

Dr. AKRIGG

FE3847.35
P4 V1

VANCOUVER - HISTORY AND DESTINY

A Paper Given to the Vancouver Institute on
30th November, 1963.

by Harry Pickstone
Van. City Planning Dept.

I have called this talk, "Vancouver- History and Destiny" because I wish to stress the fact that any city is continuously in a state of change. Parts decay and are rebuilt. If there is no rebuilding, there is nothing but decay, and in time - no more city.

This spot on the globe which we now call Vancouver is thus in a constant state of change like any other city, and its condition or state at any time is the result of a balance of many forces. Changes in the relative strength of these forces result in changes to the city.

I suggest that we can consider two types of environment - the physical environment, and what we might call the social and economic environment. I believe it was Winston Churchill who said, "We shape our cities, and they, in turn, shape us." I propose tonight to examine more the change that we have made to our cities, and, to a lesser extent, the change which our cities have wrought on us.

I believe that for all of us, and particularly for me as a planner, it is important that we should humble ourselves by realizing that what we normally regard as the history of our city is, in fact, a very, very small part of the history of this particular spot on the globe.

Millions and millions of years ago, the earth was formed, and at the time of its formation there was a particular spot on its surface which was subsequently to become Vancouver as we now know it.

Tremendous physical changes took place - upheavals, ice ages, the formation of rivers - and then, at some stage, life appeared. A wide variety of animal types must have roamed here, many of which are now extinct. During all this time, changes in the balance of forces resulted in changes to either the physical shape of the land or the lives of the inhabitants. For example, when a weakness appeared in the earth's crust, the result was a drastic change in its physical structure. Changes in the balance of animal life were, perhaps, slower but nevertheless inevitable. Animals which failed to adapt themselves became extinct - and there is, perhaps, a drastic lesson for us here!

Until the appearance of man, with their relatively higher intellects and relatively more advanced techniques, I suppose the beaver had the greatest effect on the appearance of the landscape by the construction of his dams.

The native Indians developed certain techniques to make their lives safer and more comfortable - techniques which exploited the resources that they had at hand and enabled them to live a relatively full life. The big changes due to man's activities only date from the arrival of European settlers.

The older civilizations of Europe had developed very much more advanced techniques than the Indians, and these new techniques, transplanted into a relatively virgin environment, meant enormous opportunities for exploitation

Why was this area attractive to European settlement?

In the first place, the site itself provided a wonderful natural harbour. The rivers and sea provided fish; the hinterland provided timber and gold; and other minerals were discovered. To the people of the older, more crowded, and, in some cases, over-exploited countries of the old world, this opportunity was a wonderful challenge, and the adventurous and bold, as well as the greedy, came here to take advantage of these opportunities.

I would like to study the City (using the word "City" in a metropolitan sense) by examining three particular areas in some detail. These three areas are - the downtown area, Kerrisdale, and Whalley. Before I do that, let's just see what, in fact, Vancouver in 1963, as a total entity, consists of.

The City itself contains about 400,000 people, with the metropolitan population about 800,000. Most of these people live in 172,000 single-family dwelling houses and the remainder live in 57,000 apartments and duplexes. Some indication of the change in the physical environment man has made over the past hundred years can be gained from the fact that the total private investment in the City itself (not the metropolitan area) at the present time is now worth something of the order of \$2.1 billion and a matching total public investment now worth something of the order of \$700 million.

In the last seventy years or so, a very complex industrial economy has been built up in the City with a total of 1,600 industrial concerns, ranging in scope from sawmilling to precision instrument manufacturing, employing, in 1963, about 50,000 people with an annual payroll of approximately \$200 million. I have no comparable figures for the remainder of the metropolitan area beyond the City boundary.

The central part of the City, with many high-rise commercial buildings, has about 68% of its area devoted exclusively to moving or storing cars. There is a complex rail system occupying a very large percentage of the land area in the centre of the City and a large modern dock system.

The original swamps, ravines and mud flats have largely disappeared, having been filled in and put to use as building sites. In place of the Douglas fir, hemlock, and cedar in the West End, now there are large apartment buildings with many people living 250 feet up in the air. The picture of the rest of the City is mainly of single-family houses, sitting, for the main part, in attractive gardens, with their related schools, parks, and stores.

Industries are located mainly along the rail lines or along the river, large steamships come and go in the harbour, tugs move with their log booms and scows in False Creek and in the Fraser River, and a multiplicity of small boats - tugs, yachts, fishboats, and power boats - use the harbour. Towards the edges of the metropolitan area, the density of development falls off, and there are still farms and undeveloped areas waiting hopefully for the urban tide. The whole area is tied together with a vast complex

of streets, lanes, bridges, tunnels, and just one freeway, and the importance of this system can be judged from the fact that in the City itself more than a third of the land area is devoted to streets and lanes.

What a tremendous change this is in about a hundred years! A hundred years ago most of the land occupied by this city was still primeval forest, with its balance of wild life. Today, there is still some wild life left in the City, with the activities going on downtown being perhaps the most significant!

What are these techniques which have made this tremendous change possible?

Well, I suppose the foremost is new sources of motive power - from the horse to the steam engine, to the gasoline engine, to electricity and diesels. These enable men to move, to change and to ship goods so that one man can now do, with these new machines, what thousands of men would have been required to do a hundred years ago. Our present way of life is only made possible by the use of extensive power applied to such things as ships, trains, trucks, automobiles, and, of course, the electric elevator which makes possible high-rise buildings.

Second, perhaps, comes stronger, more durable, and harder materials such as steel, and concrete, and blacktop. This, again, means that higher buildings can be built, that more durable roads can be constructed on which trucks and cars can move at a greater speed. Sewers and watermains can be laid which make possible the relatively high concentrations of people who occupy these high buildings.

Then, perhaps, the communications are important. Originally, the telegraph was a rapid means of communication, now almost entirely superseded by the telephone. Nowadays, it is no longer necessary to travel on horseback perhaps one day to have a discussion with someone in New Westminster; it can be done in a matter of seconds by dialling the appropriate number on the telephone. Radio and t.v. - another form of communication - has changed the pattern of our lives.

Fourth, the new system of automatic controls are rapidly changing our lives. We no longer rise early to stoke the furnace - we pre-set the thermostat the night before. A more important result is the application of these systems to industry, leading eventually to the push-button plant.

I can only mention a few of the changing techniques but this list will illustrate my point.

What social and economic changes have there been in the last hundred years which have changed our lives and the pattern of our cities?

First, as man's total sum of knowledge has increased, there is a tendency for each individual to specialize more. This means that men are now more interdependent than they ever have been in the past.

Second, the techniques which have been developed for building and for manufacturing things are, by their very nature, more expensive than the earlier hand methods. This means that manufacturing firms, for example, must be larger than they have been in the past to be able to afford the capital investment necessary.

Third, we now stay at school longer than we have in the past. This is, perhaps, partly indicative of the necessity for a more thorough education to cope with the change in technology but also - hopefully - it's an indication that men regard education as a means to enjoy a fuller life. This, of course, means more schools, bigger schools, and better-equipped schools, which, in themselves, are more expensive.

Fourth, we have more leisure than we've ever had in the past.

Fifth, we have more spending capacity than we have ever had in the past.

Sixth, we demand more public services than we ever have in the past.

Seventh, we have more variety of choice, both for work and play.

Eighth, we have greater mobility than we have ever had in the past - both personal mobility in the way of automobile travel and also greater opportunity for moving from one job to another, as skills become not only specialized but also categorized.

Ninth, we tend to subject ourselves to greater control over individual actions, either by governments or, directly or indirectly, by private organizations.

These are just a few of the social and economic changes that have taken place in the last hundred years, and these, together with the changing techniques which I discussed earlier, acting in balance, produce the city which I have just described.

Now, I would like to examine three parts of the metropolitan area in some detail to see what they are, how they have become like this, what forces have acted on them, and what we may expect them to be in the near future. I would like to take, first of all, the downtown area.

This was the site of the original settlement related to the harbour. It was subdivided in a grid pattern, whose dimensions were largely determined by the 66-foot length of the surveyor's chain. The original name for this part of the City was Granville. It was originally related mainly to the harbour, with ship's stores, warehouses, alacons, and with sawmills further along the coastline.

I can imagine that stumps from the felled trees would be very much in evidence and I would imagine also that there would be almost continuously a pall of smoke, both from burning stumps and slash, and from the waste-burners of the sawmills. Sailing ships used the harbour and personal transportation was by horse. Wooden sidewalks kept people out of the mud of the streets during winter, and the hauling of freight was by horse and cart, and possibly even by oxen in some cases. Almost all the buildings were made of wood and they were clustered fairly close together. The rest of the City was very thinly developed, with just a scattering of houses here and there, and a few clearings, and a few cows.

Then came the fire which gutted Vancouver in a very few hours. Very quickly, however, the same pattern, or almost the same pattern, was repeated.

I imagine that there was a very lively social life in old Granville townsite - the legends that have survived about "Gassy Jack's" give some indication of the goings-on!

Increasing development of natural resources and such external factors as the Yukon Gold Rush meant growth for the settlement and led to the land boom which took place before the first War.

The advent of the electric streetcar exploded the pattern of development from the earlier tight knot, making possible development in what we now call suburban locations. I will discuss this more when I talk about Kerrisdale.

Steamships replaced sailing ships and carried more goods which meant bigger handling facilities and, of course, the construction of the railway - the trans-continental railway - transformed Vancouver from what would be considered now an obscure West Coast village to the largest western outlet of a rapidly growing nation. All this meant more office buildings - multi-storey office buildings with the then-new electric elevators; more stores and more warehouses related to the railways and the harbour. The warehouses of that time were multi-storey buildings, a development made possible by mechanical hoisting devices.

The fingers of the streetcar lines reached out to the newly developing residential areas beyond the downtown peninsula. Vancouver was no longer a village but became the beginnings of a city.

This period really set the pattern for all that followed. As vacant sites were used up, the old wooden buildings were demolished and replaced by new ones - in many cases constructed of brick which had come to Vancouver as ballast in ships. As the City became larger, specialization started to make itself apparent. Certain streets developed a specialized character with either stores or offices for example. Buildings became higher and, with the advent of the automobile, the horse disappeared very rapidly, though the streetcar lingered on until about ten years ago. Two wars and a major depression have affected the rate at which change has taken place but on the whole the basic pattern has remained, though with a gradual shift of the centre to the west from its original location at Main and Hastings.

The period immediately after the advent of the streetcar saw a very important change in the character of the City and I think that perhaps the next most significant change has come since 1945. There are perhaps three factors which have contributed to this post-Second World War change.

First, but not necessarily the most significant, is the almost universal ownership and usage of the motor-car.

Second is the matter of increased specialization - both in business activity and in retailing.

Third is the establishment of larger and larger corporations, and the tendency for smaller firms to disappear.

I would like to examine in more detail the pattern of the Central Business District as it is at this point in time. There are two main retailing areas, neither of which is remarkable for its stability. These main retailing areas are related to department stores. In addition, we have the beginnings of special enclaves which consist of stores of a very highly specialized type or having a very particular flavour, and these special enclaves tend to be characteristic of larger cities. We have a well-established financial/office district, with a developing new office district to the west of Burrard Street. We have two major warehouse areas related to the rail and harbour facilities of the Burrard Inlet and to the railway yards of the False Creek area. Both these warehouse areas are in decline due to the increased use of trucks to the detriment of railways, and to the changes in warehousing techniques due mainly to the fork-lift truck which makes the handling of goods much simpler on one level rather than on a multi-level system. We have three entertainment areas - that is, the Granville Street area round about Smithe, the Hastings Street area round about Main Street, and the Queen Elizabeth/Little Theatre complex to which we hope to add the Coliseum.

All of these main groupings of uses - except the warehouses - are based on the main streets, that is, Granville Street, Hastings Street, Georgia Street, and Burrard Street.

The main developments have occurred on these streets and the remaining streets are underdeveloped and tend to be run down by comparison with the main streets.

The development is still based on a subdivision pattern which was developed originally as a quick and expedient way of carving up a piece of virgin land for houses about eighty years ago. We have changed our techniques, we have changed our method of transportation from the horse to the automobile, we have drastically changed our economic and social structure, and yet the pattern on which we build our city is still precisely the same as it was in those early days.

What should be the function of a downtown area in the second half of the twentieth century? Traditionally, the centre of the City is a place where people meet for relatively specialized activities which cannot be supported by smaller centres. The fact that cities, in the metropolitan sense, are becoming larger and larger indicates the greater degree of specialization of all of men's activities and men's desire generally to avail themselves of the opportunities offered by these very highly specialized activities.

In addition to the high degree of specialization, there is the element of variety. It is not one specialization but a very large number of specializations, and as a city becomes larger, both the degree and the range of specializations become greater.

These activities fall roughly into three categories:

- (a) Business and services
- (b) Shopping
- (c) Entertainment

All of these activities provide also a high proportion of the total employment of a large city.

The centre of a large city or metropolitan area, therefore, differs from a small town centre or from a sub-metropolitan centre in this degree of specialization and in the range of variety. In the field of entertainment, for example, small town or suburban centres offer, perhaps, a cinema which will generally show short-run films and may, in some cases, offer a limited amount of live entertainment on a sporadic basis. A downtown centre will offer continuous live entertainment of various types and the cinemas will tend to show long-run, special interest type, films.

In the field of shopping, a small town or suburban centre will offer a limited range of goods, generally of a "consumer" type, though there may be some degree of specialization with relation to a particular local need. A typical 30-acre shopping centre will have a small department store carrying quite a good range of children's clothing and, probably, a good range of every-day household equipment and electrical appliances. The other stores will be those which normally relate to a department store, such as men's and women's clothing, jewellers, etc., but here again the stock carried will be less than that carried by the downtown equivalent. The suburban centre will not have the more highly specialized stores which can only be supported by a large population focused on the centre.

By comparison, the downtown retailing pattern will be several major department stores, each with its attendant grouping of related specialty stores, but, in addition, it will have enclaves of very highly specialized stores which tend to group together by their specialty or by some special local character; for example, antique stores tend to group together, book and music stores tend to group together.

Vancouver is not yet large enough to have many of these highly specialized groupings and it is possible to identify only, perhaps, four or five, and some of these are very weak and uncertain

Offices, also, tend to group together for special functions - that is, lawyers tend to be in the same building or in buildings close to each other, and the banks' head offices located near the corner of Granville and Hastings Streets are typical of this grouping of office buildings. Fairly recently we have a trend for large corporation offices to be located in the western or southwestern part of the downtown area and the B.C. Hydro building is the most easily recognizable example of this trend. There are many others, of course, such as the new oil company buildings. Here is positive evidence of the growth in the size of corporations

All of the closely related groupings, both the stores and the general offices, show the benefits that are derived from close relationships which give the opportunity for face-to-face contact or for comparison shopping in the case of the retail areas. The telephone hasn't changed this, and I, for one, don't believe that television phones will either.

With the pattern that we have, therefore, which consists basically of a residential-type, gridiron subdivision, developed fairly intensively along the main streets but relatively undeveloped on the interior streets, with a tendency towards a western drift, bearing in mind what seems to be the desirable pattern, and with the technical, social, and economic changes that we can anticipate, what sort of changes are we likely to see in the pattern of the downtown area?

Perhaps the most important change that we can expect is one related to social change. Governments elected by the people have found that they must take a more positive role in the development of cities. Instead of just allowing things to happen, changes are anticipated, planned and controlled through such devices as zoning, to the benefit of everybody. The worst features of our legacy from the past are corrected through what we call redevelopment. Only through Government action in the form of redevelopment can the basic pattern be changed. No matter how large a corporation, and no matter how powerful, it cannot exercise the necessary authority over the multiplicity of individual owners to make the rather drastic changes to this existing obsolete pattern.

Second, I believe that we have at last recognized that the automobile is here to stay - and in quantity - and I believe that we are just beginning to understand that we shall have to adapt our development pattern to accommodate the automobile and, in fact, to take advantage of the mobility and convenience which it offers us.

Third, I believe that we shall see the development of other forms of transportation. This will undoubtedly include some new type of aircraft of the helicopter or "vertical take-off and landing" type, and some improved type of surface transportation. Examples are subways, monorails, and electronically controlled buses on separate rights-of-way. I am not suggesting that we will see any of these new devices in the relatively near future. Many of them are in the experimental stage and are relatively untried as yet, and it is not possible to predict clearly what effect these new methods of transportation will have, except, I believe, that it can be said in general that they will increase mobility towards the centre of the City, making it, with all its variety and richness, accessible to people over a much wider geographical area.

Fourth, I believe that we will see more sophisticated forms of climate control. Canopies are the most elementary form of climate control and it surprises me that the citizens of Vancouver haven't demanded more in the way of canopies. It is conceivable that we might see air-conditioned malls in the downtown area, and it is not beyond the bounds of possibility that very much wider areas might be completely enclosed. There have already been proposals for arctic cities totally enclosed in plastic hemispheres.

Five, I believe that we will have an increased awareness of civic beauty. There is some evidence that this is already with us. I believe that our buildings will become more beautiful as a result of conscious effort and that we will consciously construct attractive spaces between them. I believe also that we will see more civic works of art - sculptures, fountains, mosaics - in the not-too-distant future.

Six, I believe that we will see larger individual buildings or related groups of buildings acknowledging the larger size of corporations.

Seven, I think that increased leisure will be reflected in a larger number and a larger variety of places of entertainment and recreation in the centre of the City.

Eight, I believe that we will see more specialized job opportunities in the Central Business District, with fewer routine clerical jobs. Electronic devices such as mechanical accounting systems will take over manual accounting, and, I presume, similar systems can be applied to other job functions. This is, presumably, of benefit, not only to the employer, but also to the employee, who can use his better education in a more interesting and productive way.

Nine, I believe that we shall see the development of more "special enclaves" of which Robson Street and Chinatown are two examples. These give colour and variety to a city.

These nine factors of change that I have mentioned are not, of course, the only ones but they are the ones which are most clearly apparent to me. I cannot say in any precise sort of way what form the changes will take. There are, however, two general and related conclusions that I can draw.

First, I believe that the Central Business District will not decline, as some people seem to think, but will, in fact, become increasingly important.

Second, I believe that we shall, inevitably, have to make basic changes to the old residential subdivision pattern so that our City centre can function properly to meet the new conditions in a convenient and attractive way.

What changes can be foreseen in some detail?

First, I think we shall see a freeway system - probably running quite close to the heart of the downtown area and possibly with closely related parking garages within walking distance of the places of employment. I believe that this freeway system will have, within its right-of-way or related to it, some improved facilities for rapid transit, almost certainly in the form of fast buses - initially at any rate.

Second, we are at present working on a downtown redevelopment project with the idea of filling in one of these holes between the main streets that I talked about, and with the idea of creating a new physical pattern, acknowledging the changed conditions of the C.B.D. which make such a new pattern necessary. There will, we hope, be vertical separation between pedestrians and vehicles; we hope that there will be pleasant and convenient spaces within which to shop and to walk; we hope that there will be convenient car and truck access, and that parking will be well-related to the buildings and pedestrian spaces; we hope, through a comprehensive design approach, that we will be able to create a visually stimulating environment. Perhaps most important of all, we hope that this redevelopment project will help towards a more compact and well integrated C.B.D.

The second of my three areas for close examination is Kerrisdale. This area developed originally as a result of its location at a stopping point on the old inter-urban line which went to Richmond, and settlement really got under way about 1910.

The general pattern of the City at that time was the Central Business District, fairly compactly developed, with ribbons of development stretching out from the streetcar and inter-urban routes and fattening out around the stopping points.

The old municipality of Point Gray controlled subdivision of land so that everybody had to conform to a systematic rectangular grid system. This may not be too appropriate for present or future use but it did, at any rate, provide for a complete system of streets and lots, and meant that servicing was comparatively economical. I will describe a different approach when I come to discuss Whalley.

The shopping centre developed at the intersection of the inter-urban line and 41st Avenue which was a cross-town streetcar line, and the housing development spread out from the shopping centre. I believe that even up to about 1945, many people still did their weekly grocery shopping downtown, acknowledging the convenience of the inter-urban line.

The shopping centre grew, and other facilities developed - the arena, for example, churches, Magee High School with a very strong local tradition, and, after the War, a community centre was developed. This grouping of community facilities gives people something they can identify themselves with. Many people like to regard themselves as coming first from Kerrisdale and secondly from Vancouver.

Many people liked Kerrisdale so much that when their children left home to start new homes of their own and the original family home became too large, they wished to stay there, and thus created a demand for apartment buildings. The apartment buildings were originally frame buildings two or three storeys high, but latterly high-rise reinforced concrete buildings have been constructed. All this means a greater density of population around the shopping centre and a greater demand for local facilities

But now, just as in the case of the downtown area, the automobile starts to become a problem. The shopping centre originally located along the streetcar line on 41st Avenue had small stores with no parking. Larger firms, such as the chain grocery stores, established themselves with their own parking lots, tending to split the shopping centre. Instead of just a few cars and streetcars running along the street between the stores, we now have a solid stream of cars and a few buses. It's no longer possible to jay-walk from one side to the other to compare the prices or the quality of goods in adjacent stores, and it's much less pleasant and less convenient generally.

In the same way, the increased population density due to apartments, coupled with increased automobile ownership, has made the originally relatively quiet streets noisy and sometimes dangerous. The gridiron subdivision pattern, with its four-way intersections, has a danger-point at every intersection.

What is likely to happen to Kerrisdale?

It is, undoubtedly, a very attractive place in which to live, very convenient, either by car or by bus, to the downtown area (a major place of employment for the people living in Kerrisdale), and, provided that it can accommodate the necessary changes, it will maintain itself as a pleasant place in which to live.

Increased leisure and increased spending capacity mean necessary additions to places of entertainment. The Kerrisdale Community Centre is a good one, though small by comparison with some of the ones which have recently been erected. Longer years of education will mean additions to schools or, perhaps, changes in school boundaries to relieve the pressures on the existing schools. Parks need to be adequate for the outdoor recreation needs of the people living in the area. Some of the older houses will, undoubtedly be demolished to make way for new apartments, and this injection of new development in the area is one very important way of maintaining its quality.

But what about the large majority of other houses which will not be torn down to make way for apartments? Ways must be found of encouraging their continued maintenance, and this, from the point of view of the City, must be by the maintenance of a high standard of service, and also by improving the basic pattern to accommodate the ever-present problem - the automobile.

What can be done about the automobile and the shopping area? Well, the Oakridge Shopping Centre is one appropriate pattern for a suburban shopping centre in the automobile age. A shopping centre straddling a major and heavily travelled street is not an appropriate pattern. Some improvement can be made by the provision of collective parking areas but this, in itself, is only a sort of aspirin. Some much more drastic change involving surgery to the basic pattern will be necessary before any shopping centre of the Kerrisdale type can be as convenient and attractive as it should be, and I am afraid I cannot be any more precise than this because I don't know what the answer is at this time.

It is unlikely that any of the very special techniques of weather protection, such as air-conditioned malls or wholly-enclosed areas will ever be applied to areas such as Kerrisdale, though it is conceivable that simple devices like continuous canopies could give weather protection and convenience in the shopping centres. Also, just as in the case of the C.B.D., I believe that the appearance of the area will become more important to people, and, in fact, if you look at Kerrisdale you will see that this is already happening. In some of the newer buildings which have been constructed, a great deal of attention has been given to their appearance, with little paved areas in front, and some planting.

In the residential areas the street pattern can be changed, and there are many cities in North America which have, in fact, closed off certain sections of redundant streets and made small play areas; they have diverted the gridiron pattern in such a way that through traffic is discouraged from the residential areas, making them once again relatively quiet and convenient.

My last area is of a completely different character and is outside the City. I have chosen Whalley as a contrast to Kerrisdale. It is not intended to be an invidious comparison and there are many parts of the City that exhibit some of the characteristics that Whalley does though not, perhaps, to the same degree.

Before the Second War, Whalley was a small, local centre. There were some mills along the Fraser River and some marginal farming in the area. During the Depression, settlement took place around Whalley on lots of five to ten acres, where a man could carry out some very minimum subsistence farming with one cow, vegetables and other small crops.

The basic subdivision of the Fraser Valley is in the traditional North American quarter-section - that is, a grid of one half-mile square. The subdivision which took place to make this subsistence farming possible was on a very irregular basis, the five- and ten-acre blocks being mainly carved off the frontage roads of the basic quarter-sections.

The construction of the Patullo Bridge from New Westminster to the south bank of the Fraser must have given some impetus to this area but the greatest impetus came when the tolls were removed and the Trans-Canada Highway was re-routed through Whalley itself. This coincided with a period of increasing land prices in the City, and these two changes in the balance resulted in a very much increased rate of settlement. What the inter-urban route had done for Kerrisdale, the automobile and the highway link did for Whalley at the later date. It was possible for people to live in Whalley and work in New Westminster or Vancouver.

A shopping centre developed, somewhat bigger than Kerrisdale, and there was considerably more traffic, so that now there is a conflict between the shopping and the traffic function along the Trans-Canada Highway in Whalley. The traffic which made the development possible is now destroying it as more and more restrictions are applied, making both the shopping and the through-traffic movement much less convenient.

Whalley is traditionally an area of low land cost; people who could not afford to pay the high prices for City land settled there as one of the few alternatives open to them. There were no sewers and sometimes no water supply, water being obtained on an individual basis from wells. There was nothing like the Point Grey control of subdivisions, and subdivisions were made into lots of all shapes and sizes on a sporadic basis, leaving, in many cases, large and almost inaccessible areas in the middle of the original quarter-sections.

As more development took place, wells tended to dry up, and as more people came in, septic tanks became inadequate as a means of sewage disposal. The cost of providing facilities such as water and sewage after development has taken place is extremely high, particularly when development is not compact. The length of these facilities in relation to the number of houses served is very great.

Just as in the case of the highway and its later effect on the shopping centre, the low land cost which originally attracted people to live in the area has now rebounded. Taxes have to rise very greatly to pay for all the schools, sewers, water mains, and other facilities which are necessary, when, in fact, these could have been provided much more cheaply had they been constructed or planned in the first instance before the development took place.

What is likely to happen to Whalley?

Next year the Trans-Canada Highway will again be re-routed as a freeway to the north and will by-pass Whalley. This will have the effect of taking through traffic away, which will be of some advantage to most of the stores, but will be a blow for such traffic-oriented facilities as motels and hotels. The Surrey planners have proposed to the Municipal Council a very bold and imaginative plan for dealing with the situation. They propose that the main road - the present Trans-Canada Highway through the shopping centre - should be depressed, with pedestrian bridges across. They propose that there should be a ring road around the backs of the stores to give service and access to parking lots.

They propose that there should be extensive re-plotting and re-subdivision of the residential areas, which will involve demolition of existing houses in some cases, to make sites accessible that cannot now be subdivided and to make possible a proper resubdivision of some of the inappropriately large lots. They propose the zoning of some areas for apartments to provide for a greater concentration of people, and this, in turn, will provide more stability to the area.

They propose the provision of more and convenient parks and improvements to the existing schools, and a better arrangement of streets, using such devices as loop streets and cul-de-sacs to secure a quiet and pleasant residential environment. In addition, they propose an attractive system of walkways linking the schools, parks, and the shopping centre.

All of this, of course, will cost a considerable amount of money and the property owners themselves will have to bear a large part of the cost if this is to be achieved.

But, what is the alternative? A decline in quality and a decline in values, because less new development will occur. People will tend to move further and further out following a new and faster highway to new centres where land is cheaper and where some of the mistakes of Whalley will not be made. This could lead to the whole cycle taking place again in another twenty or thirty years as new techniques and new economic pressures develop.

I would like to think of some of the lessons we can learn from these three areas. It's quite true that some of the problems of all of these areas would not have arisen if there had been more thought for the future when the original pattern was set and the original development took place. Once land is subdivided and distributed among a number of different owners and the street and lot pattern is established, it's very difficult and expensive to change the pattern. At the same time, it's also very true that the early developers could not possibly have foreseen all the changes which might take place, particularly in the matter of transportation, which plays such an important part in the pattern of development. I have said that we cannot foresee with any degree of certainty what new forms of transportation will develop and what effect they will have, so I think it would be extremely unfair if we were to blame the early developers of our city.

This is not to say that we should sit back weakly and just let things happen. We must do the best we can to anticipate and plan for future changes, and the techniques and controls now available to us are extremely sophisticated compared to those available to earlier planners. Even so, however, the technological, economic, and social changes which take place still outstrip our capacity to cope with them, and perhaps this will always be so. It is certainly true in other forms of human activity, as well as city development.

Perhaps the most important thing we have to do is to recognize the danger signals arising from change in the early stages and to be bold and make the necessary changes while we can and before the situation becomes too bad. Even in a country as large and as wealthy as Canada, we cannot afford to strike our tents and move on to a new campsite when we have fouled the one we now occupy. In terms of dollars we cannot afford to write off an investment of \$2.1 billion in private assets and \$700 million in public assets, which is the investment represented in the City of Vancouver alone, and move on to another new site up the Valley. The bears and the chipmunks wouldn't thank us either because we have spoiled their natural habitat.

Apart from the economic reasons for adapting what we have, I believe there is some sort of mystic attachment formed between the land and the race of people who occupy it. Our Vancouver history, as a city, is very short so far but already there is ingrained in the citizens a love and attachment for the City which shelters, feeds, and entertains them. In the end, I believe that this mystic attachment is even stronger than the dollar investment and that people will wish to preserve what is best from the past, rectify the mistakes of the past, and leave a better City in all senses for the future citizens.

This is, I think, the great lesson from history and gives some sense of purpose to the sometimes terrible struggle for achievement.

Our present age is only a very small and insignificant part of a long process of history and destiny. I have sketched in very briefly the early history covering millions of years. I have dealt, in more detail, with the last fifty to one hundred years, and I have been quite sketchy again about a future period of twentyfive to fifty years. Beyond this, I can only see very dimly, but I have faith that the City will continue -with many mistakes, possibly with tragedies, but with many great periods as well.

H.W. Pickstone,
City Planning Department.