

- We covered all these parkade, riverfront, railway issues in 1996 Action Plan. What happened? Other issues getting in the way such as private ownership and railway legislation. Larco owns so much land and nothing is being done with it. The action plan wasn't forward looking enough. Need to look at the integrated sustainability model and integrate the different issues. Use different tools.

Appendix C

Ideas Workshop Notes

Part 2: Ideas Workshop - Specific Topics

The following notes are complete notes from the working materials generated from each roundtable at the Ideas Workshop held May 31, 2008.

Roundtable 1: Transportation

Problem & opportunity identification

NFPR

- Area is a big concern as a barrier, blight, and for its air pollution.
- The trains are an eyesore.
- If they can tunnel the SkyTrain, why can't they tunnel the trucks?
- Use the river as a goods movement alternative.

Parking

- Lack of consensus on parkade, angled parking, and supply of parking in general.
- Surprised the parkade is under-utilized.
- Statistics prove that the parkade should go and smaller parkades should be used.
- Reduce the parking availability.

- If we had more shuttle buses, would there need to be as much parking available? Small shuttle buses for locals, with a 20 seat maximum every 5 minutes.
- I went to a funeral and there was no parking at the church. Not right. A lot of old buildings with no parking. Encouraging old heritage buildings to be reused vs. redeveloped will continue the situation of old buildings with no new parking. Need parking underneath buildings.
- Reverse angle parking is very popular.
- Angle parking fumes are issues for the pedestrians.
- No fumes issue. Everyone likes the setup.
- Store owners with doors open may have problems with the fumes...
- No complaints have been made about this.
- Need density bonusing for parking provision.

Pedestrian walking environment/connectivity

- The Greenway is beautiful. It stops at private business. It's important in revitalizing Downtown and keeping it alive by attracting bikes/pedestrians. Protect it in the City master plan.
- Walkways should be created for getting over to the waterfront, including a ramp to get across the tracks at Begbie Street. The area down there is cut off. Even for buses it is a challenge to get to the water.
- Granville Island is the perfect model. Vancouver federal cabinet minister got it funded.
- Greenway is not very interesting, only curbs being changed. Need plants, more beauty, to fulfill the true concept and inspire the soul. Why not a hedge down middle of Columbia Street. Ornamental lighting would be nice.

- More on street experience would be nice, like cafés with patios to encourage street life. This will help improve problem social dynamics on the street.
- Closure of the Burr Theatre killed the evening life. It drew people to the downtown.
- Pedestrian bridge to Queensborough will allow pedestrian mode to outcompete the car in travel time to the Quay and Skytrain.
- Need network of greenways with signage/wayfinding. Shouldn't need to look at a map.
- Better defined routes for pedestrians, like IGA in Columbia Square. Need clear sight lines and walkways. Liven it up with trees. Connectivity is key. BC parkway has lost its connectivity. The overpass needs to be put in.
- More pedestrian-specific crosswalks, like Tim Hortons in Uptown, or on Sixth Street by the armouries.

Roundtable 2: Social Sustainability

- *Some find Downtown walkable, but others point to unsafe connection to Quayside and fear of crime on Carnarvon Street.*
- *No agreement on whether Downtown feels safe overall as a walkable place—at night, for women, to/from Skytrain.*
- *Consensus on major lack of places for families.*

Assorted Gaps in Services

- Amenities needed to get people to spend time in their neighbourhoods. Otherwise people have to commute to amenities. This means no social hub Downtown and no getting to know your neighbours.
- Roundhouse centre, in Vancouver, is a model of mixed type facility.
- Loss of St Mary's Hospital meant loss of some seniors' health services.
- Even pulling a cart up over McInnes overpass is hard for seniors. Too steep.
- I moved here for affordability—but rental buildings are under threat. I couldn't live here if it weren't for our affordable rental housing. Need to protect it.
- What is missing are mental health services— we have nothing. Lots of projects around addiction, transitional housing but this piece is missing. Especially mental health for the homeless, and persons with dual diagnosis. People are redeemable. We need programs to help them.
- Make it feel like Commercial Drive at night, appealing to adults.
- Downtown isn't sustainable for families or for seniors.

Street-Level Feeling of Safety / Downtown Reputation Issue

- Crack dealers bring a threat of violence to people walking downtown.
- Get rid of the Paramount, it's a deterrent to people.
- People from outside New West come to bridal shops and they see the mess.
- I don't find it unsafe (male), but my female friends do. New Westminster Skytrain station is our front door, and it makes a bad impression.

- I don't find it unsafe (female) even at night alone coming back from the opera.
- I never felt unsafe on Skytrain at night (woman) until last winter. 8 guys sleeping in a doorway at New Westminster Skytrain station, Carnarvon Street. Now it feels very unsafe.
- No eyes on the street with Plaza 88 design for Carnarvon Street, blank wall.
- Impacts of Plaza 88 construction—no sidewalks, poor lighting. Unsafe feeling on Carnarvon Street walking to Quayside over McInnes overpass for 2 years during construction.
- Safety audit assessment, block by block should be done.
- GVTA transit police are a new resource; let's get them on the street. Where are they now? Isn't it their job to address New Westminster Skytrain station safety?
- Plans need to consider social impacts and avoid gentrification. Not about cleaning up the homeless. Its about social inclusion-- businesses need to acknowledge this.
- Don't concentrate the social housing in one spot.

Gaps in What Families Need

- Nowhere to take my grandkids to play.
- Do we cater to those not here, to attract them? Or cater to who is here right now?
- Granville Island is a model. We should be a destination for families and kids if we want families to move here. Create a boardwalk across the whole riverfront.

- We have nothing to attract families. It's hard to get around hills with strollers.
- For families with young kids, parks have to be in walking distance. Queen's Park is too far, it involves getting in the car, which is onerous.
- Need the kind of family oriented facilities they have in Queensborough.

Strengths

- We have excellent public transit.
- With occasional family support for major shopping, and with IGA grocery delivery (for seniors on Tuesdays), it has been an easy transition giving up my car and living downtown.
- Army and Navy is a great asset.
- Great things happening with social services— such as Maria Keary Cottages and Genesis House.

Roundtable 3: Business and Retail

Negatives

- Residents can't meet their everyday shopping needs in Downtown. Need diversity instead of just bridal shops.
- Property tax for commercial is higher than adjacent municipalities.
- Many retail spaces have large floor plates unsuitable for “mom and pop” businesses.
- Loss of large employers such as St. Mary's Hospital and heavy industry has a spillover effect, fewer dollars spent Downtown and lost property tax revenue.

- There is a distinct lack of “Class A” office space in the Downtown. Large scale office uses are good supporters of retail spaces (restaurants, etc) during the day.

Positives

- The parkade is a unique asset, provides cheap parking (\$1/hour) and easy access to the Downtown.
- Some retail spaces with large floor plates have been divided into smaller spaces to create more viable retail.

Solutions

- What’s needed is sporting goods stores, large anchor tenants, large institutions, library, good quality restaurants, grocery stores, other basic services.
- More density will help bring more people.
- Teenagers have money to spend but there is nothing to draw them. Provide them a “funky” or “independent” café or place they feel welcome and not kicked out of. An arts and culture facility or cinema may help attract them, and give them a place to hang out in their own city.
- Have multiple streets, including a more “edgy”, less contemporary Front Street, using NFPR funds to redo Front Street this way.
- Trapp Block proposal will negatively impact retail along Front Street. Instead, there’s opportunity for Front Street to become a unique “funky” shopping experience.
- Large amount of office uses in ground floor commercial space which would be better suited for retail uses. This was a result of low rent and

available space for these office uses. Office space would be better located on a second floor or up the hill (Carnarvon or Agnes Streets).

- The bridal / antique niche markets are beautiful and there is an opportunity to use these to create a regional market.
- Can never get back to the original “Golden Mile”, but need to recreate the regional interest in the Downtown.
- Larco site is a large opportunity for office development and City could purchase it.
- Downtown actually has very little vacancy. Much of the prime space at ground level is being occupied by office uses which would be better located on the 2nd floor or on other streets.

Roundtable 4: Urban Design and Heritage

What are the most important existing urban design attributes of Downtown that should be protected and/or enhanced?

- Interesting blend of modern & heritage architecture— Plaza 88, and Columbia Street, and Trapp Block— heritage façade with modern building behind it accentuating its heritage.
- Preserve height of existing heritage buildings along Columbia Street or else shadows will cast along Columbia Street in winter. Currently, you can see the river as you come down the slope from Uptown and we need to maintain this.

- Could have higher buildings on the higher side of the slope, above Columbia Street and lower heights on Columbia Street.
- Human scale of the Downtown core is special and needs to be maintained.
- There's a Catch 22—the density is needed to revitalize the street, also by increasing height you can actually increase sunlight by creating slimmer buildings, density is needed to revitalize the Downtown.
- If height is dispersed then it's ok, but need to preserve what's on the pedestrian level of the first 4 stories or so, above that it isn't as important.
- Could have second and third floors glass sky walkways across Columbia Street to look at view of Golden Mile, these covered walkways could allow people to see vistas, views, river and provide weather protection. Could connect retail on second or third levels across Columbia Street.
- Plaza 88 needs a walkway from Columbia Street to the Quay to increase connectivity.
- Like the old buildings.
- Use elevators in parkades to bring people up and down to improve connectivity.
- The street grid pattern and street names are an important existing attribute, it's history, but not in your face and we need to preserve this.
- Street grid was laid out pre-car culture, so the city has an advantage that it's already there—the street fabric is already there for pedestrians.
- Bits of plazas are still around from when it was originally laid out, need to take advantage of these.
- The slope and topography of the Downtown is an important attribute, it has an elegant and thoughtful

streetscape that was laid out for views of the river and it should be maintained.

How do people feel about the Parkade?

- Front Street needs to be unburied, and parkade needs to be demolished.
- Move parkade over railways which would open up Front Street.
- Use needs to be changed, it is underutilized, females are apprehensive of using it, lower part could be encapsulated, parking above, brighten it up, create vistas on the back of the parkade and look at the waterway.
- It is a pancake waiting to happen in an earthquake.
- The usage is very low 38%, so we really only need 38% of what's there.
- Need to accept that people will be driving less, but trains will become more important.
- New buildings should use existing parking structures to help limit height of new towers.
- We are losing Front Street with 5 storeys of blank face (Trapp), it will destroy Front Street and it's a slippery slope for Front Street if Trapp goes ahead.
- An important attribute that has been lacking is the access to the waterfront. The parkade structure is a problem that limits connectivity to waterfront.

How do we deal with getting some density along Columbia Street while maintaining the heritage buildings?

- Trapp Block façade should be deeper so that it is more pronounced.
- if we're going to allow high rise buildings, the old buildings need to be separated enough or stepped

back from new buildings that they look real so that at the pedestrian level you see the historic 5 storeys, and the facadism is less apparent at the pedestrian level.

- If the costs are prohibitive to restore the whole building, then we need to accept facades or go ahead with an increased density. Need to move ahead on Columbia Street, it won't help to have deteriorating historic buildings along the Street—look at the past 20 years.
- Need to decide as a City what we want Front Street to become.
- Built heritage of Front Street and Columbia Street is an attribute, it's an investment in the future, it's more than a financial exercise.

There are sites that don't have heritage buildings: what should the City do with building heights there?

- Buildings east of 4th Street aren't heritage, they're 1-storey buildings that could allow for higher densities and towers to support the rest of the (heritage buildings) in the downtown.
- Part of the challenge is that the Buy & Sell building height variance has set a precedent; that area should be kept lower as an entrance to Columbia Street.
- Heritage doesn't start at a specific point in time, we need to be careful that we don't take away buildings that may be important in the future.

Roundtable 5: Environment, Parks and Open Space

Park Needs

- Need to plan for children, a school is needed in the downtown which could have a park attached; would be beneficial to work with the school board.
- Beautification of the downtown with pocket parks that include public art.
- Field space is needed.
- Need a central, open space/park space.
- Look at linear parks.
- Need community gardens, recycling and composting facilities.
- Passive space is important, City Hall green space does provide this, maybe add more trees to the space, making it more welcoming and less austere, add a playground.

Tools

- Land banking should be looked at.
- Work with developers to provide small urban park space.
- Maintenance is an issue - green space/boulevards/street corners could be 'adopted' by businesses for an advertising small sign "maintained by..."
- Successful examples of this in Vancouver, including Commercial Drive area and old train tracks in Kerrisdale. Community plots highly used and successful.
- Sapperton plaza provides a good model for the downtown, built with amenity funding, work with neighbouring property owners.
- Encourage activity on vacant unused land with bylaws or a strategy where something can be done, like a community garden, and encourage derelict buildings to

- be torn down. Provide a low cost alternative to just fencing off the property that is visually appealing.
- Implement design guidelines that require new developments to provide green space and public art at the front of buildings.

Concepts

- Wayfinding - provide linkages between park space, open space, and plazas.
- Better signage, information boards, information kiosk - directions to walking paths and park space.
- Public space does not need to be green, could be plazas or hard surfaces like cobblestone, provide places for people to gather and meet, sit and have a coffee.
- How can we use private space for public enjoyment?
- Serve the neighbourhood first, serve a range of people.
- Engage people living downtown already.
- Accessible to people from the downtown, the rest of New Westminster and other municipalities.
- Create a more human scale, incorporate townhouses at the ground level.
- Look at spaces between high buildings.
- Create visually appealing building entrances - the space, if designed well, could become art.
- Incorporate features that are nice to look at - atrium; use of historical artifacts; water walls - don't need to go into space but is nice to look at.
- Daylight old streams, identify where those streams are with signage.
- Utilize underground streams for energy.

Locations

- Create a park at Poplar Landing.
- Build a park on the top level of the parkade.
- Park on the waterfront , creatively using other spaces for parks - the top floor of the parkade, former St. Mary's site.
- Make use of underused space, at City Hall, get rid of lawn.

Programming

- Get people off of the Skytrain; provide an unstaffed tourism/information booth at Skytrain stations with brochures or a touch screen info centre showing different sites & events. Fund it through advertising.
- Downtown walking tour pamphlet needs to be updated, possibly include information about current and historical uses of buildings/sites.
- More communication with the public, like interactive maps and a website, that details activities occurring in parks, plazas, etc...
- Expand Skytour - rent headphones for a tour down Columbia Street between Skytrain stations.
- Hold an event like Open Door Toronto - a weekend event where heritage buildings in the downtown are opened up for people to visit and could include open spaces that have significance.
- Combine recreation and culture - take a walk through history, recreation does not need to be at a fixed location.
- Organize an art tour of art that is included in parks and at a future arts centre.
- Organize quirky tours.

- Integrate arts and culture into open spaces - events like ‘Shakespeare in the Park’.
- Provide a range of night life activities.
- Need a fruit and vegetable market; fish market.

Roundtable 6: Amenities, Arts and Culture and Entertainment

Local vs. Regional Role of the Downtown as Place of Arts/Culture

- Make downtown core active to ensure that it doesn’t die after a certain time.
- Make things centered so that each element can draw a focus and help the area thrive. Different uses can assist each other. The Burr could be a focal point as well as a new museum in the civic centre. Massey Theatre will still play an important role. Museums have both residents & tourists as visitors. Provide easy transit access.
- Cirque de Soleil is part of arts. Have to condense it and make it accessible to the region. The Lower Mainland is the important market.
- Serve the neighbourhood first. People working/living here need the basic amenities first- parks, open space and a library. These would have a high impact and would be used by a wide range of people. Library, museum, arts space and some multi-purpose flexible space. A theatre is essential. People don’t hang around downtown after work. Need to have local support. The attraction is just as important as location. There could be children’s programs during the day when the space isn’t used as much. Need to

- make sure that we get more use out of the space. The space needs to be flexible. The people moving here will benefit from that. The performing arts are important but needs a role in their own community.
- The aquarium and science world have many other functions outside of their core function. What can we do at FRDC?
- Critical to have access to and to enhance the waterfront all the way across. Need waterfront space along the Larco property.
- Serve the neighbourhood first. Arts and culture will work for us and the region.
- There has been a change in the retail with the loss of businesses.
- Want a recognizable downtown core that creates a hub. People want to come here because it is central. Want to be able to walk to each destination rather than drive from parking lot to parking lot.
- Maintain ourselves as a neighbourhood.
- Need to think about location to transit. This is a great place for people to converge.
- We can make a niche place that is family first.
- Right now people leave for facilities in other cities.

Civic Centre-Related

- Want a community centre. Right now people downtown have to go to Canada Games Pool and Queens Park. Want a multi purpose space. Right now the Downtown Residents Association holds their meetings in a church.
- Don’t want to give up the theatre space to create something else.
- Need child care and a library.

- Difficulty is balancing priorities with cost. Our library is the best in the region.
- What about a regional theatre, with regional and community use. Downtown is a convenient location that people in other municipalities can use.
- How can we complement other people's initiatives and not compete with them.
- Think about the region vs. community. The Burr Theatre can be a community facility but because of its location it can also be a regional destination. Need to make a choice and then run it under the right mandate that makes it accessible.
- Because of cost it can't be a one neighbourhood plan. Theatre is a specific interest that people will travel to. Use examples such as the Kay Meek Theatre. It is very attractive and useable.
- Want to expand the Massey Theatre. It has the capacity to use more space for more uses, unlike the Burr.
- Council and SD40 try to work together, but don't always go the same direction. School priorities come first.
- A museum would attract people from the city and region. Should work in tandem with FRDC and history of Columbia Street. The City has a very important history that it can highlight.
- Can we do anything with the Casino steamboat?
- We don't showcase what we have. Is there a provincial role we can incorporate?
- What about seniors and after school programs.

Density Bonusing-Related

- Access to the waterfront is so important. We are a small city with a limited tax base. We have to try and find opportunities. There's a lot of privately owned land.
- Albert Crescent is a ski slope. How can we better use this space? How can we afford to maintain it? How can we get more money from developers?
- City of Windsor buys a little bit at a time and has achieved a lot. Help support existing facilities. Need seamlessness and need to overcome the grade change between Columbia Street and the river. Need development to create plazas and connections. People should be able to walk from the waterfront all the way along.
- Lonsdale Quay is a model-- encapsulation with a number of uses incorporated.
- Need social services and a place for the homeless. Can't have NIMBY-ism. Need to provide services despite the gentrification. Need a good incorporation of uses.
- Think about how places of living and working relate to each other.