

# NSV - Neighbourhoods for a Sustainable Vancouver

## Basic Principles

*(Note order of principles does not represent priority of importance)*

The City of Vancouver should:

1. **Make City Hall Open and Accountable** - Restore and improve transparency at all levels of governance through a decentralized staff structure, meaningful public involvement in council and committee meetings, independent Freedom of Information processes, open access to land use planning detailed data, financial and budget information; and reintroduction of line by line budgets. Restore unencumbered access to senior city staff by news media.
2. **Advance Campaign Finance Reform** - Reform campaign financing and related influence at Vancouver City Hall. Regulators of land use policy should not be funded by the industry that they regulate. Restrict campaign donations with spending limits and to individual persons and avoid contributions that could be potential and/or perceived conflicts of interest.
3. **Value Vancouver as Community—not Commodity-** Ensure that Vancouver remains a vibrant, prosperous and sustainable city of neighbourhoods that values and encourages the broad diversity and character of Vancouver's local communities, culture and people. Planning, development and policy must place Vancouver and its residents above profit while ensuring that Vancouver develops in harmony with its natural setting, retains outstanding liveability, and is affordable to residents with the full range of occupations and incomes necessary for a vital, diverse and inclusive city.
4. **Respect Existing Local Area Plans and Community Visions** - Ensure that the shape and scale of development remains largely consistent with established planning and in harmony with neighbourhood context. Rein in the current preoccupation with spot rezoning that is distorting neighbourhood character, inflating land values and undermining affordability.
5. **Support Neighbourhood-based Planning** - Ensure that planning and development are rooted in neighbourhood-based processes with enhanced public trust and established community support. Ensure that recent and future community planning for all Vancouver's neighbourhoods is consistent with CityPlan terms of reference and restore outreach funding and meaningful influence to Vision Implementation Committees across the city.
6. **Empower Community Initiative** - Respect and support local initiative, community service and self-reliance. From Community Centre Associations to CityPlan Implementation Committees, citizens should be encouraged and empowered to take stock in their local neighbourhoods, realize their aspirations and promote the distinct character of local communities as part of a broader shared Vancouver.
7. **Promote a Diverse and Sustainable Economy** - Foster and promote a vibrant and sustainable economy by supporting established industries through appropriate policies and encouraging new enterprise with a focus on high-tech and green economies. Protect remaining industrial lands and collaborate with industry leaders, experts and senior levels of government to develop a strategy for growing a thriving and sustainable manufacturing sector with a diversity of employment opportunities.
8. **Advance Social Justice and End Homelessness** - Strive to end homelessness and poverty and ensure that municipal policy and services are effective in protecting and addressing the needs of the most vulnerable in our society (homeless, low-income seniors, youth, mentally ill, addicted, etc). Advocate and partner with the housing industry, public agencies and senior levels of government to foster appropriate legislation, programs and funding to address poverty, mental illness, addiction and the chronic shortage of social and assisted housing. Use authority for land use (and other appropriate

tools) to help protect existing commercial and not-for-profit services identified by low-income residents as crucial for meeting their needs.

9. **Make Real Progress on Housing Affordability** - Recognize and address the full range of factors that are contributing to the current shortage of affordable market housing in Vancouver and that densification is not a panacea. The analysis and solution to Vancouver's housing crisis cannot be left to the property development industry and market forces. Research promising approaches and successful policies in other cities, consult with experts and the Vancouver public, and implement an integrated housing strategy that goes well beyond supply and demand.
10. **Protect and Expand Rental Housing** - Ensure that planning and development do not have adverse impacts on the availability of low income and rental housing. Protect and incentivise the upgrading and improvement of existing rental stock. Where redevelopment is appropriate, improve upon current rate of change regulations and implement a city-wide inclusionary policy for new development, requiring a significant and fixed percentage of units be purpose-built rentals (below-market/rent-controlled if rezoning is involved) for the life of the building, or cash in lieu to be invested in below-market rental housing.
11. **Support the Arts, Film, Culture and Tourism** - Support and advocate for the arts, film and culture. Continue to invest in Vancouver's civic theatres and provide sponsorship to cultural events across the city. Ensure that planning and development recognizes and protects community assets beyond public institutions. The City should work with local neighbourhoods to identify non-profit and privately operated movie theatres, live performance venues, art galleries and other de facto cultural, educational and recreational amenities that are highly valued by the community. A wide range of potential measures should be explored, including property tax relief and, where appropriate, zoning relaxations to ensure that these community-valued enterprises remain viable.
12. **Protect Heritage Buildings and Viewscapes** - Respect and protect heritage buildings and viewscapes as central to Vancouver's identity and the diversity of neighbourhood character and place. Recognize the fuller environmental cost of new construction and incentivise the retention and upgrading of existing buildings, which due to embodied energy and materials are inherently "green." Support neighbourhood-based planning that seeks to employ rezoning and new housing forms as incentives to retain existing heritage and character homes rather than to demolish them.
13. **Improve Public Transit** - Ensure that Vancouver is well served by an efficient, affordable, and environmentally sustainable public transit system that attracts growing ridership. Planning and delivery of mass rapid transit should be regional in scope and encourage complete regional centres to reduce long-range commuting. The priority for Vancouver should be an extension of the Millennium Line to Central Broadway (not UBC), together with and a major expansion of the existing electric trolley network, including conversion of the 99 B-Line and other high-frequency bus services from diesel to electric. Longer-term upgrading to streetcars should be considered where road capacity and demand are sufficient to justify investment.
14. **Reject "Hong Kong" Transit-Oriented Development Model**- "Frequent Transit Development Areas" should not be regionally designated to avoid appropriate public consultation or to enable forms of development that are out of scale or otherwise in conflict with local neighbourhood context and/or established planning. TransLink's mandate to generate revenue through strategic real estate investments (the so-called "Hong Kong model") constitutes a systemic conflict of interest and would contribute to speculative inflation of land values. Proceeds of rezoning currently support civic amenities and social housing. Diverting this revenue stream from the City of Vancouver to TransLink would therefore impact the City's capital budget and create pressure for property tax increases. Transit-related rezoning should not be considered in advance of infrastructure delivery. The City should oppose further near-term transit fare increases and advocate for sustained federal and provincial funding of transit through progressive carbon-related fees and taxes.

15. **Support Active Transportation** - Continue to encourage walking and cycling as viable and healthy modes of local transportation with improved infrastructure that must also be in balance with the need to maintain an efficient and well-distributed road and transit network. More sustainable electric and hybrid vehicles, car share programs, and car pooling should also be supported through policy and infrastructure.
  
16. **Improve Environmental Sustainability** - Improve practical performance on environmental sustainability. Expand the current recycling program to include plastic bags and further incentivise or mandate deconstruction to maximize reuse, recycling and recovery of the building materials. Protect and enhance the parks, green space and mountain views that make Vancouver a special place.

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