

2.5 ENVIRONMENT, THE RIVERFRONT AND CLIMATE ACTION

Issues

Air Quality

Air Quality is a Global and Municipal Concern

Processes affecting air resources involve both global concerns, such as climate change and high level ozone depletion, and municipal concerns related to localized air pollution (e.g., ground level ozone) and air quality trends.

Automobile Emissions Are a Primary Source of Air Pollution

In the Metro Vancouver, up to 77 percent of emissions are from mobile sources, principally the automobile. This statistic is likely representative of New Westminster, as well.

Air Quality Management Plans have been Developed

The Federal, Provincial, and Regional Governments have developed air quality management plans that are being implemented to manage common air contaminants and greenhouse gas emissions.

Strategically Manage Capacity of Roads

Given the projected growth rates for Metro Vancouver and New Westminster (which is identified as a Growth Concentration Area in the *Livable Region Strategic Plan*), it is neither likely nor desirable that the road capacity will be increased at a level that matches projected growth.

Water Quality

Brunette River is Affected by Urban Runoff

Urban runoff contamination (e.g., metals, nutrients, hydrocarbons) of the Brunette River has been demonstrated through numerous scientific studies. In addition, impacts associated with development activities (e.g., riparian clearing) and operational activities (e.g., site runoff) at commercial and industrial sites have contributed to the deterioration of basic water quality parameters (especially temperature and summer dissolved oxygen levels) in the Brunette River.

Preparation of the Regional Liquid Waste Management Plan

The Metro Vancouver is preparing the *Regional Liquid Waste Management Plan* over a period of several years. The Plan will address many interrelated issues including storm water management, the *Brunette Basin Management Plan* and the reduction of combined sewer overflows along the New Westminster waterfront.

Fraser River is Affected by Sewer Outfalls and Past Industrial and Manufacturing Activities

Numerous storm sewer and combined sewer outfalls along the Fraser River introduce significant quantities of effluent into the river. Further, it is possible that historical industrial and manufacturing activities have affected soil and groundwater quality, particularly along the Fraser River foreshore.

Fish, Wildlife and Natural Habitat Resources

Various Fish Bearing Streams Have Been Lost

Several of New Westminster's fish bearing streams were lost when ravines were infilled to facilitate urban development.

Poor Water Quality May Affect Fish Bearing Streams

New Westminster's remaining fish bearing watercourses include the Fraser and Brunette Rivers (home to salmonid and non-salmonid species). Localized water quality degradation in the Fraser River as well as activities along or near upstream areas in New Westminster and adjacent municipalities may affect aquatic life. Specific water quality issues include various contaminants from non-point sources (e.g., urban runoff) and point sources (e.g., storm sewer and combined sewer outfalls). Water quality degradation in the Brunette River may limit fish production. Specific water quality issues include various contaminants from non-point sources (e.g., trace metals, nutrients, hydrocarbons).

Loss of Riparian Function May Affect Aquatic Life

Loss of riparian function (including accumulation of large organic debris, addition of organic matter, stabilization of the stream channel, modification of microclimate, and mitigation of water quality degradation) associated with riparian clearing along the Brunette River corridor may limit fish production. Further, destruction and alteration of foreshore habitat on the Fraser River, in particular the loss of many areas and floodplain environments, may limit the capability of these foreshore habitats to support aquatic organisms.

New Westminster has Migration Routes and Remnant Habitat Areas

The Fraser River/Brunette River corridor provides a migration route for terrestrial and aquatic species. The Queen's Park/Woodlands site/Glenbrooke Ravine Park complex also constitutes a significant area of remnant wildlife habitat.



Climate Action

Addressing Energy Consumption and Emissions

There is increasing evidence that global climate change resulting from emissions of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases (GHGs) is having a significant impact on the ecology of the planet. In addition, climate change is expected to have serious negative impacts on global economic growth and development. Recognizing the collective effort and important role municipal governments can play in mitigating climate change, the Provincial Government amended Section 877 (Bill 27, 2008) of the Local Government Act, requiring all municipalities to include targets, policies and actions to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in their Official Community Plans.

New Westminister's small geographic size, central location within the region, compact settlement pattern and high quality transit infrastructure has fostered an urban character that exemplifies responsible growth management. The Official Community Plan includes a policy framework that complements climate action and advances the City's sustainability objectives. The new 2011 Community Energy and Emissions Plan (CEEP) provides further guidance and clarity on the City's path towards minimizing its impact on the global environment.

The CEEP is a 'living plan' that includes policies and actions that can be implemented over time. It includes a level of flexibility to allow for new technologies and senior government interventions to be explored and applied as the area of climate action evolves in the coming years.

In cooperation with senior levels of government, the City of New Westminister will work to reduce community-wide greenhouse gas emissions by 15% from 2007 levels by 2030.

[B/L No.7477, 2011]

Goals

1. Provide a livable and sustainable living environment for local residents by protecting, managing or enhancing the natural environment and resources.
2. Promote the greening of public and private property to enhance the City's appearance and aid in controlling local climate.
3. Protect and manage environmentally sensitive lands, particularly the Fraser River waterfront, as a vital public resource.
4. Improve energy efficiency in existing buildings.
5. Build the most energy efficient new buildings.
6. Encourage renewable, responsible & local energy.
7. Build neighbourhoods where residents can live, work and play in close proximity.
8. Foster walking, cycling, and taking transit as the preferred ways of getting around.
9. Support use of efficient and low-carbon mobility.
10. Minimize waste generation.
11. Maximize reuse, recycling and material recovery. [B/L No.7477, 2011]

Policies and Priorities

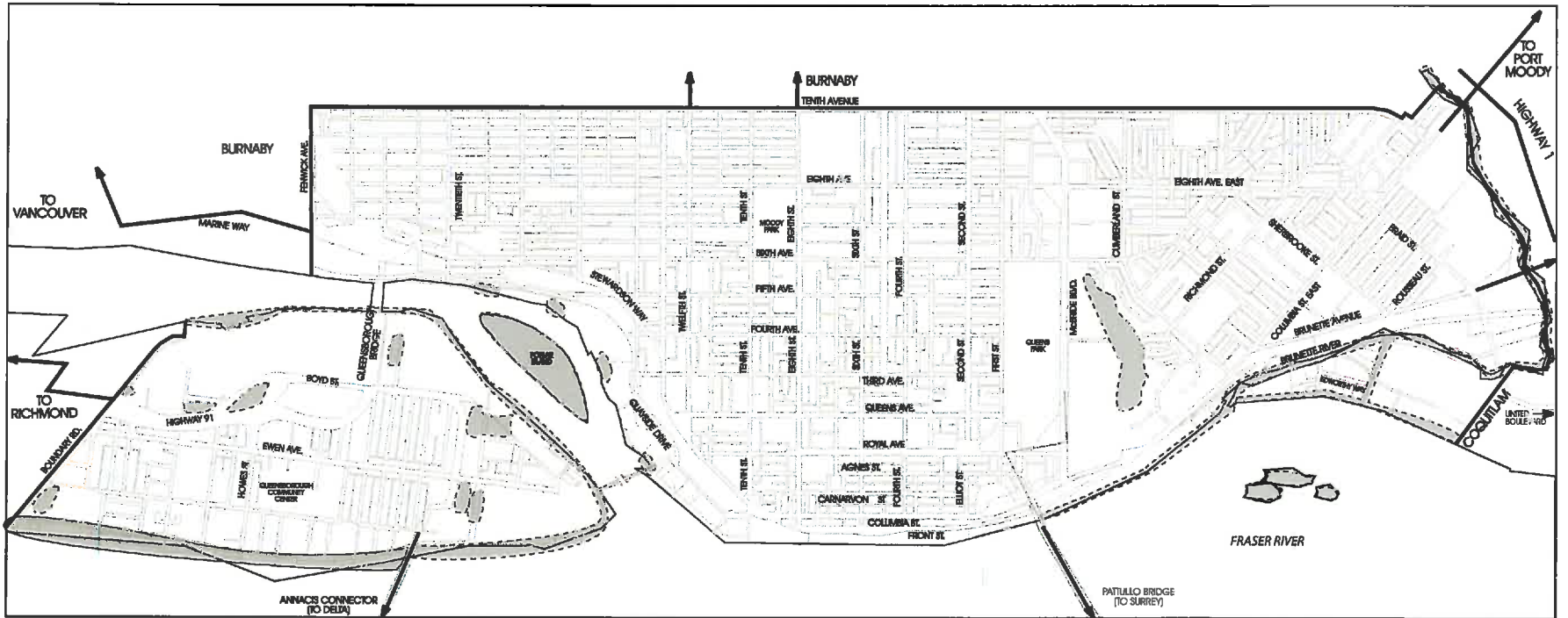
1. **Work towards enhancing air quality in New Westminister.**
 - Strive to reduce automobile emissions by improving transit frequency, promoting and encouraging employer based trip reduction programs such as ride sharing and variable work hours, and considering a municipal employee vehicle reduction program to set an example for the community.
 - Consider setting an example for the community by investigating the feasibility of using energy efficient, clean burning fuels in the City's vehicle fleet.
 - Continue to develop and implement the *New Westminister Bicycle Plan*.

- Continue to facilitate safe pedestrian movement around the City by establishing a system of linear greenways and attractive streetscapes.
 - Continue to require that pedestrian movement and infrastructure be addressed in the review and approval of all municipal and private sector development and redevelopment proposals.
 - Continue to encourage tree planting by the City and private residents.
 - Continue to participate fully in the Metro Vancouver's *Transportation Demand Management Strategy* process.
 - Continue to participate fully in the implementation of the Metro Vancouver's *Air Quality Management Plan*.
 - Review the need for more roads and existing road standards in terms of pavement widths.
 - Promote a City structure that emphasizes a compact and complete form in order to reduce the need for driving.
 - Give favourable consideration to technology that emphasizes communication over transportation.
 - Increase public awareness of the social, financial and environmental costs of driving vehicles and of the alternatives available.
- 2. Strive to enhance the quality of water resources in New Westminister. [Repealed B/L No.6742, 2002]**
- Continue to heighten public awareness of the potential for environmental damage and human health hazards related to the discharge of toxic substances into the municipal drainage system. This may be accomplished through, for example, the installation of decorative grates near fish habitats or the use of signage to identify fish, wildlife or natural habitat resources.
 - Consider monitoring urban catchment drains, particularly those near industrial and manufacturing activities, in order to minimize the discharge of toxic substances into the municipal drainage system.
 - Endeavour to maintain natural water flows along the Brunette River, Glenbrooke Ravine and the Fraser River in order to preserve natural habitat resources.
 - Continue to participate fully in the Metro Vancouver's *Liquid Waste Management Plan* process.
 - Continue to participate in planning activities of the Fraser River Estuary Management Program and the Fraser River Harbour Commission.
 - Encourage the retention of trees and other vegetation along the banks of fish-bearing streams.
- 3. Maintain or enhance the fish, wildlife and natural habitat resources in the City.**
- Work with public environmental agencies to further study environmentally sensitive lands within the City [see *Map E1: Environmentally Sensitive Lands*].
 - Work towards establishing objectives, policies and procedures on how to conserve and manage environmentally sensitive lands in the City.
 - Continue to refer applications to public environmental agencies where environmentally sensitive lands are concerned.
 - Consider supplementing the City's environmental policies with sustainable development guidelines from the Federal, Provincial and Regional agencies.

- Strive to protect the portion of Glenbrooke Ravine on the existing Woodlands site as a park area by considering the designation of a minimum of 15 metres building setback, where practical, above the top-of-ravine-bank to address the issue of environmental conservation and if geotechnical stability is an issue.
 - Consider “daylighting” streams, where feasible.
 - Promote additional opportunities for recreational fishing along the Fraser River.
 - Consider developing a long term strategy to acquire the riparian areas of the Fraser River for habitat conservation and/ or recreational use using statutory and voluntary measures.
 - Encourage the planting of riparian vegetation to enhance fish and wildlife habitat.
 - Continue to discourage new development within a leave-strip area except for such works as being unavoidable or publicly necessary, such as public works, pathways and creek restoration or protection measures.
 - Continue to encourage all proposed development at or adjacent to leave-strip areas to be referred to the senior environmental agencies (Department of Fisheries and Oceans and Ministry of Environment, Lands and Parks) for their review and comment.
 - Continue to encourage the preservation of the Brunette River corridor by participating fully in the Metro Vancouver Brunette River initiative.
- Continue to implement the *Zoning Bylaw* floodplain regulations in Queensborough.
 - Consider using the Fraser River Estuary Management Program waterfront designations as a guide to the present and future use of waterfront lands [see *Map E2: Fraser River Estuary Management Program Designations*].
 - Coordinate with adjacent municipalities to address cross-boundary environmental issues.
 - Work with other jurisdictions (such as the Fraser River Harbour Commission and Fraser River Estuary Management Program) to develop an approval process for float homes.
 - Endorse the activities of community organizations to restore and enhance fish and wildlife habitat.
 - Increase awareness and public support for individual measures to enhance the natural environment (e.g., building birdhouses, planting trees, native vegetation, gardens, etc.)
- 4. Encourage energy efficient planning and design.**
- Continue to set an example for the community by improving the energy efficiency of municipally owned buildings and facilities.
 - Encourage the construction of new buildings and renovations to existing buildings to incorporate water saving devices.
 - Consider examining a utilities fee structure based on water metering.

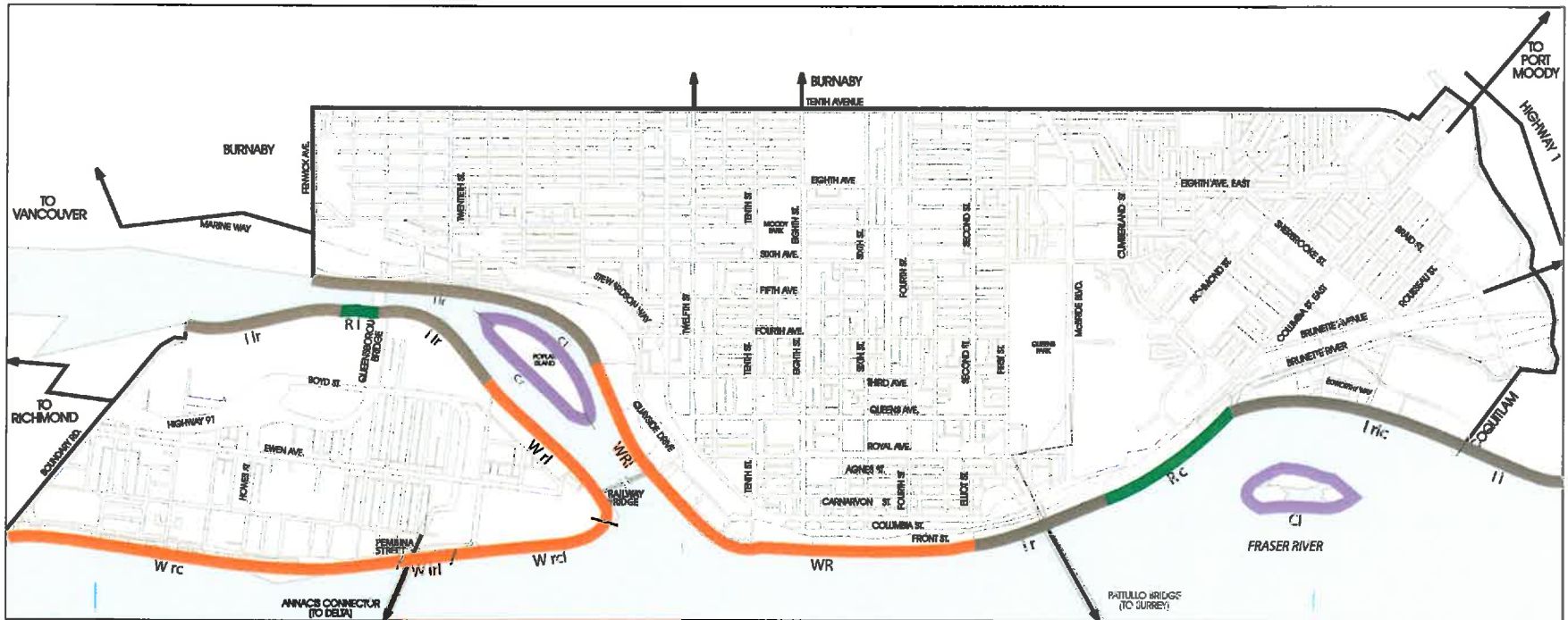


MAP E1 Environmentally Sensitive Lands



 Environmentally Sensitive Lands

MAP E2 Fraser River Estuary Management Program Designations



- W w Waterfront Urban Commercial and Residential
 - I i Industry
 - R r Recreation
 - C c Conservation
 - L i Log Storage
- N.B. Upper Case letter(s) are major designation of foreshore.
Lower Case letter(s) are minor designations.