



Urban Agenda Platform

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Reconciliation with history to move the community forward – a path towards sustainable development in the Grandview-Woodland community

Region	North America
Award Scheme	Shanghai Manual
Themes	Energy Housing Local Govts & decentralization Mobility Planning & Design Regeneration Youth & Livelihoods
Sustainable Development Goals	Goal 8 - Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all Goal 11 - Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable Goal 16 - Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels
New Urban Agenda Commitments	Sustainable Urban Development for Social Inclusion and Ending Poverty Sustainable and Inclusive Urban Prosperity and Opportunities for All Environmentally Sustainable and Resilient Urban Development Building urban governance structures to establish a supportive framework

Summary

The establishment of a partnership between Vancouver's local government and Vancouver's Grandview-Woodland Community has helped integrate affordable housing, employment opportunities, public transport and environmentally sustainable design measures into the locality, advancing sustainable urban development in a historically disadvantaged community.

Background and Objective

Located in north-east Vancouver as shown in figure 78, the Grandview-Woodland Community is one of several communities clustered around downtown Vancouver, one of the city's oldest settlements with a reported 29,175 inhabitants as of 2016. The community is also an integral part of the traditional territories of the three First Nations in Vancouver, whereby the territory is an ancestral and unceded territory of the Coast Salish people meaning that community residents are working and living in their own territory. British Columbia has the largest percentage of First Nations people accounting for about half of the country's total First Nations population. With more than 30 indigenous languages being used, it is also the most linguistically dense area in the world. The Grandview-Woodland Community is home to a significant number of urban Aboriginal people including members of the local Musqueam, Squamish and Tsleil-Waututh First Nations, as well as Métis and Inuit from across British Columbia and the rest of Canada. As of 2011, the community's 2,195 indigenous residents accounted for almost a fifth (18 per cent) of Vancouver's off-reserve urban Aboriginal population, the largest number living in any neighbourhood. The three Aboriginal peoples, Musqueam, Squamish and Tsleil-Waututh, were the first to inhabit the territory and utilize Grandview-Woodland and areas beyond. During the early development of urban transportation in the 1890s, the development of the intercity tram spurred the growth of the community into a vibrant part of Vancouver's eastern suburbs. In the 20th century, it further developed into a highly walkable and interconnected community and a popular destination for residents and tourists. However, at the same time the community has faced historical problems through the destructive legacy of European colonies. During the development of Vancouver as it is today, First Nations were dispersed to limited reservations and irretrievably eroded of the traditional food acquisition, rituals and culture of Aboriginal residents and their systems of governance. Vancouver, in partnership with Reconciliation Canada, declared 2013 as the Year of Reconciliation. This included acknowledging negative cultural influences and stereotypes generated by Canada's residential school system through a process of reconciliation and healing that fosters a wider and shareable understanding of the historical influences that have so far shaped the aboriginal experience. However, reconciliation is an ongoing process that will continue well into the future. In 2014, Vancouver was declared as a City of Reconciliation in recognition that this mission was not limited to a certain year but instead required long-term effort over generations. The city stated that it would work with local First Nations and urban Aboriginal residents to continue acknowledging their long-standing existence, addressing the adverse effects of colonialism and building new, positive and constructive



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relationships wherever possible to the benefit of all residents of the community. Clearly, the overall development of the Grandview-Woodland Community, a time honoured and diverse community, has a special historical symbolic significance for Vancouver. Today, the Grandview-Woodland Community still boasts a spectrum of heritage resources and a diversified social structure with approximately two-thirds of the residents living in rented housing. A long-term review shows that as cities continue to grow, so do the issues facing their communities. The challenges presented to Canadian communities have varied over time. In the 20 years after World War II, the urban communities sole focus was on accommodating their growing population, providing them with housing, utilities, schools and parks, and coping with the increased use of cars. From the 1960s, concerns focused on local environmental deterioration whereby community renewal became the desired solution until the 'bulldozer method' used to achieve this goal was questioned. In the 1970s, residents became concerned about the impact that new large-scale projects might have on existing residential and public areas including apartments, complexes, motorways, airports and shopping centres. In the 1980s, management of growth and affordable housing captured most of the attention of community planners, whilst over the 21st century, climate change and potential deterioration of the natural environment are now put under the spotlight, with a priority on ensuring sustainable urban development. The key question here is how to preserve the valuable qualities of a community whilst continually improving its affordability, sustainability, inclusion, vitality and liveability. Specifically, like other communities in Vancouver, the Grandview-Woodland Community is grappling with today's challenges such as environmental pollution and climate change; housing delivery for a diverse population; increasing access to affordable housing; ensuring business vitality; managing population growth stagnation; declining numbers of young and school-age children; an aging population; and addressing the needs of local urban Aboriginal residents and First Nations.

Actions and Implementation

The practice of the Grandview-Woodland Community demonstrates how local communities localize the SDGs with the support and assistance of the government. More specifically, it shows how local governments can work with First Nations and urban Aboriginal residents to build new, positive and constructive relationships for sustainable development in local communities by supporting affordable housing, encouraging community-based retail businesses, promoting green building design including energy saving retrofitting and adopting sustainable transport schemes. In the spirit of reconciliation, they are and will continue to build a better future for the community. Due to its historical background and social context, the Grandview-Woodland Community has compiled and implemented a community plan that illustrates its unique challenges and opportunities – an integral part of Vancouver's community planning system. In the mid-1970s in response to the pressure of urban growth and development, the Vancouver City Council approved the development of Local Area Planning in selected communities. Shortly thereafter, the City Council launched a comprehensive planning initiative called City Plan which marked the first integrated urban planning intervention since the 1928 Bartholomew Plan. City Plan: Directions for Vancouver was approved in 1995 and identified Vancouver as 'a city of neighbourhoods'. As part of the planning process, it was recognized that City Plan would only be truly effective if it included the neighbourhood at community level. As a response, the Community Visions Programme came into force in 1997. It called for cooperation between the community and the city government to create a vision for the future according to the direction of the City Plan and the needs and desires of the community. The Grandview-Woodland Community Plan was formulated under this context. Like other community plans in the city, the Grandview-Woodland Community Plan is comprised of four main stages: 1) initiation of planning; 2) formulation of the plan and policies; 3) plan drafting; and 4) plan approval. Multi-party participation is encouraged in the process of community plan preparation, and opinions and suggestions from community members and other major stakeholders are collected to ensure an inclusive planning process that reflects the diversity of the community. The plans and strategies related to sustainable development in the Grandview-Woodland Community Plan involve two aspects: social sustainability and environmental sustainability. The focus on social sustainability is targeted towards the inclusion, equity and resilience of the society, responding to the needs of urban aboriginal residents and First Nations as well as the challenges of housing delivery within a diverse population. Concerning environmental sustainability, the focus lies in environmental protection, most notably via the integration of green, sustainable transportation planning, sustainable energy generation and climate change. Community planning began in 2011 and in March 2012, Vancouver City Council approved the terms of reference to guide the planning processes for four new communities, initiating the Grandview-Woodland Community as one of them. The community planning process was expected to take two years; however, after planning had been underway for some time, it was found that there was no consensus on many issues. The council convened a Citizens' Assembly as an important tool to explore multiple options, address challenges and solve issues that arose in the community, and the plan was finally approved in 2016. The Grandview-Woodland Community Plan sets out a thoughtfully managed framework for future change. Critically it responds to the challenges facing the community, guiding local development to ensure long-term sustainability and liveability. The plan covers the following topics:

- Support a range of affordable housing options: provide a range of housing forms, unit types and sizes, with a particular focus on the retention and managed renewal of secured market rental housing
- Foster a robust, resilient economy: encourage community-based retail activity, and enhance and support community vitality and the local economy
- Encourage green design and retrofitting of buildings to support energy conservation: encourage new construction to use passive design approaches and existing buildings to adopt energy-saving retrofits
- Support a range of sustainable transportation options: prioritize sustainable transportation choices such as walking, cycling and public transport; manage the road network efficiently to improve safety, and support the efficient movement and delivery of goods and services.

The challenges faced by the First Nations have historical origins. Although Canada is a developed country, First Nations live in difficult conditions and their life expectancy is far below the national average. These conditions are caused by a complex range of factors including the dispersed population pattern in 'reserve lands' far away from cities, as well as inconvenient transportation access and extremely harsh natural conditions. In tandem, these communities suffer from poor infrastructure as well as a lack of access to reliable, clean drinking water, electricity, telecommunications, educational resources and



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housing. Due to the sluggish economy and few job opportunities in the communities, poverty was once synonymous with First Nations communities with issues of drug abuse, crime and suicide major problems throughout recent history. Where the current population of First Nations is 850,000, (2.6 per cent of Canada's total population) their suicide rate is five to six times higher than that of non-indigenous peoples. The existential crisis of First Nations is also a continuation of the suffering of Canada's Aboriginal people in modern times. Since the Confederation of Canada in 1867, the fate of the Aboriginal people has not changed and Canada's social practices over the past 150 years have been detrimental, destroying a vast swath of the nation's culture. Children of First Nations, for example, were forcibly taken from their parents to attend residential schools where they received so-called 'white education' and were separated from the influence of their families and traditions. The residential school system not only resulted in a large number of child deaths due to mental and physical abuse but also stripped the children of their culture. The residential school system marked the devastating history of the Canadian government's cultural genocide on the Aboriginal people, which continues to have a far-reaching and long-lasting impact on First Nations and other Aboriginal communities and families across British Columbia and Canada more widely. More than 20 years ago, the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples of Canada proposed to improve the living conditions of First Nations; however, successive governments have failed to address the root causes and take practical measures. Given the substantial investment and requirement for other Canadians to give up some of their interests, the government was faced with the need for authentic and effective actions to help enhance the long-term prosperity of First Nations. In terms of community planning values, the Grandview-Woodland Community respects traditional cultural customs, highlights representation and diversity, hears the voices of residents in the community, pays attention to the needs of First Nations and indigenous people in the community, and focuses on maintaining the diversity of housing, facilities, land use and economic opportunities. One of the core planning principles is to support the goals of reconciliation in partnership with the Aboriginal community, whilst the community develops unique and respectful ways to acknowledge and celebrate the historic and current presence of Aboriginal people in the Grandview-Woodland Community and seeks opportunities to reference Musqueam, Squamish and Tsleil-Waututh First Nations by utilizing traditional place names, and through other placemaking activities and place-identifying efforts. In terms of a social well-being strategy, the Grandview-Woodland Community carries out updates and planning based on the requirements of its indigenous people, and renews and expands venues and adds functions of service facilities for Musqueam, Squamish and Tsleil-Waututh First Nations to meet the growing needs of the community. And in terms of art and culture, the community supports the artistic and cultural expression and activities of First Nations and urban Aboriginal people. Investments are made in local First Nations and urban Aboriginal cultural activities, as well as Musqueam, Squamish and Tsleil-Waututh First Nations and urban Aboriginal cultural expression and activities, and public art by creating a cultural landscape, combined with cultural activities and contemporary culture.

Conclusion

The sustainable development of communities mainly involves three aspects: economic growth, social development and environmental protection.⁶ The Grandview-Woodland Community attaches equal importance to social equity and inclusiveness, community economy, and environmental protection and response strategies. It pays attention to the diversity and equity of the community, and the maintenance of the existing community network – especially the needs of vulnerable groups in the community – and accordingly guarantees a diverse supply of housing, employment, business development and services. The community not only considers attracting new residents but also pays attention to the retention and concerns of existing residents, and enhances the sense of belonging of residents to continue the existing community network. The community also pays attention to the application of green planning strategies and energy-saving technologies, formulates planning measures corresponding to future climate change, and evaluates and analyses the vulnerability of the community to climate change in future development. The Grandview-Woodland Community stresses the active participation of the public in the whole process of compiling, implementing and supervising the community plan; collects the input of community residents through the Citizens' Assembly, exhibition days, seminars and questionnaires and pays attention to their vital interests; analyses and diagnoses the current situation of the community together with local authorities and professionals; efficiently allocates and invests limited resources in the critical or serious problems of the community; and in a joint effort, outlines a vision of community development. In this way, it has achieved democratic, transparent and inclusive public participation in community planning and affairs, and promoted sustainable community development. Vancouver aims to develop into a liveable and sustainable city. The practice of the Grandview-Woodland Community is of particular significance for the sustainable development of cities and regions which are home to indigenous people. In community planning and when implementing specific programmes, the community underscores openness, planning, evaluation and supervision, and updates the community plan in view of future development changes to achieve the goal of sustainable development. Providing housing options for households of all income levels and family sizes will ensure that a community remains diverse and resilient, and is critical to ensure the social and economic health of cities and communities. In line with existing city-wide policies on affordable housing in Vancouver, the Grandview-Woodland Community proposes the following housing strategies: 1) to increase housing supply and affordability, and enable the development of additional supportive housing through senior government funding and/or the provision of additional density; 2) to allow for a gradual increase in the supply of secured market rental housing, non-market rental housing and ownership housing; 3) to work with non-profit organizations, housing service providers and urban Aboriginal partners to maximize the housing supply for vulnerable community residents; and 4) to increase affordable housing options in response to the diversity of community needs including families, single people, persons with disabilities and seniors. The transportation network fundamentally affects a neighbourhood's character and the interactions that take place within that community. Prioritizing sustainable transportation such as walking, cycling and public transport will help Vancouver address the challenge of continued growth without increased road space, creating a more vibrant urban environment and achieving its sustainability goals. In more detail this points towards: 1) adopting 'complete street' principles and designs; 2) improving transportation safety; 3) optimizing the walking environment; 4) refining cycling conditions; 5) encouraging



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the use of public transport and; 6) optimizing the road network and parking. To help Vancouver achieve the goal of becoming the greenest city in the world and contributing to a reduced ecological footprint, the Grandview-Woodland Community has taken active measures: 1) land use policies maximize opportunities to reduce energy consumption and GHG emissions in the community through the integration of cluster and mixed land uses, transportation and energy; 2) energy and building retrofits encourage new developments to utilize renewable energy and related technology, and the implementation of energy conservation measures as part of the renovation of existing buildings to improve energy efficiency and health performance; and 3) climate change adaptation enhances social connectedness, encourages stewardship of trees, green spaces and green storm water infrastructure, and improves the ability to respond to and recover from events. Develop green transportation to reduce CO2 emissions and construct new buildings with environment-friendly materials for optimal environmental performance. A Public Benefits Strategy provides strategic direction for future capital investments in a community over the long term. It covers key areas that support liveable, healthy and sustainable communities including affordable housing, childcare, parks and open spaces, community facilities, civic facilities, transportation, utilities and heritage. The Public Benefits Strategy considers the existing network of amenities and infrastructure within the community, as well as district-serving and city-serving amenities located beyond the community's boundary. In light of the city's priorities and funding considerations, long-, medium- and short-term investments in the community are planned to facilitate the implementation of a sustainable community plan.