

2008 Civic Election Candidate Questionnaire

Neighbourhoods for a Sustainable Vancouver is a city wide ad hoc organization of neighbourhood groups that includes residents' associations, CityPlan Vision implementation committees, ratepayers' associations and community groups. We are contacting all party candidates to request their opinions on various issues of importance to our member groups.

1. Please provide your name: **Gregor Robertson and the Vision Vancouver Team**

2. Please provide your civic party name: **Vision Vancouver**

3. Please enter the date: **November 9, 2008**

Neighbourhood Based Planning

The CityPlan Community Visions process was initiated as a long-range planning initiative that would guide Vancouver's development into the new century as an ecologically sustainable "City of Neighbourhoods". Community-based planning ensures that core CityPlan sustainability principles, including densification, are embraced and implemented in a way that promotes and preserves the distinct qualities and character of individual neighbourhoods. The consultation phase of the CityPlan process is only now being completed in the single-family neighbourhoods. Other neighbourhoods have local area plans or would like to also go through a CityPlan visioning process. The implementation of Community Visions is well underway. The CityPlan Vision process represents twelve years of planning and neighbourhood community resources to date.

4. Do you support CityPlan and related neighbourhood-based Community Visioning as the primary basis for future planning in Vancouver neighbourhoods?

→ **Yes**

Comments: We need to do a better job of integrating other city reports with the CityPlan process.

5. Do you support that CityPlan Community Visions developed through a decade-long neighbourhood consultation process should be respected and faithfully implemented?

→ **Yes**

Comments: We also need to take in to consideration current and future issues in the community in the planning process to ensure that the needs of citizens are being met.

6. Do you agree that CityPlan Community Visions should only be implemented through an inclusive neighbourhood-based planning process that is supported by a clear majority of local citizens?

→ **Yes**

Comments: There are very complex planning issues which all neighbourhoods must share responsibility for.

7. Would you increase the staff resources for CityPlan Vision implementation?

→ **No**

Comments: Vision Vancouver will be conducting an external review of the city's finances before making any new commitments to funding.

Objective and Meaningful Public Consultation Processes

The City's consultation process is generally not genuine or meaningful and is often orchestrated to yield a preconceived result.

8. Do you agree that City consultation processes should be genuine, democratic, transparent, and inclusive?

→ Yes

Comments: Vision Vancouver is committed to establishing a Citizen Engagement office.

9. Should Council members be required to attend public hearings in order to vote on the related issues (despite the technical loophole provided by recent amendments to the Vancouver Charter)?

→ Yes

10. Would you endeavour to make the City approval process more responsive to citizen input and ensure the right of citizens to speak directly on issues before Council (in contrast with a recent precedent to permit only written submissions)?

→ Yes

11. Do you agree that City staff should be objective and unbiased in the solicitation, analysis and reporting of public opinion to Council?

→ Yes

12. Do you agree that there should be a larger role for scientific polling and referenda in determining the level of public support for major civic policy decisions?

→ Yes

13. Do you agree that neighbourhood and community groups representing the public interest are not "lobbyists organizations", as has been implied by a recent report to Council?

→ Yes

14. Do you agree that the City of Vancouver should establish stringent regulations and restrictions on the lobbying of elected City officials and staff?

→ Yes

Reconsideration of EcoDensity Charter and Initial Actions

There is no shortage of consensus that Vancouver's future should be ecologically sustainable and that judicious densification can be an effective tool in limiting urban sprawl. The focus of debate around the EcoDensity Charter is whether densification should be the primary focus of the City's sustainability strategy and the way in which an advantageous level of densification should be achieved.

Public Hearings on the EcoDensity Charter and Initial Actions extended for seven sessions between February 26 and April 3, 2008 and heard from about 150 speakers. Despite an evident lack of public support and significant subsequent revision of the draft Charter, Council refused to allow the public to speak prior to voting on the final document at the June 10 Council meeting, permitting only written submissions.

In advance of the June 10 meeting, the City received 164 written submissions. Based on the letters posted to the City's website, only 23% of the public wrote letters in unequivocal support of EcoDensity compared with 77%, calling for the proposed Charter and Actions to be withdrawn or revised. With no reasonable opportunity provided for staff or Council to read, consider or address the substance of written submissions prior to voting, the Director of Planning presented a radically different assessment of the public response prior to Council's voting and unanimous adoption of the Charter.

Thus, despite the very significant implications of the EcoDensity Charter and Actions, and its potential to profoundly change land use across the city, more than 150 public submissions, including a critical but constructive review of EcoDensity by Neighbourhoods for a Sustainable Vancouver which represents 29 neighbourhood groups across the city, were virtually ignored.

15. Based on the above, if elected, would you support an extension of the EcoDensity public process to address outstanding concerns related to the EcoDensity Initial Actions and their implementation?

→ Yes

The City's Existing Zoned Capacity

There are estimated by the City to be 590,000 residents in Vancouver now and 656,000 residents by 2021, assuming projections based on the last few record breaking years with no future economic recession. This is well under today's existing zoned capacity of 670,000 residents. The 670,000 is a low calculation because it only includes the 'outright zoned' sites most likely to be built and does not include any additional discretionary Comprehensive Development CD1 rezoning or the additional zoning potential identified in the unimplemented Community Visions. Therefore, according to the City's own figures there is already sufficient zoned capacity for anticipated growth within the foreseeable future.

16. In view of foregoing facts, do you agree that the City should focus on implementing the greater variety of housing options already supported through the CityPlan process rather than imposing unsupported rezoning policy on neighbourhoods?

→ Yes

The City's 2005 Community Climate Change Action Plan

17. Would you put more resources into updating and implementing the Community Climate Change Action Plan?

→ Yes

Reinstatement of Third Party Appeals

Third party appeals to the Board of Variance were a right of citizens for over 40 years until a 2006 ruling by the BC Supreme Court reinterpreted related language in the Vancouver Charter and effectively closed this critical avenue for neighbourhood-level challenge of unreasonable development impacts.

18. Would you be in favour of the reinstatement of Board of Variance third party appeals and would you make a request to the Province to clarify this through appropriate amendment of the Vancouver Charter?

→ Yes

Development Topics

19. Would you protect existing non-strata and purpose built rental buildings from redevelopment and conversion to strata?

→ Yes

20. Given that older buildings are more affordable than new construction, would you craft new zoning to give incentives to retain, upgrade and densify existing character buildings to optimize the reuse of embodied energy and promote affordability?	→ Yes
21. Do you support planning the updating of infrastructure, transportation and amenities (including green space) before more development?	→ Yes
22. Do you oppose the transfer of density from the downtown Heritage Density Bank onto landing sites outside of the currently-approved areas, into communities across the City?	→ Yes
23. Do you oppose the Provincial government downloading their responsibilities onto the City by exploiting development density bonusing within municipal jurisdictions to fund provincial responsibilities, including schools and transit?	→ Yes
<i>Civic Political Party Reform</i>	
24. Do you support requiring full disclosure of all donations to civic political parties, posted to the City's website upon being received, all the time, not just at elections?	→ Yes
25. Do you support banning corporate and union donations to civic political parties?	→ See comment
<i>Comments: We are committed to a public process to discuss banning union and corporate donations.</i>	
26. Do you support limiting personal donations to civic political parties?	→ Yes
27. Do you support limiting campaign financing to civic political parties?	→ See comment
<i>Comments: Vision Vancouver is committed to reviewing election financing and will ask the province to make changes before the next provincial election.</i>	
28. Do you support restricting memberships to civic political parties to only people who are eligible to vote in City of Vancouver civic elections?	→ No
29. Do you agree that people who have an inherent potential conflict of interest (such as realtors, developers, and those in the development industry) should not be allowed to run for Council?	→ No

Additional Comments & Completion

30. Please provide any additional comments, if you have any: **The Vision Vancouver Action Plan is available at www.votevision.ca**

31. Name: **Gregor Robertson and the Vision Vancouver Team**