



STRATEGIC PLAN

City of Vancouver, WA

Updated May, 2008



STRATEGIC PLAN

CITY OF VANCOUVER, WASHINGTON

May 1998
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May 2008

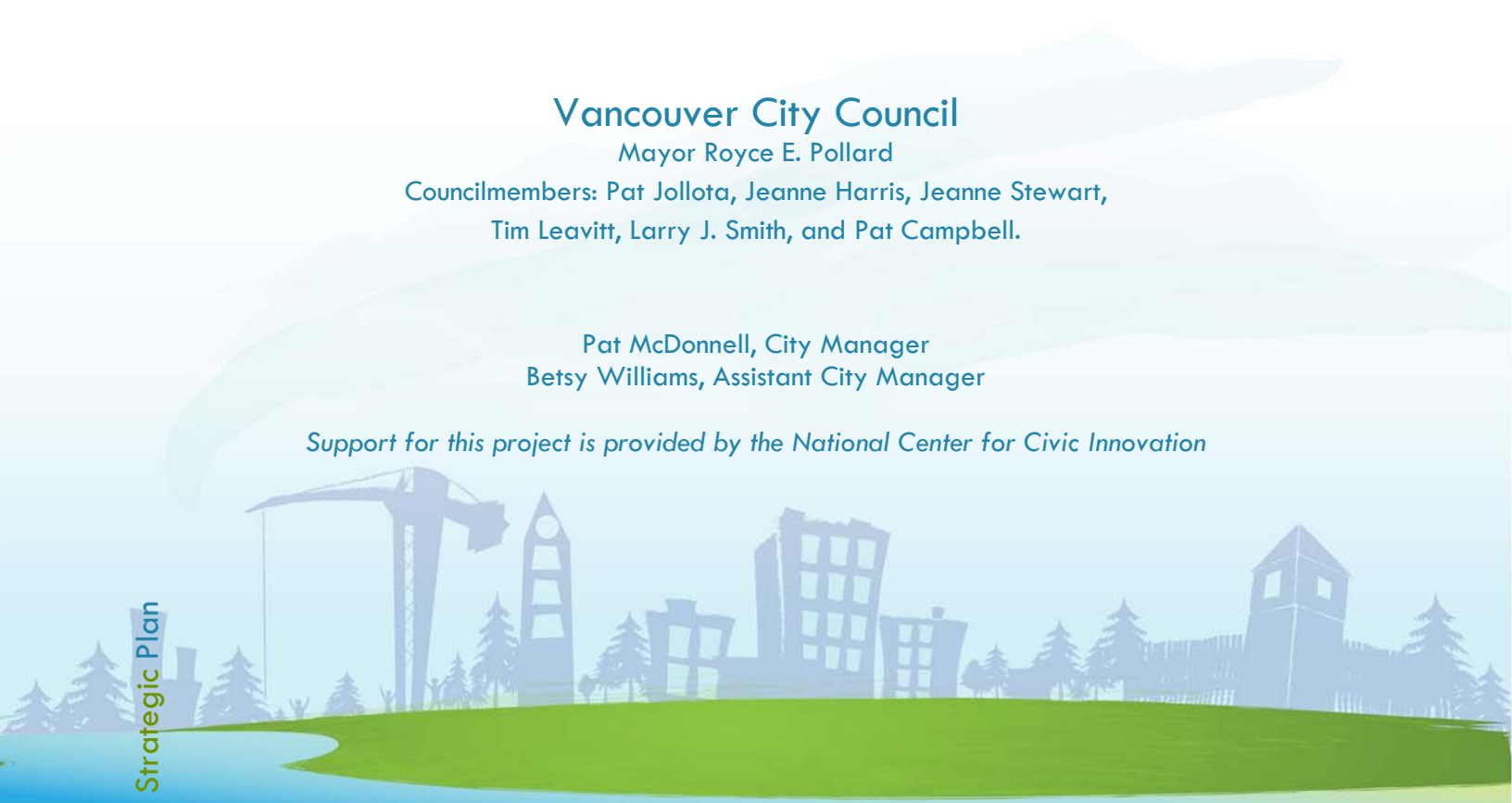
Vancouver City Council

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2008 Vancouver City Council



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Mayor Royce E. Pollard



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*"THE CITY is the place where the
diffused rays of many
separate lives fall into focus."*

- Lewis Mumford

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Mayor's Message

On behalf of the Vancouver City Council, I am pleased to present you with Vancouver's 2008 Strategic Plan Update.

Why does Vancouver need a strategic plan? Just as it is a good idea to have a road map before embarking on a major journey it is an equally good idea for a community to have a strategic plan to make sure it achieves its goals. In other words, this strategic plan is a map to Vancouver's future, describing the roads and paths to travel to get to our destination.

The creation of this plan involved more than 2,000 people from throughout all parts of our community – residents, businesses, non-profits, youth, seniors, neighborhoods and non-English speakers. The result of our outreach is reflected here in a new, more focused vision for Vancouver built upon our seven core values: Active and Livable Neighborhoods; Natural Resources; Economic Vitality and Diversity; Cultural Diversity; Responsive Government; Heritage; and Quality Urban Services.

This updated strategic plan focuses on six strategic commitments that the city council will use to guide our community's direction. We will monitor our progress with the development of key indicators for each commitment.

These commitments are:

- A Healthy, Livable, Sustainable Vancouver
- Transportation Mobility and Connectivity
- Financial Health and Economic Vitality
- A Safe and Prepared Community
- Accountable, Responsive City Government
- An Active, Involved Community

This strategic plan builds on our past and will guide us into the 21st century. Implementing this plan together will enable us to move positively and confidently into the future with the assurance that Vancouver's needs are well met for years to come. Thank you for being an important part of our community.



Mayor Royce E. Pollard

WE ARE VANCOUVER 2028

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

As birthplace of the Pacific Northwest, Vancouver, Washington, is at a unique crossroads as it celebrates 150 years as an incorporated city. We are proud of our distinguished heritage and rich history but we want to be an active partner in helping to shape a dynamic and prosperous future not only for our city but for our region.

In March 2007 the Vancouver City Council began a process that involved city staff as well as our entire community to update our Strategic Plan including our vision for Vancouver's future. The original Strategic Plan that serves as the foundation for this update was developed in 1997 and adopted by council in 1998 soon after the annexation of the Cascade Park area to the city, making Vancouver the 4th largest city in the state of Washington. The Plan was updated in 2000 and the celebration of our 150th birthday in 2007 was a logical time to evaluate whether the vision in the original plan was still shared by our citizens and whether the city's priority areas of focus were the right ones to achieve that vision. The city of Vancouver has realized many significant accomplishments during the past decade, but there are new challenges and opportunities ahead.

As we met with the community, conducted surveys and focus groups and provided opportunities to receive feedback through the city's web site we asked a series of fundamental questions. What kind of city do we want to be? What does it mean to be the 4th largest city in the state? What is our role in the larger community – the county, the region, the state, and the nation? How do we envision our future? Is the vision created ten years ago still valid? Should it be changed? What are the most pressing issues and challenges our community will face in the next five to ten years? Where should city government focus its priorities?

That discussion involved more than 2,000 individuals. The result is that we have a new, more focused vision for the city of Vancouver built upon our core values: active and livable neighborhoods, natural resources, economic vitality and diversity, cultural diversity, responsive government, heritage, and quality urban services. This updated strategic plan focuses on six strategic commitments that will guide city council's budgetary and policy decisions:

- A Healthy, Livable, Sustainable Vancouver
- Transportation Mobility and Connectivity
- Financial Health and Economic Vitality
- A Safe and Prepared Community
- Accountable, Responsive City Government
- An Active, Involved Community

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY, continued

Implementation strategies will be developed through the city's budget process and departmental business plans. Progress towards achieving these commitments will be measured and monitored by key indicators identified in the Plan. This Strategic Plan Update is a dynamic roadmap to help realize our community's future and in concert with other planning and policy documents, will provide us with the tools to achieve our community's vision.

*"Continue to be the beautiful city more and more people want to visit and inhabit.
Keep our charm for generations to come"*

- Stakeholder comment

INTRODUCTION

To paraphrase Lewis Carroll in *Through the Looking Glass*, if you don't know where you're going, it doesn't matter which way you go! The purpose of a strategic plan is to help organizations and communities determine where they want to go, what they want to be, and how to get where they want to go, or in other words, how to achieve their vision for the future. For a strategic plan to be more than an academic exercise that results in an impressive, but dreary document gathering dust on a shelf, it must be developed by people who are passionate about an organization's potential and its future. What follows is the story of how this Strategic Plan Update for the City of Vancouver evolved and the efforts of a diverse and concerned community to craft a vision and develop priorities for achieving that vision.

Planning Process

To provide a data and information base for the update of the strategic plan, an Environmental Scan was developed which reported on changes in Vancouver and its surroundings since the city's Strategic Plan was originally developed in 1997 and updated in 2000. The purpose of the scan was to help identify the important issues the city needs to address in order to realize its vision for the future.

The Environmental Scan identified significant demographic, economic, social, technological and environmental changes in the past decade. It was compiled by city staff based on information and data from existing studies and reports. These included the City of Vancouver's Comprehensive Plan and Plan Monitoring Report, data developed as a part of the current Clark County Comprehensive Plan update, city department business plans, annual reports, budget documents, prior State of the City addresses, community surveys, census information, and other reference documents. The scan focused on changes in both the external environment (community, regional, national and international) as well as internal changes to the city organization and services provided by the city.

The foundation for this plan update, however, is the public involvement process. The planning effort included extensive outreach to our community to find out how our residents view Vancouver, what their issues and concerns are, and what their hopes and dreams are for the future of our community. In total, over 2,000 of our citizens and employees participated in the process:

- In May, 2007 a strategic issues telephone survey was conducted by Intercept Research. Six hundred Vancouver residents were randomly selected to answer a variety of questions including what makes Vancouver a great place to live, what are the top issues that the community faces, and the importance of a variety of city services and concerns.
- Eleven stakeholder sessions were held during June and July to ask similar questions. Almost 150 community members participated in these sessions, including representatives from the business community, education, social services, transportation experts, and other government agencies, members of various city boards and commissions, and neighborhood leaders. An electronic audience response system was used in these sessions to capture participants' ratings of the importance of 32 city services and concerns.
- A survey of community youth was conducted at Vancouver's first CouvFest, a youth-oriented music event, in June. Over 200 young people provided their input on what they like about Vancouver and changes they would like to see.
- An on-line survey was conducted of city employees in September to get input from this very important stakeholder group.
- A survey was conducted at the city's first Diversity Job Fair in October, where we received responses from 120 attendees at the fair.
- There was extensive outreach to Vancouver's diverse ethnic groups to get their perspective on our community. Presentations were made at local ESL and citizenship classes, as well as an area church with a large Hispanic congregation. Survey instruments were translated into Spanish, Russian and Korean and distributed through classes, local agencies, and on the city's website. Over 500 responses were received.
- A strategic plan section was created on the city's web site to provide current information on the planning process to interested citizens and provide opportunity for further comment.
- As the plan was developed, stakeholders were asked to comment on and provide feedback to the draft documents.

What did we learn?

Based on the Environmental Scan and public feedback, it is apparent that our community, as well as city government, has changed a great deal over the past decade. That change has focused our attention on several community challenges and opportunities. It is also clear, however, that our residents value the quality of life in Vancouver and that our community has many strengths on which to build.

Following are some of the highlights of what we heard from our many stakeholders:

Vision

- The Community Vision identified in the original Strategic Plan in 1997 is still relevant, and most of the elements in that vision are still important to our community. The natural beauty, our history and heritage, a vibrant downtown, the riverfront, our friendly and welcoming feel and strong neighborhoods continue to be sources of great pride; and a good transportation system and prosperous economy are still important to our future.
- The original vision, however, is missing some important components, such as Vancouver's emerging identity and role in the region, the need to be more pedestrian friendly, for better access to mass transit, and to focus on sustainability.

How well are we doing?

- When asked, "Do you feel you are getting your money's worth for your tax dollar?" 70% of survey respondents and 54% of the focus group participants said YES.
- When asked, "Are we headed in the right direction?" only 18% of the nearly 900 people we asked said NO.

Challenges we face

- By far, managing – and planning for - the impacts of growth was identified as the most pressing problem Vancouver faces in the next ten years. This involves a variety of issues, including impacts on neighborhoods, infill, balance of housing and commercial development, preserving and protecting open space and our tree canopy, and other environmental concerns.
- A close second, and related to growth, was transportation, including traffic congestion, the need for better mass transit, and the I-5 commute.
- The third most pressing problem identified was the lack of adequate family wage jobs in Vancouver, resulting in over 60,000 Clark County residents commuting to Oregon every day to work.
- Public safety also emerged as a community concern, much more so than in the original 1997 plan and 2000 update. This is somewhat attributable to national and international events that have occurred since then, such as Sept. 11 and other terrorist events, but also reflects concerns at the local level about increased drug and gang activity.
- On a lesser scale, but important nevertheless, our stakeholders identified other issues they felt needed to be addressed as we look to the future of Vancouver. These included building a stronger sense of community; enhancing urban amenities and cultural opportunities in Vancouver; improving accessibility to local government and the decisions made by our elected officials; adequate funding for public services; and preserving the heritage and natural beauty of our community.

“Smaller cities and others in the community look to Vancouver for leadership.”

- Stakeholder comment

STRATEGIC PLAN UPDATE

The following sections outline the framework for the strategic plan, the foundation upon which the plan is based, and the strategic commitments that are the guide posts to help realize the community's vision and to accomplish the city's mission.

THE FOUNDATION

The foundation of the strategic plan is built on the Community Vision, Core Values, the Organizational Mission and Vision, and the Organizational Operating Principles.

Community Vision for 2028

Based upon feedback from the community, the Community Vision is changed in 2008 to read:

Birthplace of the Pacific Northwest, Vancouver is the heart of southwest Washington, connecting people and places throughout the region. The mighty Columbia River is the link to our past and a key to our future.

We are a friendly city for all ages, incomes, abilities and backgrounds, with proud, unique neighborhoods. We are dedicated to preserving our heritage and natural beauty while welcoming the opportunities change brings to our lively metropolitan community.

We are the most livable city in the Pacific Northwest. Residents and businesses across our city are passionate about building a safe, thriving and sustainable community together. We are proud to proclaim, "I am Vancouver."

City of Vancouver Core Values

(Unchanged since 1991)

- Active & Livable Neighborhoods
- Natural Resources
- Economic Vitality & Diversity
- Cultural Diversity
- Responsive Government
- Heritage
- Quality Urban Services

City of Vancouver Mission Statement

(Unchanged since 1997)

To foster leadership, stewardship, responsive services and community partnerships.

Organizational Vision Statement

(Unchanged since 1997)

Vancouver is recognized for its civic excellence. Employees are proud to work in an open, supportive environment where we are empowered to create solutions and outcomes which exceed the expectations of the citizens we serve.

Operating Principles

(Established 1996; updated 2000)

- Stewardship
- Fiscal Responsibility
- Customer Service
- Integrity
- Respect
- Responsibility
- Cooperation
- Leadership
- Reputation

STRATEGIC COMMITMENTS

The purpose of the city's strategic commitments is to emphasize those areas that the community and the organization have identified as needing focused attention and effort to realize the community vision and accomplish the city's mission. To be successful we must focus on the specific challenges and expectations that the strategic commitments are intended to address.

By design, the strategic commitments do not address all of the city's core functions and activities nor will we use the commitments to allocate all of our resources. Individual employees, programs and some entire service areas may find that their services do not directly relate to any one of the commitments. The strategic commitments are intended to provide focus to needs above and beyond basic services to achieve the community vision.

How the Strategic Commitments are Constructed

Why this is important: These are challenges and issues in our community that were identified in our stakeholder input process (community survey, focus groups, etc.) that the strategic commitment is intended to address.

Pledge: This is our commitment or "pledge" to our community to address the concerns and challenges they identified.

Strategic Directions: These are guiding approaches, actions or strategies identified by many of our stakeholders to achieve the pledge. These are intended to provide guidance to city leaders, managers and work teams in developing more specific "tactical" actions and in allocating resources toward achievement of the strategic commitment.

Key Indicators: These are high-level performance measures, identified by stakeholders and staff, to indicate to the community, policy makers, and city staff how well we're doing in making progress toward achieving the strategic commitments. To be meaningful measures, they must tie back specifically to the challenges and issues the strategic commitment is intended to address.

"Vancouver is a gem, it is just rough around the edges."

- Stakeholder comment

2008 STRATEGIC COMMITMENTS

To achieve our vision, we have identified the following six strategic commitments:

- **A Healthy, Livable and Sustainable Vancouver**
- **Transportation Mobility and Connectivity**
- **Financial Health and Economic Vitality**
- **A Safe and Prepared Community**
- **Accountable, Responsive City Government**
- **An Active and Involved Community**

“We need to be a vibrant city!”

- Stakeholder comment



Strategic Commitment: A Healthy, Livable and Sustainable Vancouver

Why is this important?

Our citizens would like to live more healthy, sustainable lives, but systems are not in place to support that. For example, our neighborhoods are not as walkable as stakeholders want. Residents are concerned about climate change, the loss of natural areas, resource depletion, pollution and a declining quality of life. Land use patterns are low density with uses separated and located far apart. Development is consuming green spaces and we have favored engineered systems over natural systems.

Our Pledge

We will build a community that balances environmental protection, economic health and social equity.

Strategic Directions

- Engage the community to develop and implement a community-wide sustainability plan.
- Educate the community about sustainability, and promote sustainable practices by households and businesses.
- Lead by example. The city can lead the way for the community by utilizing sustainable practices in city operations, such as “green” purchasing, reduction of fossil fuel consumption in buildings and fleet and innovations in building design.
- Require sustainable development patterns with a mix of uses and better pedestrian, bicycle and transit connections from neighborhoods to shopping and employment centers so that residents have options for living more sustainably.
- Protect and enhance our natural infrastructure, including our tree canopy, habitat, open space and greenways to improve our air and water quality.
- Give voice to future generations by considering how our decisions and actions today impact their options and opportunities.

A Healthy, Livable and Sustainable Vancouver

Key Indicators

- ⇒ **Clean Drinking Water:** Percent of citizens rating drinking water quality “good” or “excellent”
- ⇒ **Livable City:** Percent of citizens rating city livability “good” or “excellent”
- ⇒ **Managing Growth:** Percent of citizens rating growth management within the city as “good” or “excellent”
- ⇒ **Healthy Tree Canopy:** Percent of city that is covered by a tree canopy
- ⇒ **Improved Tree Canopy:** Number of new tree plantings supported by the city in the calendar year
- ⇒ **Preserve Open Space:** City has acquired sufficient park land to meet our residents’ stated needs or goal
- ⇒ **Reduced Trash:** Percent of total residential trash that is recycled or diverted from landfill
- ⇒ **Accessible Parks:** Percent of residents within one-half mile of a park, school or other accessible open area

“Be bold – make the hard choices now!”

- Stakeholder comment



Strategic Commitment: Transportation Mobility and Connectivity

Why is this important?

Our citizens are concerned that traffic is increasing faster everywhere – on freeways, major streets and in neighborhoods – faster than we provide connections and capacity. As a result congestion and pollution are worse. Specifically, they would like a more complete and balanced transportation system, more attractive bicycle and pedestrian connections between residential neighborhoods and shopping districts or employment centers, and better transit connections with more frequent service. According to multiple surveys, conducted by various organizations in 2007, a majority of our residents would like a high capacity transit option for Vancouver.

Our Pledge

We will develop a safe and balanced transportation system and encourage better transit service throughout the region, including high capacity transit connections to the Portland metropolitan area.

Strategic Directions

- Provide a variety of safe, accessible and attractive travel options for residents, including sidewalks and trails, bicycle routes, streets and transit.
- Complete the missing links in our pedestrian, bicycle, trail and street systems, connecting neighborhoods to work, shopping and recreational facilities.
- Recognize that congestion in community centers is a sign that people want to be there but do not compromise the vitality of the area to reduce congestion.
- Work with C-TRAN to improve transit service throughout the city.
- Work with the I-5 Columbia River Crossing team to ensure that the new bridge includes high capacity transit connections, as well as bicycle and pedestrian components and fits into the landscape of downtown Vancouver.
- Anticipate and plan for transportation systems which will meet the needs of future generations.

Transportation Mobility and Connectivity

Key Indicators

- **Access:** Average vehicle miles traveled to work, shopping and recreation in the past year
- **Congestion:** Percent of residents who rate traffic congestion as a “top three” community challenge
- **Street Condition:** Percent of lane miles in “satisfactory” or better condition using PAVR evaluation system
- **Street Safety:** Number of total reported injury accidents (vehicle, pedestrian, bicyclist) on all city streets for the year
- **Driving Safety:** Percent of residents who feel safe while driving in Vancouver
- **People Connectivity:** Total miles of bike, walking and hiking trails in Vancouver as of December 31st
- **Alternative Transportation:** Annual bus ridership (C-Tran) in millions of rides

*“Some things could derail our progress.
Bridge and transportation issues could unwind it all.”*

- Stakeholder comment



Strategic Commitment: Financial Health and Economic Vitality

Why is this important?

Vancouver needs quality jobs to ensure the long-term economic viability of our city and to support the basic needs of our community. An estimated 60,000 Clark County residents commute to Oregon every day to work, as well as pay income taxes to the state of Oregon, because there are insufficient living wage jobs in our own community. We are losing our youth to other communities because there aren't enough good jobs to bring them back to Vancouver after completing their education. In addition, our citizens and business community, through the ballot box and public testimony, have told us they want a voice on new or increased taxes and are concerned about the increasing tax burden on their ability to pay. However, the need and demand for adequate public services, especially in the areas of public safety and transportation, continues to grow; and the costs are far outpacing available revenues.

Our Pledge

We will foster a dynamic, diverse economy in Vancouver to provide good jobs for our citizens, support successful businesses - large and small - and ensure financial stability for future generations.

"I am concerned about the financial ability of the city to preserve the amenities, history and special assets of Vancouver."

- Stakeholder comment

Financial Health and Economic Vitality

Strategic Directions

- Actively recruit “green” businesses (and green jobs) to Vancouver as a key component of our economic development strategy.
- Build upon our existing signature industries and resources by attracting complementary businesses and industries to expand and strengthen the local economy.
- Leverage private investment that results in tax base expansion and living wage job creation.
- Continue revitalization **across the city** with a focus on new development and redevelopment opportunities that foster and promote unique and vibrant neighborhoods and business districts.
- Continue the redevelopment of the downtown area, including the waterfront, into a vibrant, pedestrian-friendly, mixed use community center.
- Build on the community’s history, heritage, natural resources and livability to promote Vancouver as a tourism destination.
- Reach out to the community to raise awareness of the benefits of economic development.
- Sustain core governmental services within available resources.

Key Indicators

- ➔ **Income:** Clark County median family income
- ➔ **Housing:** Change in the Clark County housing affordability index
- ➔ **Employment Rate:** Clark County/Vancouver employment rate
- ➔ **Local Job Creation:** Percent of citizens rating city job creation and business development as “good” or “excellent” in survey
- ➔ **Economic Development:** Number and value of new economic development projects initiated/approved this year
- ➔ **Work in Vancouver:** Percentage of Clark County labor force who are employed in Clark County
- ➔ **Funding City Services:** Citizens’ perception of city’s ability to provide existing services within budget in the future according to survey
- ➔ **City Financial Stability:** The city has a high bond rating



Strategic Commitment: A Safe and Prepared Community

Why is this important?

Public safety is a growing concern for our citizens and they want to be part of the solution. It is difficult, however, to connect new residents and people who commute to work in Oregon to city government and to one another. Our youth require safe, healthy places to meet and constructive and positive recreational and work opportunities. Recent acts of violence and natural disasters have increased the importance of emergency preparedness as a city organization as well as for individual households. Working closely with our neighborhoods, business associations and other organizations, city officials need to make government services accessible to all residents and provide opportunities for residents to work together to resolve community problems and create a safe and prepared community.

Our Pledge

We will ensure a safe and secure environment for our residents, businesses and visitors using a community-oriented approach.

“Keep good police action so people feel safe.”

- New resident

A Safe and Prepared Community

Strategic Directions

- Promote, enhance, and increase community-based partnerships in crime prevention, fire and life safety emergency preparedness and community policing.
- Support progressive code enforcement and neighborhood partnerships that encourage healthy and vital neighborhoods free of crime and decline.
- Be proactive in developing and establishing community-based emergency preparedness programs.
- Ensure appropriate service levels for public safety services as community population grows.
- Reduce risk and increase safety through community-based crime and fire prevention programs.
- Reduce through-traffic into neighborhoods for quicker emergency vehicle response and to provide a safer environment for children.
- Support events and activities at parks and community centers that provide a positive outlet for youth as a crime prevention tool.

Key Indicators

- ⇒ **Overall Safety:** Citizens feel safe in their neighborhood during the day
- ⇒ **Property Crime:** Property crime rate for Vancouver
- ⇒ **Violent Crime:** Violent crime rate for Vancouver
- ⇒ **Police Response:** Highest priority call response times (Priority 1 calls less than .3% of calls)
- ⇒ **Fire & EMS Response:** Percent of city (urban) responses under 5 minutes
- ⇒ **Fire Loss:** Average dollar value of fire loss per structure fire
- ⇒ **Well Lighted Streets:** Citizen satisfaction with street lighting levels
- ⇒ **Resolving Unsafe or Unhealthy Conditions:** Number of code enforcement nuisance and safety cases resolved



Strategic Commitment: Accountable, Responsive City Government

Why is this important?

Stakeholders - residents, businesses, customers, regional partners, and employees – look to Vancouver to set a standard of excellence in city governance. They want city leaders to ensure that Vancouver is a great city even in a time of constrained resources for residents, businesses and government. They have also made it clear that they want to understand how decisions are made and want to be involved in solving the community's problems and setting priorities, especially the financing of essential services. They want accountability and accessibility from our city leaders as they make decisions that will affect the lives of current and future generations in Vancouver.

Our Pledge

We will be a leader in the efficient and effective delivery of services that our community values the most.

Strategic Directions

- Maintain an environment of open communication that invites the public to participate in decisions concerning city services and funding of those services.
- Implement long-range financial strategies to ensure a competitive level of municipal services.
- Continue to utilize sound fiscal practices to maintain financial stability and solvency of city government.
- Fully integrate the Strategic Plan, Comprehensive Plan, departmental business and performance management plans with financial planning and resource allocation.
- Partner with other local governments, community organizations and the private sector to optimize delivery of effective and affordable services to our citizens.
- Evaluate customer satisfaction with city services on a regular basis and implement appropriate service improvements.
- Ensure that city services are accessible to all members of the community.

Accountable, Responsive Government

Key Indicators

- ↪ **Good City Government:** Citizen rating of city government overall performance
- ↪ **Good City Employees:** Citizen rating of contact with city employees
- ↪ **Responsive Government:** Percent of new single-family residential building permits completed within 14 days
- ↪ **Responsive Government:** Percent of citizens who feel city government responds to their concerns
- ↪ **Leadership:** Percent of city employees rating effectiveness of city leadership “good” or “excellent”
- ↪ **Government Value:** Citizens rating of the value that Vancouver provides for the tax dollar
- ↪ **Cost of City Services:** Overall cost per capita for city services
- ↪ **Recreational Program Value:** Percent of direct cost recovery achieved for all programs

“We moved to Vancouver 4 years ago. In my former town, my voice was never valued much. In Vancouver I feel that public opinion is heard, considered, and respected.”

- Survey respondent



Strategic Commitment: An Active, Involved Community

Why is this important?

With the demands of work and family, it is a challenge to get people to be active participants in civic life. Vancouver's increasingly diverse population, in terms of age, abilities and ethnicity, is a source of strength as well as a challenge when it comes to getting them involved in the community. To realize the benefits of our unique and diverse community, we must create ways to break down barriers and make government more accessible to everyone. The interaction of residents, especially our youth, and government strengthens our community. We also believe government effectiveness increases when citizens are engaged and informed. We value volunteers and encourage involvement, whether it is within the neighborhood or within the larger community, because it promotes a healthy city. Listening to, and understanding the concerns of citizens, fosters mutual trust.

Our Pledge

We will help build a community that welcomes everyone and provides them with the opportunity to participate fully in community life.

"We need to create more of an identity for Vancouver so that newcomers 'connect' more with the community."

- Stakeholder comment

An Active, Involved Community

Strategic Directions

- Create and implement a comprehensive communications plan to encourage informed citizen participation in civic life.
- Support community events and activities that create opportunities to build community and neighborhood identity.
- Support and develop programs that involve our youth in the community and teach them to be good citizens.
- Promote and celebrate the multiculturalism of the community and encourage active involvement by all in civic life.
- Nurture citizen involvement through volunteer opportunities.
- Strengthen neighborhood identity and character while promoting identification with the broader community.
- Encourage our citizens of all ages to celebrate important dates and milestones marking our community's rich heritage.
- Support strong and active neighborhood and business associations.

"Ethnic diversity is respected as the 'fabric' of our community; build on that strength."

- Stakeholder comment

An Active, Involved Community

Key Indicators

- **Neighborhoods are Active:** Percent of recognized neighborhood associations that met last year at least quarterly
- **Widespread Sense of Community:** Number of public events in the community that involve more than 500 people
- **Sense of Belonging:** Percent of citizens who feel like part of the community
- **Connected Citizens:** Number of citizens signed up for GovDelivery email information service as of December 31st
- **People Vote:** Percent of eligible voters who voted in the last city election
- **Participating in Government:** Number of applications for commissions and boards on December 31st
- **People Visit Community Centers:** Annual visits to community centers
- **Volunteerism:** Percent of community who report they volunteer at least monthly

"Focus on the entire city, not just downtown; let's be 'one city'".

- Stakeholder comment

THE NEXT STEPS

As indicated when we began the story of Vancouver's 2008 Strategic Plan Update and our community's vision for 2028, a plan such as this is only as strong as the commitment to accomplish it. We must make tangible progress toward the achievement of our vision or that vision is just words that lead nowhere. To do this we must focus. We must prioritize. We must be accountable. How do we go from enthusiastic words to measurable action? There are four critical steps:

- **OPERATIONAL BUSINESS PLANS** with specific action-oriented goals, discrete and focused work activities and a balanced set of performance measures for each city department and program;
- **RESOURCE ALLOCATION** that is tied directly to the city's biennial budget, aligning priorities with how we spend public dollars;
- **MONITOR KEY INDICATORS** to hold ourselves accountable in reporting on progress in achieving the strategic commitments;
- **PERIODIC REVIEW** of the Strategic Plan to insure that it continues to focus city government on the issues of most importance to the community.

"People say 'thank you' in Vancouver. That is memorable."

- Stakeholder comment