

West Vancouver

Community engagement and contribution to the District of West Vancouver 2009 Strategic Planning Process

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5/1/2009

This document contains both summaries and verbatim transcriptions of community member contributions to the District of West Vancouver 2009 strategic planning process. Data gathered and presented herein resulted from modified Interview Matrix and Open Space processes.

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SUMMARY AND SYNTHESIS

OVERVIEW OF PROCESS

This paper represents the sum total of participant contributions to the District of West Vancouver's visioning portion of the 2009 strategic planning process. Two community forums were conducted, one on April 1st at the Morris J. Wosk Centre for Dialogue and the other on April 25th at the District of West Vancouver Memorial Library. Both sessions were identical in format with the intent of producing output of substance that would inform the District's high-level vision and emerging strategic priorities.

The morning of both sessions saw a modified "Interview Matrix" process which resulted in upwards of 450 interviews whereby each participant (approximately 140) was afforded ten-minute interview periods for each of the following questions:

1. What is unique about West Vancouver's past?
2. Imagine the best of all worlds for West Vancouver 25 years from now. Describe: what the community experience will be like; what it will be like to live, work and play here; and what will be important to the community.
3. From your perspective, what are the issues of today and tomorrow we need to face?
4. What inspires you to make West Vancouver home?

Using a modified Open Space Forum in the afternoon session, each participant was asked to finish the statement: "*In order to fully live into our preferred future discussed in the morning session(s) I/we need to pay attention to ...*" Each final portion of the sentence stem became an agenda item for group discussion. Participants from both sessions separately raised more than 60 topics of importance in reaching West Vancouver's vision. Once these topics had been raised, participants were asked to discuss:

1. What are we already doing that will help us in this topic area?
2. What should we start doing that will assist us in this topic area?
3. Related to this topic area, what should we stop doing?

At the end of the day, participants were provided with a mock budget of \$1.85 at which point they were asked to distribute their entire budget across any item raised during the Open Space Forum with the understanding that the highest amount of funds should be allotted to those items they deemed most important in helping the District of West Vancouver move toward its emerging vision. Participants were also given the caveat that although they were to spend their entire budget, they could not, however, spend any more than \$1.00 on any one topic.

This report contains verbatim comments and summaries of participant conversations obtained during this process. Items contained in the Open Space Forum Output section are ranked according to the composite value of funds dispensed by participants during the nominal voting process.

VISION THEMES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The facilitator's analysis of the data provided by the participants suggests the following statements should be considered as the basis of the District's 25 year vision:

West Vancouver is a vibrant waterfront village of cultural expression, leading the world in socially responsible living, environmental stewardship and quality of community life.

The following statements are central to leveraging the power of this vision:

West Vancouver community members have a passion for reigniting the vibrancy inherent in the unique "village feel" of the community. They envision a walkable waterfront that is alive with social activity, small-business commerce, cultural displays, green space, and open, friendly gathering spaces of all sorts. The "village experience" extends beyond the waterfront to multiple centres throughout the district.

West Vancouver's waterfront has a significant place in its history and future both literally and symbolically. In the past it has served in part to define the community: to separate it and to connect it. In the future, it will be a gathering place, a place to simultaneously respect, re-energize and recreate. It will be a means by which community members connect with other destinations, and with each other.

West Vancouver's exquisitely rich cultural heritage and capacity of its community members is fundamental to expression and enjoyment of co-created life together. The community wishes to share this among neighbors and throughout the world.

West Vancouver community members recognize the importance of being demographically diverse in order to experience a sustained rich and vibrant community life. Members envision the energy and spark of children and families living, working and playing in their own community. They also recognize the importance of the need to cautiously increase population density, to develop affordable housing alternatives for members across the spectrum of life's stages. To support this reality, they also recognize and respect the need for law and security, for adequate municipal infrastructure capacity, an increased and sustainable tax base, and for education alternatives.

West Vancouver holds in the highest possible esteem, the natural beauty for which it is blessed and renowned. The distinctive environment both defines West Vancouver and enriches it. To protect this central component of the District experience, community members seek to lead the world in environmentally sound approaches to

living, development and stewardship. They recognize the critical and urgent need to develop and implement climate mitigation and adaptation strategies, as well as those strategies and activities that show prudence and respect for nourishing the natural environment in which they are privileged to live.

West Vancouver community members also have a passion for community. Their future holds more community gatherings, a heightened sense of "neighbourliness," shared experiences and responsibilities, centres for community-based activity, environmentally sound transportation alternatives, and increased local economic activity.

RECOMMENDED PRIORITIES FOR DISCUSSION DURING COMMUNITY CONSULTATION CAFÉ'S

Based on community input during the Open Space Forums in particular, the facilitator recommends the following topics and associated questions should be explored or at least serve as the basis for developing additional questions of critical importance (no particular order):

Affordable Housing Development

- a. What do you see as core strategies in increasing affordable housing options in our community? What long-term goals should we establish?
- b. What sustainable development strategies should we employ if we do consider increased density?
- c. How can we avoid exacerbating a community split in social status identified by housing? Is this important, or is it not?

Environmental Stewardship and Issues of Sustainability

- a. What goals should we establish and what actions should we take within West Vancouver in the next 5, 10 and 25 years in order to increase our capacity to adapt to climate change? To mitigate it?
- b. Twenty-Five Years from now, if we fully nourish our natural environment in the District of West Vancouver, what would it look like? What would be different than today? What would you notice?
- c. How can we as a community best encourage and support individual and family living that has a positive impact on the environment?

Cultural Expression and Activity

- a. On a long-term basis, how should we honour our artists and our arts legacy?
- b. What goals should we establish and what specific initiatives should we undertake to make West Vancouver a destination for cultural excellence?
- c. How can we embed arts and culture into our community "waterfront village" experience?

Closing the Generation Gap

- a. What can we do to increase the 20-30 year old demographic in the District?
- b. How can we best increase living and work opportunities for young people in the District?
- c. What initiatives and practices should we undertake in order to connect multiple generations within our community?

Developing our Economic Capacity

- a. What opportunities either currently exist or should be created in order to increase our economic capacity within West Vancouver?
- b. What services and/or destinations should be created or exploited to enhance our economic capacity?
- c. What is our strategic economic advantage within West Vancouver?

Revitalizing the Village Vibrancy

- a. What can we do to make our village(s) truly come to life?
- b. What strategies should the municipality, our citizens and businesses consider doing in order to strengthen our village character?
- c. What needs attention in our various villages? What long-term goals should be established?

