

A Sustainable Urban System:

The Long-term Plan for Greater Vancouver



Introduction

Welcome to cities^{PLUS}, Canada's first case study of long-term sustainable urban systems planning. This document represents the culmination of 18 months of thinking, dreaming, talking, drawing, assessing, and most importantly, committing ourselves to a process and a plan.

cities^{PLUS} - or *cities Planning for Long-term Urban Sustainability* - is the name coined for a collaborative approach to long-term urban planning. The collaborative emerged as Canada's response to an international competition on Sustainable Urban Systems Design, sponsored by the International Gas Union. The competition involved nine teams from around the world, each preparing a staged, 100-year plan for a major metropolitan area. From this beginning, cities^{PLUS} has grown to address a number of key on-going objectives, including the creation of 'learning' networks, and the fostering of sustainability in innovation, leadership and business development.

Over the course of our work, support and input was received from cities across Canada, as well as federal departments, utilities, civil society and the private sector. The resulting plan reflects not only the challenges that face metropolitan areas across our vast nation, but also the desire to address these challenges in a long-lasting and life-enriching way.

This case study focuses on one specific metropolitan area: the Greater Vancouver region. The region has been addressed as a whole, using a comprehensive approach. At the same time, the results were developed and conveyed through a taxonomy of scales from the building and parcel, to the scale of neighbourhoods and individual municipalities.

Selected through a national process, Greater Vancouver was in large part chosen as a case study because of the multiplicity of municipalities and development patterns that make up the region. As a whole, they were seen to represent a microcosm of urban areas in Canada.

Greater Vancouver was also chosen because of the opportunity to transfer the results into the real-time planning of the Greater Vancouver Regional District (GVRD), the regional government that administers many of the urban services for the metropolitan area. This was a tremendous opportunity to develop the GVRD's long-term plan incorporating economic, social, and environmental priorities.

And tremendous it has become! The process has evolved into an overwhelmingly successful dialogue among over 500 individuals and organizations. cities^{PLUS} has evolved from a project name to a brand representing a major public/private/civil sector collaborative. We invite you to learn about our process, our long-term plan for Greater Vancouver, and our paradigm-shifting results.

This document is divided into four sections. The first gives the context at a broad level and with specific reference to Greater Vancouver. The second section articulates the long-term plan for Greater Vancouver. It identifies our vision for the next 100 years, discusses how to achieve this vision and the steps to implement it, and imagines how this long-term plan will transform the region at a range of scales. Section 3 discusses the legacies that are the endowment of this work. The final section offers brief insights into the making of our plan.

