"Is Sutton Brown God?"

Planning Expertise and the Local State in Vancouver, 1952-1973

by

William Langford

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Abstract

In the late 1940s and early 1950s, city planning was, for the first time, drawn into the processes of the local state in a meaningful way. Planning departments and new administrative structures were created that gave planners and planning expertise a privileged and central role in the operation of the local state. Gerald Sutton Brown, first as Director of Planning and then as City Commissioner, was one such expert and he worked to implement a number of commonly held high modernist planning solutions in Vancouver. However, in the context of the global Sixties, the dehumanizing and undemocratic nature of high modernist planning expertise was revealed and confronted. This paper endeavours to explore the contours of the entrenchment of planning expertise within local government and the way in which it was eventually challenged.

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For the vast majority of North Americans, the postwar era was a period of unprecedented prosperity and growth, what has been called the Thirty Golden Years (1945-1975). It was also a period when the welfare state greatly expanded. New and reformed bureaucracies were empowered to face postwar anxieties, deal with the increasing complexity and plurality of society, and ensure the "good life." Professionalized experts became the key agents shaping policy and delivering services. Indeed, the decades between (roughly) 1952 and 1972 stand as a distinctive period where depoliticized expertise was accepted as an integral and indispensable element of government. For cities, the forces of postwar change were pronounced. Postwar housing shortages, rapid urbanization, accelerated suburbanization, the rise of the automobile, and the growing affluence of residents brought increasing demands on the local state. Conventional thinking defined the municipal government's role as that of providing the basic services such as water, electricity, and roads. The state had to keep pace with development. To satisfy this pro-growth mantra, the local state employed new modes of governance with the intention of bringing about more efficient, economical, and professional government. Important elements of this were the creation of planning departments and of new administrative structures that gave planners and planning expertise a privileged and central role in the operation of the local state.

Historians have written a great deal about planning. One body of literature traces the late nineteenth century intellectual origins of planning. The earliest planning advocates were Progressive Era reformers who looked to design better urban environments to counter the ills

of the Industrial Age.[1] Another body deals with the professionalization of planning.

Planners organized and by the late 1920s had established a professional identity rooted in the

scientific management of urban space.[2] A further avenue of inquiry delves into the new

planning policies and technical solutions of the postwar years. The rise, fall, and

consequences of freeways and urban renewal, especially, are well-discussed terrain.[3] In

some cases, historians have focused on single planners. For example, Robert Moses stands

as an archetype of the all-powerful planner and is the source of ongoing debate.[4]

     I wish to develop an oft-ignored link in this historiographical sketch. While city

planners were nominally professionalized by the 1920s, planners were few and far between.

They worked mostly as consultants, drawing up one-off master plans that often went unused.

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[1] On the intellectual and cultural origins of planning, see Helen Meller, *Towns, Plans, and Society in Modern Britain* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997) and Peter Hall, *Cities of Tomorrow: An Intellectual History of Urban Planning and Design in the Twentieth Century*, Third Edition (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2002). On the reform currents of the 19th Century and the Progressive Era, see Stanley K. Schultz, *Constructing Urban Culture: American Cities and City Planning, 1800-1920* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1989) and Daniel Rodgers, *Atlantic Crossings: Social Politics in a Progressive Age* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1998).

[2] See Joseph Heathcott*, "'The Whole City is Our Laboratory': Harland Bartholomew and the Production of Urban Knowledge," *Journal of Planning History* 4, no. 4 (2005): 322-355; John D. Fairfield, "The Scientific Management of Urban Space: Professional City Planning and the Legacy of Progressive Reform," *Journal of Urban History* 20, no. 2 (1994): 179-204; Louis Ward Kemp, "Aesthetes and Engineers: The Occupational Ideology of Highway Design," *Technology and Culture* 27, no. 4 (1986): 759-797; Jeffrey Brown, "From Traffic Regulation to Limited Ways: The Effort to Build a Science of Transportation Planning," *Journal of Planning History* 5, no. 3 (2006): 3-34.

[3] The literature on urban renewal is especially rich. For instance, Jon C. Teaford, *The Rough Road to Renaissance: Urban Revitalization in America, 1940-1985* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1990); Samuel Zipp, *Manhattan Projects: The Rise and Fall of Urban Renewal in Cold War New York* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010); Christopher Klemek, "From Political Outsider to Power Broker in Two 'Great American Cities': Jane Jacobs and the Fall of the Urban Renewal Order in New York and Toronto," *Journal of Urban History* 34, no. 2 (2008): 309-332; Sean Purdy, "'Ripped Off' by the System: Housing Policy, Poverty and Territorial Stigmatization in Regent Park Housing Project, 1951-1991," *Labour/Le Travail* 52 (2003): 45-108. On freeways, see, for example, Raymond A. Mohl, "Stop the Road: Freeway Revolts in American Cities," *Journal of Urban History* 30, no. 5 (2004): 674-706; Zachary M. Schrag, "The Freeway Fight in Washington, D.C.: The Three Sisters Bridge in Three Administrations," *Journal of Urban History* 30, no. 5 (2004): 648-673; Ken MacKenzie, "Freeway Planning and Protests in Vancouver, 1954-1972," MA Thesis, Simon Fraser University (1985).

[4] Part of the revisionist debate is captured in Hilary Ballon and Kenneth T. Jackson, eds. *Robert Moses and the Modern City: The Transformation of New York* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2007). The archetype was set by Robert A. Caro, *The Power Broker: Robert Moses and the Fall of New York* (New York: Knopf, 1974).

Local planning bodies served in a loose, advisory capacity and municipal governments were not compelled to heed planning advice. Professional planners were largely transient voices of reason, champions of idealism or heralds of doom. The postwar period, then, is crucial to understanding the emergence of planning expertise. It was only in the late 1940s and early 1950s that planners were drawn into the processes of the local state in a meaningful way. Changes in civic administration made planning an occupation, a career, and an entrenched part of bureaucracy, as it had never been before. Some historians have hinted at this development.[5] Christopher Klemek, for instance, suggests that a post-1949 professionalization of planning occurred in response to the initiation of urban renewal policy – planners were needed to manage the program.[6] Stephen Bocking hedges that 1940 to 1970 was a period when the authority of urban expertise "was perhaps most unchallenged."[7] More decisively, Helen Meller calls 1942 to 1965 the "golden age of planning."[8] This paper endeavours to explore the contours of this entrenchment and the way in which the role of planning expertise within local government was eventually challenged.

An important element to this story was that mid-twentieth century planning was high modern.[9] According to anthropologist James C. Scott, high modernity is best thought of as an exaggerated belief in the capacity of scientific and technological progress to meet growing

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[5] Kevin Brushett, "People and Government Traveling Together: Community Organization, Urban Planning and the Politics of Post-War Reconstruction, 1943-1953," *Urban History Review* 27, no. 2 (1999): 44-58; Christopher Fullerton, "A Changing of the Guard: Regional Planning in Ottawa, 1945-1974," *Urban History Review* 34, no. 1 (2005): 100-112.

[6] Klemek: 311.

[7] Stephen Bocking, "Constructing Urban Expertise: Professional and Political Authority in Toronto, 1940-1970," *Journal of Urban History* 33, no. 1 (2006): 52.

[8] Meller: 67.

[9] Scholars of modernity, while not always using this terminology, have argued that there was something distinctive about its twentieth century iterations. See Marshall Berman, *All That is Solid Melts into Air: The Experience of Modernity* (New York: Viking Penguin, 1988) and Zygmunt Bauman, *Modernity and the Holocaust* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2000).

human needs and bestow social benefits. It was an ideology commensurate with the interests

of political and economic elites and gained credibility across the political spectrum and

around the world in the 1930s. While as a discourse it emphasized the gains that average

people would make in a rationalized society, planning was depoliticized and citizens were

standardized subjects excluded from the decision-making process. Instead, it was planners,

engineers, architects, scientists, and technicians who were at the vanguard of high modernity

and who used their skills and status to design prescriptions for the future.[10] High modernist

planning became common practice only after World War II, stimulated by the convergence

of corporate capitalism and mass democracy.[11] Especially in cities, planners worked to

smooth over the undeniable contradiction of an economic system based on individual gain

and a political system predicated on the common good.

While the advance of high modernity may have been most pronounced in

authoritarian states, it was also a dominant current in Western democracies. The emergence

of high modernity within mass democracies is particularly interesting because it allows for an

examination of what happened when the ideology met political resistance. Scott himself

traces its emergence in New Deal America with respect to the Tennessee Valley Authority.[12]

In a Canadian context, several historians have explored high modernity in relation to

hydroelectric dams.[13] Histories of city planning and government, while treating the issue of

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[10] James C. Scott, *Seeing Like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998): 4-5, 94-96.

[11] Robert A. Beauregard, *Voices of Decline: The Postwar Fate of U.S. Cities*, Second Edition (New York: Routledge, 2003): 29-30.

[12] James C. Scott, "High Modernist Social Engineering: The Case of the Tennessee Valley Authority," in *Experiencing the State*, eds. Lloyd I. Rudolph and John K. Jacobsen (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2006): 3-52.

[13] Tina Loo, "People in the Way: Modernity, Environment, and Society on the Arrow Lakes," *BC Studies* 142-143 (Fall and Winter 2004-2005): 161-191 and James L. Kenny and Andrew G. Secord, "Engineering Modernity: Hydroelectricity Development in New Brunswick, 1945-1970," *Acadiensis* 24, no. 1 (2010): 3-26.

experts, have largely left the high modernist impulses of the mid-century at the margins of analyses. Certainly, city planners from 1952 to 1972 worked within a planning consensus that was high modern and that emerged from complex transnational debates over the future of cities. While there were different legislative frameworks across Western democracies, planners pursued the same goals with the same methods and technical solutions.

These debates, however, played out in major cities as local debates, with local actors and local consequences. For more than just practical reasons, then, this paper looks at one city and at one planner in order to speak to broader currents. Vancouver, the largest city in British Columbia, was a modest and conservative city with an economy that relied on being a managerial centre for the regional logging and fishing industries, and served as Canada's most westerly port.[14] The populist conservative provincial government of W.A.C. Bennett pursued a program of modernization from 1952 to 1972 that served the development of the resource economy, paralleling urban actions of the period. Primary provincial programs were highway building and dam construction built on high modernist logic.[15] Vancouver was no less caught up with this "culture of modernity."[16] Notably, Vancouver emerged as a self-conscious centre for acclaimed Modernist architecture from the mid-1940s.[17] Progress, growth, and modernization were broadly shared aims and it was in this context that Vancouver hired its first city planner, Gerald Sutton Brown, who served as Director of Planning from 1953 to the end of 1959 and City Commissioner from 1960 to early 1973.

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[14] R.W. Collier, "Downtown: Metropolitan Focus," in *Vancouver: Western Metropolis*, ed. L.J. Evenden (Victoria: Department of Geography, University of Victoria, 1978): 159.

[15] Martin Robin, *Pillars of Profit: The Company Province 1934-1972* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1973): 170; Loo (2004-2005), op. cit.

[16] A phrase used by Mayna Star Vancaillie, "To Build a 'Better City': Urban Renewal and the Culture of Modernity in Post-War Vancouver," BA Hons. Thesis, University of British Columbia (2000).

[17] Rhodri Windsor-Liscombe, *The New Spirit: Modern Architecture in Vancouver, 1938-1963* (Vancouver: Douglas &McIntyre, 1997): 6.

Many writers have noted Sutton Brown's political and administrative importance in Vancouver, but it is often in passing and with hints of innuendo. Variously, he was an "engineer-planner working for a business government," and "the most powerful person at city hall, his power verging on absolute." Meeting him was like "being granted an audience with the Queen."[18] While these evaluations are insightful, Sutton Brown was wholly unremarkable – he was a conventional planner of his time. Yet, as a conventional planner, he played a central part in the postwar history of urban development in Vancouver, a history in many ways like that of other North American cities of the time.

In following the trajectory of Sutton Brown's career, two abutting stories tell how the role of planning expertise was negotiated within the local state. The first concerns the institutionalization of city planning and the establishment of a profession rooted in high modernist ideology. The second entails how, in the context of the global Sixties, the dehumanizing and undemocratic nature of high modernist planning expertise was revealed and confronted. What emerges is that the 1950s and early 1960s were a period when planning experts and expertise were uncritically accepted as an instrument of the local state. Only in the late 1960s did people realize that the consequences of high modernity were untenable.

Planning emerged from nineteenth century intellectual currents in Europe, Britain and North America. Stanley Schultz argues that an urban culture was constructed as new attitudes towards the relationship between the physical environment and bodily, mental, and

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[18] Stephen V. Ward, "British and American Influences on Canadian Urban Planning: The Example of Vancouver, 1910-1975," *British Journal of Canadian Studies* 13, no. 1 (1998): 132; Donald Gutstein, "Vancouver," in *City Politics in Canada*, eds. Warren Magnusson and Andrew Sancton (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1983): 178; Setty Pendakur being quoted in, "Who Really Runs City Hall? Bureaucrats Use Many Tricks to Keep Politicians in the Dark," *Vancouver Sun*, 9 March 2010.

moral health emerged. The use of eminent domain and police power became acceptable means with which to regulate urban space and to effect change.[19] By late century, middle class concern over Industrial Age inequalities led to a reform movement known as Progressivism. From the 1870s, a transatlantic network of reform ideas, policies, and legislative devices developed.[20] Urban experts – especially engineers – gained credence because they made themselves indispensable to reform governments by proposing solutions to urban problems. As Bruce Seely argues, there was an Enlightenment-driven assumption that rational people would do what was good if it was shown to them and that public behaviours should correspond to the public good. Increasingly, the idea of the public good became tied up with the ideal of social efficiency. Social efficiency could be brought to bear only through expert scientific management, or Taylorism. Town planning emerged in this period as one of the most accepted reform measures. Planning entailed, quite literally, shaping the physical environment to improve social welfare, and the legitimization of planning created an impetus for the professionalization of planning experts. Even though the Progressive Era had faded by the early 1920s, the idea of the apolitical planning expert endured.[21]

Canada was firmly embedded in this transatlantic traffic of reform. In 1914, the conservation branch of the federal government hired the well-known British planner Thomas Adams and he succeeded in bringing planning legislation to Canada's provinces.[22] In Vancouver, planning was embraced by local elites who saw it was a technique for social and

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[19] Schultz: xvii, 36.
[20] Rodgers: 3-4.
[21] Bruce Seely, *Building the American Freeway System: Engineers as Policymakers* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1987): 4-5. On Taylorism, see Fairfield: 179-180.
[22] Michael Simpson, *Thomas Adams and the Modern Planning Movement in Canada and the United States, 1900-1940* (London: Mansell, 1985).

economic efficiency.[23] Real estate men and boosters populated Vancouver's Town Planning

Commission (TPC), which was normative in the sense that it was a non-professional board

that served the city in an advisory capacity only. In 1925, the same elites were critical to the

hiring of St. Louis planning consultant Harland Bartholomew.[24] His *A Plan for the City of*

Vancouver of 1929 stood as a symbolic planning framework for the city and had legitimacy

through its very existence.[25]

The Great Depression and the Second World War was a crucial interregnum and

important to understanding the trajectory of planning in North American cities. The

disruptions of the 1930s and 1940s delayed the ambitions of planners and elites alike. Yet

the experience of these decades actually worked to legitimize planning in a much broader

way than previously. The interventions of the state in the management of a successful war

effort, especially, underlined the value of planning.[26] In the waning years of WWII, all levels

of government began to emphasize the need to rebuild to avert a return to the economic

depths of the Depression.[27] For the local state, the push was predominantly on the imperative

of city planning. In 1944, Vancouver rehired Bartholomew's firm to update its original plan.

Paid for by downtown merchants, the new plan detailed the economic and physical

requirements of the postwar future.[28] Of greatest concern were the slums dotting the

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[23] John Bottomley, "Ideology, Planning and the Landscape: The Business Community, Urban Reform and the Establishment of Town Planning in Vancouver, British Columbia, 1900-1940," PhD. Diss., University of British Columbia (1977): 4.

[24] On Bartholomew, see Joseph Heathcott, "The City Quietly Remade: National Programs and Local Agendas in the Movement to Clear Slums," *Journal of Urban History* 34 (2008): 221-242 and Jeffrey Brown, "A Tale of Two Visions: Harland Bartholomew, Robert Moses, and the Development of the American Freeway," *Journal of Planning History* 4, no. 1 (2005): 3-32.

[25] Vancouver Town Planning Commission, *A Plan for Vancouver, British Columbia* (Vancouver: Town Planning Commission, 1929); V. Setty Pendakur, *Cities, Citizens & Freeways* (Vancouver: 1972): 5.

[26] Meller: 67; Mohl: 677.

[27] Beauregard: 77; Bocking, op. cit.; Brushett, op. cit.

[28] "Council Approves Resurvey of Vancouver's 'Town Plan'," *Vancouver Province*, 10 May 1944, 6; The TPC released a series of reports from the Bartholomew firm between 1944 and 1948. Town Planning Commission,

landscapes of major cities.[29] After years of discussion, a major housing study was initiated in

Vancouver to detail the issue.[30]

In 1950, the TPC drove talk of creating a civic planning department. Accepting that

technical and administrative matters overburdened the advisory body, City Council resolved

to create a stand-alone planning department within the civic bureaucracy.[31] The city

promptly hired two McGill University professors to recommend a set-up. The resulting

Spence-Sales and Bland report argued that planning should be a function of municipal

government "because of the growth of the city and the increasing complexity of municipal

responsibilities." Indeed, planning was being accepted in other major Canadian cities. The

report also called for the creation of a Technical Planning Board (TPB), populated by civic

department heads, to coordinate planning initiatives and present proposals to city council.[32]

In such a centralized system, the collective weight of departmental experts would be behind

each and every proposal put to Council. The Director of Planning would necessarily serve as

the TPB's chairman because, "by virtue of his training and outlook, [he] must of necessity,

be free to exercise his abilities within the civic administration so as to give stimulus to the

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"[Report Series] Town Planning Commission; Harland Bartholomew and Associates," (Vancouver: TPC, 1944-48).

[29] Robert Beauregard examines the discourse of urban decline, op. cit.

[30] Leonard C. Marsh, *Rebuilding a Neighbourhood: Report on a Demonstration Slum Clearance and Urban Rehabilitation in a Key Central Area in Vancouver* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia, 1950).

[31] "City Planning Still Nebulous," *Vancouver Province*, 3 February 1950, 8; Harold Spence-Sales and John Bland, "Report Upon the Establishment of a Planning Department in the City of Vancouver," 20 July 1951, City Council and Office of the City Clerk fonds, Public Records Series (hereafter PRS) 40, 120-A-4 File 32, City of Vancouver Archives (hereafter CVA).

[32] The eventual TPB consisted of the Director of Planning, the City Comptroller, the City Engineer, the Corporation Counsel, the Building Inspector, the Supervisor for Land and Rentals, the Medical Health Officer, the Superintendent of the Board of School Trustees, and the Superintendent of Parks Commissioners. It met for the first time on 23 October 1952. Two City Commissioners were added to the TPB in 1956. "Notes on Planning Organization and Accomplishments 1952-1962; Prepared for Commissioner G. Sutton Brown," City Planning Department fonds, Director's general files, PRS 648, 77-F-2 File 10, CVA; "New Commissioner Terms Himself 'A Cautious Man'," *Vancouver Province*, 9 December 1959, 2.

planning of the urban area."[33] Council quickly moved to act on the study. In doing so, it

changed the role of planning in city government and precipitated a shift in power from

elected officials to professionalized experts. Planning was to be an active part in the day-to-

day governance of the local state. As a result, city planning was made an institutionalized

occupation in a way that it had not been before.

In November 1951, the city advertised the newly created Director of Planning job in

ten professional journals in Canada, the United States, and Britain. The advertisement called

for someone with a civil engineering or architectural degree and training and experience in

planning, underlying the as yet ill-shaped nature of the planning profession. Seven men were

shortlisted from 128 applicants and, in line with the McGill professors' assertion that a

British planner would be more comfortable "with the constituted basis and the traditions of

British Columbia," all hailed from the United Kingdom.[34] Both James Lemon and Stephen

V. Ward have noted the distinct trend for Canadian cities and federal agencies to hire British

planners, a fact that also speaks to the earlier establishment of planning in Britain.[35] Gerald

Sutton Brown was seen as the best applicant and was flown to Vancouver in April 1952,

where he impressed all of those who interviewed him. Indeed, Council so highly rated his

expertise that, pushed by his salary demands, it bumped its salary offer well above what had

been advertised.[36] The city hired Sutton Brown and the move was met with widespread

approval. Ratepayers' and business groups warmly received him and the press hailed him as

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[33] The Town Planning Commission also stayed on as an advisory body, but was largely inconsequential. Spence-Sales and Bland, "Report."

[34] Spence-Sales and Bland, "Report"; and Draft copy of advertisement; Personnel Director to City Council, 5 March 1952, City Council and Office of the City Clerk fonds, PRS 20, 81-B-6 File 2, CVA.

[35] James T. Lemon, *Liberal Dreams and Nature's Limits: Great Cities of North America since 1600* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996): 267; Ward: 129-130.

[36] Personnel Committee Special Meeting minutes, 24 April 1952, PRS 20, 81-B-6 File 2, CVA; "Planner to Receive Top Salary," *Vancouver Province*, 24 April 1952, 1.

a "top flight English community planner."[37] Indeed, as he got to work, the booster sentiment

was that now, with a planning department established, "we are all set to go places."[38]

Born in Jamaica, Gerald Sutton Brown, aged 41, was "a man of medium height, a

lean-faced pipe-smoker with a precise English accent and a habit of thinking carefully before

he speaks."[39] When hired he moved to Vancouver with his daughter, Anne, a niece, a

nephew and wife Katherine. He enjoyed fishing, golfing and gardening, and took office

work home.[40] While he was sincere in his professional ideas, he was not a demagogue and

did not let them get in the way of his family or vacations to Hawaii and "the fleshpots of

Europe."[41] He remarried in the mid-1960s to a barrister named Joan and died in retirement

on a golf course in California in 1985.[42]

Sutton Brown was a professional climber. Between 1932 and 1952, he had held

seven positions in different local governments in England. Each subsequent job was more

prestigious than the last, culminating in a post as County Planning Officer for Lancashire,

"the more senior position of this type outside of London."[43] In this role, he was involved

with keeping Britain's war-torn cities up and running. It was noted later that he took the

Vancouver job because he felt that it was time for a change.[44] That his first wife was from

Canada likely explains why he applied to the position in the first place. Certainly, Sutton

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[37] "Let's Say 'Yes' to Mr. Brown," *Vancouver Province*, Editorial, 26 April 1952, 4.

[38] D.A. McGregor, "Realistic Town Planning," *Vancouver Province*, Op. Ed., 29 January 1954, 6.

[39] "City's Town Planner Calls Job 'Interesting'," *Vancouver Province*, 25 April 1952, 8.

[40] "Vancouver Has its Faults but Sutton Brown Likes it Here," *Vancouver Sun*, 11 December 1959, 3. He was a member of the Royal Horticultural Society. Letters, 1961, Office of the City Manager fonds, Commissioner subject files 1925-1972, PRS 476, 111-C-4 File 193, CVA.

[41] Sutton Brown to G. Elliott, Southport, Lancashire, 6 August 1962, PRS 476, 111-C-4 File 193, CVA.

[42] "Sutton Brown Rites Set for Thursday," *Vancouver Sun*, 19 November 1985, D10.

[43] Sutton Brown's resume shows that his planning jobs were either as a regional planner or as a town planner working within a civic engineering department. This suggests that the stand-alone civic planning department was a postwar product. Acting City Clerk Ronald Thompson to Mrs. I. Crichton, 5 August 1952, Robert Henry fonds, Add. MSS. 1245, 618-D-1 File 14, CVA.

[44] "Sutton Brown Rites Set for Thursday," *Vancouver Sun*, 19 November 1985, D10.

Brown mustered only muted enthusiasm for his new job, saying that Vancouver lagged in

creating a planning department and noting, "It's not that this is a better job, but I certainly am

happy about the chances for the future." His education as a civil engineer at the University

of Southampton, which followed his years at a prominent Jamaican boarding school for boys,

determined his approach to planning. While he began his civil service career as an engineer,

he gradually shifted into planning.[45] Effectively, then, he learned planning on the job during

a period when the engineering-minded scientific management of urban space was becoming

the dominant approach in the discipline. This approach was high modernist.

High modernist planning had to do with power and policy, with administration and

space. High modernist planners worked, through hierarchical structures of authority, to

actively bring about change that often entailed the drastic reorganization of the urban

landscape. The most basic element of high modernist planning was its temporal fixation on

the future. Everything Sutton Brown did was "forward looking." He warned, for instance,

that "any slackness or lack of forethought at this critical stage in Vancouver's planning could

prejudice the future."[46] Lest this sound too foreboding, Sutton Brown was openly optimistic,

insisting that Vancouver had "a fantastic future."[47] Vancouverites shared this vision.

A second element at play was high modernist planning's social prerogative. Sutton

Brown confirmed succinctly his understanding of planning as a progressive social instrument

by underlining the text of a speech calling on a shared belief that:

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[45] "City's Town Planner Calls Job 'Interesting'," *Vancouver Province*, 25 April 1952, 8.
[46] "Aggressive Policy Advocated for City," *Vancouver Sun*, 9 October 1953, 20; "Town Planner Urges
Aggressive Policy," *Vancouver Province*, 8 October 1953, 40.
[47] "'Fantastic Future' Seen for Vancouver," *Vancouver Sun*, 11 April 1956, 37.

> What we are all striving for is an improvement – <u>a substantial improvement</u> – in the human environment and in the efficiency of its operation – we are trying to make our cities, towns and villages better places to live in and work in.[48]

This connection between physical and social problems was, of course, a predisposition of planners; it was planning's raison d'être. The ongoing and active goal of postwar city planning was to effect significant social change. High modernist planning was an exercise in social engineering.

Third, Sutton Brown was convinced that social and physical progress had to be expert-led. He expressed a great deal of self-assurance in claiming that, "To show imagination is easy, but to make the most imaginative use of limited resources, that is where the planner's skill is fully tested."[49] He stressed the need for objectivity, which the TPB exemplified. "The meetings of the Board," he explained, "are not held in public and the members thus are enabled without external pressures of any sort to thrash out on a realistic and factual basis the several problems concerning the development of the City upon which they are required to report."[50] The paradox here was that Sutton Brown's status as an expert gave him a platform to be a political advocate. He inserted himself into the legislative process numerous times. Politics purportedly had no role in planning, yet planning regularly had a political purpose to serve.[51]

This view of expertise also shaped his opinion on the public's role in planning:

> There is a great tendency to say we now have professional men appointed to do the job – they should get on with it, and we are no longer necessary. Now that may be true in some form of benevolent dictatorship, but it is catastrophic in a democracy.

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[48] Gerald Sutton Brown, "Whither Planning?" talk for Community Planning Advisory Committee conference, Hotel Vancouver, 10 November 1959, PRS 648, 77-F-2 File 10, CVA, 1.
[49] "Aggressive Policy Advocated for City," *Vancouver Sun*, 9 October 1953, 20.
[50] Sutton Brown, "Whither Planning?" 1.
[51] Bruce Seely notes the same dynamic with highway engineers. Seely: 37.

> In a democracy, when inevitably we are interfering with the liberties of the
> individual to the public interest, the informed awareness by the citizens of what is
> taking place is absolutely vital.[52]

Sutton Brown took to public speaking in an attempt to create this "informed awareness." The
public was receptive. Many civil society groups wrote to the planning department requesting
a speaker, demonstrating that they were cognizant of urban changes and interested in
planning. Sutton Brown usually tailored his message to each organization. He spoke to the
Downtown Business Association (DBA) of economic development, to the CPC Industrial
Council of protecting sufficient industrial land, to the Western Society for Rehabilitation of
redeveloping slums, and to the Kitsilano Ratepayers' Association of maintaining property
values.[53] He looked to dispel stereotypes about planners and impose a reasoned professional
identity of his own.

Guided by more than rational argument, his rhetoric was held together by a constant
use of language, principles, and imagery borrowed from business and science and medicine
and in opposition to politics.[54] By employing the language of other professions, Sutton
Brown was calling on a shared understanding that business, scientific, medical, and apolitical
expertise was imperative in society. In making these associations, he tried to create a
narrative about what planning was and why it was so necessary. In fact, Sutton Brown was

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[52] Sutton Brown, "Whither Planning?" 5.
[53] "Vancouver in 1976: 900,000 People, 140,000 More Cars," *Vancouver Sun*, 8 February 1955, 17; "'Fantastic
Future' Seen for Vancouver," *Vancouver Sun*, 11 April 1956, 37; "Planner Urges Study of Industrial Land,"
Vancouver Province, 15 March 1954, 22;"New Planner Finds Big Headache," *Vancouver Sun*, 18 October
1952, 9.
[54] The connections to business, science, and apolitical expertise permeate this paper. Sutton Brown's use of
medical imagery, however, largely had to do with his conception of slums as "blight" that necessitated certain
"surgical operations" from planners, namely urban renewal. His allusions to disease were tied to both the
nineteenth century public health tradition and the Chicago school urban ecology model that compared the city to
the body and the natural world. On the public health origins of municipal regulation, see Patrick Joyce, *The
Rule of Freedom: Liberalism and the Modern City* (2003): 63-72 and Schultz: 91-140, especially. On the urban
ecology tradition, see John R. Logan and Harvey Molotch, *Urban Fortunes: The Political Economy of Place*
(Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007): vii-6.

engaging in a multifarious debate about the future of cities, his voice one of many.[55] But as

Director of Planning, Sutton Brown had a privileged position through which he could work

to shape what Michel Foucault calls the "political economy of truth."[56]

Figure 1 Gerald Sutton Brown (middle) reviews a "draft copy" of the 20-Year Development Plan with 'Average Citizens'. Source: "'Average Citizens' Approve Plan," *Vancouver Province*, 13 November 1952, 9.

A fourth dynamic, critical to legitimizing expert-driven planning and to shaping the

contours of high modernity, was Sutton Brown's planning tools. The most obvious tool was

the Plan itself. Spence-Sales and Bland argued that the primary role of the planning

department was to formulate an overall development plan for the city of Vancouver.[57]

Certainly, Sutton Brown argued that the Plan was the very framework of planning

administration.[58] So, like Bartholomew before him, Sutton Brown geared all of his efforts

towards putting together an overarching and absolute plan.[59] By 1955, Sutton Brown spoke

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[55] See Beauregard for the kinds of debates going on in Vancouver and elsewhere.
[56] Michel Foucault, *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings, 1972-1977*, Edited and Translated by Colin Gordon (Brighton, England: Harvester Press, 1980): 131-133.
[57] Spence-Sales and Bland, "Report."
[58] "Planning Legislation," memo circa 1953 likely by Sutton Brown, PRS 648, 926-B-4 File 6, CVA.
[59] Sutton Brown split the planning department into architectural, engineering, and research sections. These sub-departments worked towards the contents of the development plan, namely i) The City and its People, ii) The

openly of a "20-Year Development Plan," culminating in 1976.[60] From that point, he geared

all of his predictions and policies towards what he expected 1976 Vancouver to look like.

The perhaps curious thing was that Sutton Brown spoke throughout the 1950s to a plan that

did not exist in any material sense. However, the idea of the twenty-year development plan,

and the insistence that it was being worked on and was forthcoming, was powerful. All of

the planning department's decisions were justified with and mediated by the plan and its

ends; Sutton Brown spoke through it. Something Le Corbusier wrote seems apt: "The despot

is not a man. It is the Plan."[61]

The five-year fiscal plans that Sutton Brown developed, in conjunction with the TPB,

at corresponding intervals, were a more material planning device. Sutton Brown argued that

the city could not rely on isolated money by-laws and that, in the interest of efficiency,

planning needed sustained support and money.[62] He was quick to emphasize the fiscal

prudence and realistic aims of the plans.[63] He spoke often about the importance of the five-

year plans because the city required voter approval to borrow money and to raise taxes in

order to build public works. The five-year plans were very much political policies generated

by the technical experts on the TPB.

Sutton Brown also made his claims to expertise by emphasizing the scientific

techniques of planning. He referred to surveys, "basic data," "modern processes," and

"detailed analyses" – in short, to techniques that dealt with things that were quantifiable. This

bias was amplified by the near unique emphasis on physical and technical dimensions.

Heart of the City, iii) Highways, iv) Transportation, v) Industry and Commerce, vi) Cultural, Recreational and Trade Facilities, vii) Community Planning, viii) Summary. According to the 1954 programme of work, PRS 648, 925-E-3 File 2, CVA.

[60] "New 20-Year Plan Aims to Guide City's Growth," *Vancouver Province*, 4 March 1955, 31.
[61] Quoted in Scott: 111.
[62] "Vancouver 'Can't Rely on Isolated Money Bylaws,'" *Vancouver Sun*, 24 October 1957, 25.
[63] "No 'Fancy Schemes' in City's Master Plan," *Vancouver Province*, 11 March 1955, 4.

Social concerns and qualitative features of urban life were ignored because they resisted rational, engineering-style interpretation. Sutton Brown underlined this by using business language and economic rationality. He likened the preparation and functioning of a modern development plan to "the techniques and processes normally adopted by big business." He concluded that, "in these days, 'private enterprise' would not dream of investing millions in an extensive capital program without the most exhaustive report by experts of every phase of that program, and a step-by-step analysis of its chances of financial success."[64]

Undertaking this kind of work required trained and capable personnel. Sutton Brown insisted that planning departments be populated by personnel with "a high level of technical qualifications" based on function and specialization, and that they be trained to handle the "severe responsibilities" of the task at hand.[65] Council gave Sutton Brown the discretion to set up his own department and he looked to enforce the professional standards of the Vancouver planning department by hiring British planners.[66] He also created a hierarchical management structure within the department. Sutton Brown did not do any planning but, rather, dished out assignments and acted in a supervisory role.

Sutton Brown was also involved in pulling together planners in an overt form of professionalization. His own professional affiliations extended to civil engineering, municipal engineering, and planning associations in Canada, the U.S. and the U.K. At the Town Planning Institute of Canada's (TPIC) suggestion, Sutton Brown organized meetings of local planners. His efforts culminated in the creation of the Planning Institute of British

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[64] Sutton Brown, "Planning Administration," Reprinted from Volume IV, 1954, *Community Planning Review,* Issued to its Members by the Community Planning Association of Canada, 77 MacLaren Street, Ottawa, Canada, PAM 1954-132, CVA, 1-2.
[65] Ibid: 2, 5.
[66] 'New Planning Setup to Cost City $80,000," *Vancouver Province*, 23 December 1952, 17.

Columbia (PIBC), incorporated in 1958. In mid-1959, Sutton Brown was elected its first president.[67] Noting the growth of the profession, Sutton Brown said that planners were organizing to ensure a high quality of service to the public.[68] To this end, the PIBC set a qualifying exam and issued a syllabus.[69] Sutton Brown also entered into discussions with the University of British Columbia (UBC) about a training program and, in 1954, he himself lectured at UBC on planning administration.[70] In all of this, Sutton Brown looked to establish modernized and standardized professional boundaries. Finally, the PIBC looked to overcome the contingency of the emerging profession by developing a draft act "to legally establish the practice of community and regional planning as a profession." In the long run, legislation was never passed but the PIBC became the de facto regulating body of the profession.[71]

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[67] The PIBC held its first annual general meeting in December 1957 with thirty-eight municipal planners, academics, regional planners and consultants, all men, in attendance. Fifteen came from Vancouver's planning department. Third organizational meeting of B.C. planners minutes, 14 December 1955; George Fountain to R. Norman Dryden, Secretary-Treasurer, TPIC, 28 February 1955; R. Norman Dryden to Sutton Brown, 26 October 1954; Inaugural AGM of PIBC minutes, 12 December 1957; B.C. Professional Planners – Mailing List, 18 December 1957, PRS 648, 926-C-2 Files 9-10, CVA; "Brown Heads B.C. Planners," *Vancouver Province*, 8 May 1959, 11.

[68] Sutton Brown address to the American Institute of Planners convention, 26-30 July 1959, Seattle, City Planning Department fonds, Director's general files, PRS 648, 77-F-2 File 11, CVA.

[69] The units were the Historical Development of Planning, the Planning Process, the Physical Elements of Planning, the Social Elements of Planning, the Economics of Land Use and Land Development, and the Basic Methods and Tools of Planning. PIBC Examination Syllabus and Instructions to Candidates – Draft, November 1960, PRS 648, 926-C-2 File 10, CVA.

[70] In addition to UBC, planning programs were established at McGill University (1947), the University of Toronto and the University of Manitoba. By 1972, a further six institutions offered planning courses. Gerald Hodge, *The Demand and Supply of Urban and Regional Planners in Canada, 1961-1981; A Report to the Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation* (Toronto: Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation, 1972): 11; Sutton Brown to Hugh Lemon, Secretary-Treasurer, TPIC, 4 June 1959; Brochure – "Orientation Course in Community Planning," Dept. of University Extension, UBC, PRS 648, 77-E-3 File 1, CVA.

[71] One of the obstacles to its enactment were existing engineering, surveying, and architectural professional organizations. Planning combined elements of all of these disciplines and Sutton Brown's deputy George Fountain worked to appease these groups, warning that, "it would be most unfortunate if any such problem were aired in public, particularly in the Legislature or the press." Sutton Brown address to the American Institute of Planners convention, 26-30 July 1959, Seattle, City Planning Department fonds, Director's general files, PRS 648, 77-F-2 File 11, CVA; George Fountain, Deputy Planning Director to Commissioner Oliver, 17 March 1960; Fountain, Vice-President of PIBC to Nigel Richardson, Secretary of PIBC, 17 February 1960; Fountain to G.S. Andrews, Surveyor-General, Dept. of Land and Forests, 4 February 1960, PRS 648, 926-C-2 File 9, CVA.

With respect to these local professionalization efforts, Sutton Brown was also operating within a broader formal and informal network of planners. Conferences were an important component. Sutton Brown attended, for instance, a planning conference in Philadelphia where he saw model redevelopments. He, too, spoke at events like an American Institute of Planning conference in Seattle and, closer to home, Community Planning Association of Canada seminars. Professional journals were a further link in this network. Sutton Brown read and wrote in the *Community Planning Review*, as well as publishing in the *Royal Architectural Institute Journal*. The informal exchange of ideas, however, often was a more immediate source of information. Sutton Brown corresponded with planning officials in other major North American cities over plans, policies, strategies, and financial implications. Vancouver planners also traveled to cities like San Francisco and Portland to investigate planning measures they had taken.[72] And consultants, city planners, and politicians from other cities often came to and spoke in Vancouver, facilitating an exchange of ideas on existing planning practice.

The fifth factor of high modernist planning had to do with policy itself. The responsibilities of the new planning department were extensive, covering provisions for everything from sidewalks to parks and cemeteries, garbage collection to public works.[73] One of Sutton Brown's recurring concerns was to ensure that Vancouver had enough

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[72] Multiple speeches, PRS 648, 77-F-2 File 10-11, CVA; Sutton Brown to Francis J. Lanmer, Executive Director, Philadelphia Redevelopment Authority, 22 October 1954, PRS 648, 924-D-6 File 2, CVA; Sutton Brown to C.R. Woods, Planning Director, City Planning Dept., Pittsburgh, 19 September 1956, PRS 648, 924-B-3 File 1, CVA.

[73] Development Plan – Vancouver Organization, Draft, Planning Department, 10 January 1958, PRS 648, 925-E-3 File 2, CVA.

industrial land.[74] To a large extent, his task was about trying to decide how to come to grips

with suburbanization.[75] In this light, Sutton Brown's preoccupation was with advancing four

policies: urban renewal, downtown redevelopment, freeways, and comprehensive zoning.

These were high modern initiatives: expert-managed technical solutions to perceived urban

problems that involved the drastic alteration, regulation, standardization, and modernization

of city space. His adherence to these policies spoke to both the goal of professionalization

and the way Vancouver was entangled with the dominant currents in city planning. In a

sense, he laid claim to these planning solutions because they were so widely held. It was

these planning solutions that validated the central involvement of planning expertise in the

operation of the local state.

Slums were a constant concern of urban civil society, particularly in the 1940s.

Politicians, housing reformers and planning advocates debated what to do about the

perceived connection between the poor physical living conditions and social depravity.

Local forces were responding to a real need and became important forces in shaping national

policy. In Vancouver, the lack of low rent housing was a longstanding issue, exacerbated by

an aging housing stock and postwar demand.[76] As Joseph Heathcott argues, the political

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[74] "Planner Forecasts City of 1,000,000," *Vancouver Province*, 23 January 1953, 13; "City Future Hangs on Industry Plan," *Vancouver Province*, 15 January 1954, 25; "Industry to Depend on Freeway," *Vancouver Province*, 26 June 1959, 12.

[75] Suburbanization was, however, a trend Sutton Brown could never really influence. On suburbanization in Canada, see Richard Harris, *Creeping Conformity: How Canada Became Suburban, 1900-1960* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2004); Harris, "More American than the United States: Housing in Urban Canada in the Twentieth Century," *Journal of Urban History* 26, no. 4 (2000): 456-478; Veronica Strong-Boag, "Home Dreams: Women and the Suburban Experiment in Canada, 1945-60," *Canadian Historical Review* 72, no. 4 (1991): 471-504; John C. Bacher, *Keeping to the Marketplace: The Evolution of Canadian Housing Policy* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1993); Shawn M. Natrasony and Don Alexander, "The Rise of Modernism and the Decline of Place: The Case of Surrey City Centre, Canada," *Planning Perspectives* 20, no. 4 (2005): 413-433.

[76] See Jill Wade, *Houses for All: The Struggle for Social Housing in Vancouver, 1919-1950* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1994).

agenda for slum clearance was shaped from 1942 to 1952.[77] The growing consensus was one

stressing the need for physical renewal.[78] City planners like Sutton Brown were crucial to

these debates because they brought a new language to the issue and, crucially, a technical

solution to the problem: urban renewal. Urban renewal involved the public acquisition and

clearance of privately owned property through the power of eminent domain, land which was

then made available for public housing and private redevelopment. Renewal initiatives were

remarkable for their scale and for the way they involved a dramatic reworking of urban

space. To achieve rational order, provide modern housing, and produce economic efficiency

– all for the betterment of society – the slate first had to be wiped clean. The hegemony of

urban renewal extended across the Western world, within a Cold War context, and was an

important element to the ambitions of the postwar liberal welfare state.[79]

Though enabled by the legislative framework of upper level government, the

importance of local experts was paramount to the progression of urban renewal in Canada.

Local officials, who decided when and where to proceed, initiated projects. Vancouver was

at the forefront of redevelopment efforts because Sutton Brown diligently pursued it as an

integral part of his planning program. He was, for instance, stridently opposed to the

establishment of a separate authority to carry out projects.[80] This thinking was part of the

way Sutton Brown justified renewal with planning logic itself – renewal would bring about

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[77] Joseph Heathcott discusses the local forces behind the emergence of slum clearance policy, "The City Quietly Remade…" (2008).
[78] Teaford: 6.
[79] I have already been drawing on the American historiography. Meller, op. cit., looks at renewal in Britain and touches on continental Europe. The extent of renewal in Canada is covered in Kevin J. Cross and Robert W. Collier, *The Urban Renewal Process in Canada: An Analysis of Current Practice* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia, 1967). On the connection between urban renewal and the welfare state, see Brushett, op. cit. and Tina Loo, "Africville and the Dynamics of State Power in Postwar Canada," *Acadiensis* 39, no. 2 (2010): 23-47.
[80] "Urban Renewal Seminar: a Report of a Meeting Held in Ottawa, September, 1959 under the Auspices of the Central Mortgage Corporation," PRS 476, 111-C-1 File 171, CVA.

greater rationality and efficiency that would benefit the city as a whole. However, he largely

argued for renewal on financial terms. Essentially, he stressed that it would raise property

values and deliver more tax revenue. In this respect, planners more often sought grant

money than looked to solve any social problem.[81] This reveals the key split between federal

and local forces. Where the Canadian government pursued a social prerogative, the local

state treated housing and other social aspects of renewal as afterthought. Rather, urban

renewal was taken by planners and local elites alike as a tool to promote growth.

The *Vancouver Redevelopment Study* (1957) laid out the premises of renewal in the

city.[82] It targeted for redevelopment an area of the city that was home to Vancouver's

Chinese and other non-Anglo Saxon minorities. While the disempowered Chinese

community objected to the program, Sutton Brown mustered little sympathy:

> I know that if I heard that a big, impersonal City was going to pull my house down
> I'd be very upset… But we're sure the Chinese will be very surprised when they
> find they can have modern Western accommodation at prices they can afford… It is
> true that their mode of life will change, but it can't be helped. We're not spending
> public money where it isn't necessary.[83]

More bluntly, Mayor Tom Alsbury praised the Chinese community but insisted that, "in the

interests of a planned city the redevelopment must proceed" – "our experts tell us this is one

of the many areas in the city that must be redeveloped."[84] The high modernity of the local

state had to do with the abstracted needs of the city as a whole.

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[81] Kevin J. Cross, "Part V – Urban Renewal Studies: A Critical Evaluation," in Cross and Collier, *The Urban Renewal Process in Canada: An Analysis of Current Practice* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia, 1967): 26.

[82] Vancouver Planning Department, *Vancouver Redevelopment Study; Prepared by the City of Vancouver Planning Department for the Housing Research Committee* (Vancouver: The Vancouver Planning Department, 1957).

[83] Quoted in the *Chinatown News*, as per Kay J. Anderson, *Vancouver's Chinatown: Racial Discourse in Canada, 1875-1980* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1991): 195.

[84] "Chinese Praised by Mayor, But Slum Job 'Must Proceed'," *Vancouver Province*, 26 September 1960, 11.

In a self-congratulatory moment, Sutton Brown called the "Downtown Vancouver 1955-1976" planning study a milestone, the first of its kind in North America. The report outlined initiatives to meet the needs of the Central Business District (CBD), arguing that the downtown's "physical separation from the rest of the city, added to its special function and character" made it worthy of special consideration.[85] The centrepiece of his plans was a multi-block civic centre comprising a collection of monumental public buildings surrounding an open plaza. Representing a triumph of Modernist architecture, the civic centre was intended as a demonstration of power and order. It was hardly a new idea. Bartholomew had proposed one in his original 1929 plan for Vancouver and the idea, revived in 1946, narrowly missed approval in a plebiscite.[86] Nor was the ambition Vancouver's alone. Sutton Brown corresponded with officials in Pittsburgh, Cincinnati, Seattle, and Baltimore (to name a few) regarding parallel projects. He wrote that he was "bringing up to date [his] information on modern American City Developments" and that he relied " to a considerable degree on the up-to-date experience" of planners in other cities.[87] In comparing notes planners were collectively subscribing to the same thinking about the functional and financial benefits of dramatically rebuilding sections of the downtown.

The championing of freeways by city planners similarly had to do with reconciling the perceived importance of the downtown with ongoing suburbanization. Their concern with making the CBD accessible to far-flung metropolitan residents was only intensified with

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[85] "Don't Worry: The Heart's Strong," *Vancouver Sun*, 16 February 1963, 13; Vancouver Technical Planning Board, *Downtown Vancouver 1955-1976* (Vancouver: 1956): 1.

[86] "Planner Sees Dreams for City Coming True," *Vancouver Province*, 30 October 1952, 38.

[87] Sutton Brown to City Clerk, Baltimore, 19 September 1956; Sutton Brown to A.G. Odell, Jr., A.G. Odell, Jr. and Associates, Charlotte, North Carolina, 19 September 1956, PRS 648, 77-E-3 File 1, CVA.

the growth of consumerism and the ancillary rise in automobile ownership.[88] At first, Sutton

Brown spoke cautiously about freeways, noting that they were "a drastic measure at a drastic

price" and that the city would not be able to afford them without help.[89] He was alluding to

the fact that unlike the United States, where the federal government paid 90% of the cost and

the federal bureaucracy played a dominant policy role, both financial and political support for

freeways in Canada had to be pieced together with upper level government. But, by 1956,

Sutton Brown confidently insisted that freeways "will be built," "will be required," and

"soon will be the only answer to increasing traffic."[90] He advanced freeways as a

technological solution.

Sutton Brown's growing confidence likely stemmed from his involvement with the

Technical Committee for Metropolitan Highway Planning (TCMHP), which began work in

the mid-1950s. The committee, populated by a slew of engineering and planning experts

from the province and the municipalities of the Vancouver metropolitan region, released a

final plan in April 1959 that proposed a $340 million system. Sutton Brown helped establish

the metropolitan committee and headed the steering committee, likely because of his

esteemed position as Director of Planning of Vancouver.[91] In that capacity, Sutton Brown

held meetings in his office but did little to no actual planning work. He summarized the

various reports included in the plan and addressed the media. Acting as the administrator of

the project, Sutton Brown only reinforced the existing consensus on the technical imperative

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[88] In its appeal to mass consumption, high modernist planning in Western democracies was rooted in Keynesian economics. See David Ley, "Styles of the Times: Liberal and Neo-Conservative Landscapes in Inner Vancouver, 1968-1986," *Journal of Historical Geography* 13, no. 1 (1987): 47-49.

[89] "Planner Forecasts City of 1,000,000," *Vancouver Province*, 23 January 1953, 13; "Town Planner Urges Aggressive Policy," *Vancouver Province*, 8 October 1953, 40.

[90] "'Fantastic Future' Seen for Vancouver," *Vancouver Sun*, 11 April 1956, 37; "Expert Urges Start on Express Roads," *Vancouver Sun*, 24 October 1957, 25; "New Road Network a 'Must' for City," *Vancouver Province*, 9 November 1956, 24; "Vancouver 'Can't Rely on Isolated Bylaws,'" *Vancouver Sun*, 4 December 1957, 55.

[91] Pendakur: 12.

of freeways, which would be built through existing neighbourhoods, yet be a credit to the public good.

The first major legislation that Sutton Brown advocated was a comprehensive zoning by-law. The zoning by-law was designed to assign, regulate and strictly enforce land use in the city according to function, a police power not previously in place. As the *Sun* noted, the wide land use controls delivered to city planners constituted a drastic change in the city's zoning rules.[92] The new *Zoning and Development By-law* of 1956 was an exercise in modernization, a document that copiously rationalized and ordered city space.[93] Land uses were standardized and specialized according to technical designations that resulted in a language resistant to colloquial understanding. Sutton Brown emphasized the totality of the zoning scheme and repeatedly refused to rezone singular properties by emphasizing the broader, overarching land needs of the city.[94] The zoning by-law, thus, became a rationale unto itself.

It also provided the Director of Planning with unprecedented powers. City aldermen were astonished by phrases in the 1955 draft of the law like "in the opinion of" and "at the discretion of" the TPB. Thirteen organizations showed up at a public hearing to protest the discretionary powers being given to city staff, but groups like the Board of Trade, the Vancouver Housing Association, and the Architectural Institute of BC (AIBC) largely backed the by-law.[95] Most of this controversial language was changed, but the Director of Planning still gained explicit stewardship of the by-law and decision-making power on

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[92] "Drastic Change for City Zoning Laws," *Vancouver Sun*, 10 April 1954, 25.

[93] Vancouver Technical Planning Board, *Zoning and Development By-Law No. 3575*, (Vancouver: 1956).

[94] City Clerk to Sutton Brown, 28 February 1955, PRS 648, 925-E-1 File 5, CVA; Sutton Brown to Board of Administration, 2 April 1959, PRS 476, 111-A-6 File 77, CVA;"Lawyer Hits 'Inelastic' Zoning Law," *Vancouver Sun*, 5 June 1956, 19.

[95] "Alderman Orr Attacks Plans Board 'Empire'," *Vancouver Province*, 4 October 1955, 4; "Planning Board Powers Under Fire," *Vancouver Sun*, 19 October 1955, 9.

rezoning applications, development permits, and design specifications. Only the right to

appeal rested with another body.[96] Mayor Frederick Hume brushed off any lingering

criticism, saying that, "Many experts have been in on the drafting of this by-law and they

have given the very best of their skill and knowledge."[97]

By the end of the 1950s, the city of Vancouver planning department did not have all

that much to show. It had completed a series of reports, nominally all linked to the twenty-

year development plan.[98] And it oversaw the extension of basic services. But of Sutton

Brown's main preoccupations, only the zoning by-law was in place. Urban renewal,

however, would begin early in the 1960s and freeways and downtown redevelopment

remained central planning aims of the decade. To a great extent, the lag had to do with the

fact that planning took time, financial considerations often had to be worked out with upper-

level governments, and major civic spending had to be approved by plebiscite. Nonetheless,

what Sutton Brown had accomplished was important. He had established in Vancouver a

professional identity for planning rooted in high modernist ideology and now

institutionalized in the local state. In December 1959, he was appointed to the Board of

Administration (BOA). Reflecting on his promotion, Sutton Brown said he expected Council

and the public to continue to support a progressive planning program. He summed up his

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[96] "City Finally Passes New Zoning By-Law," *Vancouver Province*, 23 February 1956, 4; Vancouver Technical

   Planning Board, *Zoning and Development By-Law No. 3575*, (Vancouver: 1956).

[97] "New Zoning By-law in Operation June 18," *Vancouver Province*, 18 May 1956, 14.

[98] The plans were: *Downtown Vancouver 1955-1976* (1955), *Downtown Parking Problem* (1955), *Vancouver Redevelopment Study* (1957), *Apartment Zoning Report* (1958), *Preliminary Development Plan for Parks 1959-1976* (1959), *Metropolitan Highway Planning Reports* (1959). G.F. Fountain, Chairman of TPB to Board of Administration, 7 April 1961, PRS 648, 925-E-3 File 2, CVA.

sentiments by musing, while lighting up a filter-tip cigarette: "We have our faults, but I wouldn't care to be anywhere else."[99]

The creation of the BOA in 1956 signaled the further entrenchment of expertise in local government and was further evidence of the postwar expansion of bureaucracy. It was formed in response to unprecedented growth and the increasing complexity of problems facing the municipal state. More pointedly, it was intended to reduce the workload of aldermen who were expected to be successful businessmen and to deal with civic affairs on a part-time basis.[100] Furthermore, the BOA's formation came from a desire among elites for honest, efficient and economical government.[101] Richard Spencer Childs, an American political reformer, had championed short ballots, non-partisanship, and at-large elections in his early twentieth century efforts to reform local American democracy in the face of corrupt ward politics. Childs and his supporters had believed in making politicians responsible to all voters so that they would act in the common good.[102] Vancouver instituted at-large elections in 1935 and the Non Partisan Association (NPA), formed in 1937, became the dominant political force in the city until 1972. But the crucial element to Childs' Progressivist reforms was the council-manager system. The principle was that city councils would develop policy and an unelected City Manager would carry it out. The set-up relied on Woodrow Wilson's 1887 insistence that administration could be separated from policy formation and an adherence to the virtues of scientific management, or Taylorism.[103] Unsurprisingly, then,

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[99] "Vancouver Has Faults But Sutton Brown Likes it Here," *Vancouver Sun*, 11 December 1959, 3.

[100] "New Board 'Farce' Alderman Claims," *Vancouver Sun*, 9 June 1956, 23.

[101] On the political ideas of Vancouver's elites, see Bottomley, op. cit. and Andrea Barbara Smith, "The Origins of the NPA: A Study in Vancouver Politics, 1930-1940," MA Thesis, University of British Columbia (1981).

[102] Bernard Hirshhorn, *Democracy Reformed: Richard Spencer Childs and His Fight for Better Government* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1997): xxii-xxiv.

[103] Richard J. Stillman II, *The Rise of the City Manager: A Public Profession in Local Government* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1974): 9-10; John Nalbandian, *Professionalism in Local*

engineering bureaucracies were early models for "good government."[104] Childs' system

spread across North America from the 1910s.

Reformers in Vancouver toyed with the council-manager idea from 1938.[105] The

Civic Bureau of the Board of Trade (BOT), a group of business elites that John Bottomley

argues was crucial to establishing a pro-growth agenda, was responsible for pushing the

system. A BOT-led board studied the city's government structure in 1953 and recommended

the installation of a variant of the Childs model, a council-commissioner system used in

Calgary and Edmonton. Administrative matters would be dealt with by a board populated by

two appointed Commissioners, the mayor, and an ex-officio alderman.[106] Perhaps

unconvinced by this approach, Council soon hired a Chicago-based firm to consider the

issue. Their November 1955 report backed the orthodoxy of council-manager

government.[107] But the civic finance committee's rejection of the consultant advice

underlined unease with putting too much power in the hands of unelected officials. In his

majority report on civic government, Ald. George Cunningham backed the council-

commissioner variant as the middle course between ensuring expert counsel on urban affairs

and maintaining a responsibility to voters.[108]

Government: Transformations in the Roles, Responsibilities, and Values of City Managers (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1991): 7.

[104] Schultz: 186.

[105] Brief of Vancouver and New Westminster District and Labor Council to Civic Finance Committee, 22 September 1938, PRS 20, 82-A-2 File 1, CVA.

[106] "Civic Prober Describes City Commissioner Rule," *Vancouver Sun*, 6 February 1953, 25; Interim Report of the Committee on Civic Finance and Administration on Civic Administration in Vancouver, 13 April 1953, PRS 20, 82-A-2 File 4, CVA.

[107] Public Admistration Service, Chicago, "Report on an Administrative Survey of Municipal Government – City of Vancouver, B.C.," 20 November 1955, PRS 20, 82-A-2 File 6, CVA.

[108] Alderman George Cunningham, Majority Report on Civic Government, 2 May 1956, PRS 20, 82-A-2 File 11, CVA.

If Cunningham approached reform carefully, City Clerk Ron Thompson was livid at the very prospect. In his minority report, Thompson wrote: "[I]n my view it is contrary to the true spirit of democratic government for any person or group of persons other than the duly elected representatives to be completely vested with power to make all administrative decisions."[109] The Vancouver Central Council of Ratepayers' Associations (VCCRA), the main body representing homeowners, repeatedly wrote to Council with parallel concerns.[110] But once prompted by the BOT, Council sided with Cunningham's logic and voted in May 1956 to create a new layer of bureaucracy on top of the TPB. Importantly, the vote was five to three and the BOA was contingently set up for a six-month trial period. Despite this sign of wariness, the cautiousness was mixed with deference. After some debate, Council voted to allow the BOA to define its own duties and responsibilities and unanimously reapproved it in January 1957.[111] Apprehension over expert authority resurfaced in early 1959 when Council voted seven to two to allow the BOA to hold its meetings in secret, thereby keeping the city's administrative decisions above scrutiny. The press, who relied on open meetings for news content, no doubt manufactured part of the outcry over the action. But this was also a debate over the character of local democracy. The VCCRA planned a protest rally over the action and one poll found the public three to one against closed meetings. Mayor Tom Alsbury brushed off claims that the decision was a dictatorial maneuver by speaking to the

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[109] City Clerk Ron Thompson, Minority Report on Civic Government, 7 May 1956, PRS 20, 82-A-2 File 10, CVA.

[110] Gwyn Watkins, President, Vancouver Central Council of Ratepayers' Associations to the Chairman and Members of the Legislative Committee, 20 February 1960, PRS 476, 111-A-5 File 63, CVA.

[111] Council minutes, 16 July 1956; Special Council Meeting minutes, 5 June 1956, City Council and Office of the City Clerk fonds, PRS 20, 21-G-5 File 2, CVA; "Aldermen Battle over Board's Duties," *Vancouver Sun*, 20 June 1956, 21.

idea that a silent majority was behind him. In fact, Alsbury received so many letters of support on the issue that he came up with a form letter response.[112]

Sutton Brown, then, was appointed amidst ongoing debate over the BOA and local governance. Alsbury, in fact, stormed out of the meeting at which Sutton Brown was appointed because he wanted to be removed from the BOA.[113] That matter dragged on for another year, as both the commissioners and the mayor complained that too much of their time was spent in meetings. Ald. Bill Rathie built the case for the Mayor's removal by insinuating that it would bring more city business out into the open: Council would get a say on issues before the Mayor could quash them.[114] This logic prevailed and Council voted nine to one in January 1961 to cut the BOA to two commissioners, even though the move was construed as a temporary measure. As Sutton Brown later described it, the decision effectively gave Vancouver a "dual-headed" City Manager.[115]

Sutton Brown's status as an expert and experience in Vancouver led to his promotion. The city received more than 150 applicants for the commissioner post vacated by Jones, the advertisement calling for someone with proven administrative experience, extensive background in municipal service, and knowledge in the widest possible area.[116] Sutton Brown pointed to the fact that his planning job put him in contact with other departments and

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[112] "Mayor Won't Budge on Closed Meetings," *Vancouver Sun*, 29 January 1959, 1; "But Citizens 3-1 Against," *Vancouver Sun*, 4 February 1959, 1; "New Censorship at City Hall," *Vancouver Province*, Editorial, 29 January 1959, 4; Dozens of replies by Alsbury, Mayor's Office fonds, General correspondence files, PRS 483, 36-B-7 File 13, CVA.
[113] "Mayor Walks Out as City Post Filled," *Vancouver Province*, 9 December 1959, 1-2; "City Planner Named to Board Post," *Vancouver Sun*, 8 December 1959, 1.
[114] "Board Admits Failure," *Vancouver Sun*, 11 October 1960, 27; "Board Cut Demanded by Rathie," *Vancouver Province*, 8 December 1960, 1; "City Board Cut Urged," *Vancouver Sun*, 8 December 1960, 37.
[115] "Civic Board Cut to Two Members," *Vancouver Sun*, 18 January 1961, 1-2; "Elected Officials Leave Board," *Vancouver Province*, 18 January 1961, 3; Sutton Brown to Elliott, op. cit.
[116] "Attacks on Board Don't Scare Applicants for Top City Job," *Vancouver Sun*, 10 September 1959, 11; By-law no. 3790 – A By-law to amend the procedure of the Board of Administration, passed 25 August 1959, PRS 483, 36-B-7 File 12, CVA.

had him dealing with finances and administration.[117] In other words, his role on the TPB

groomed him for the new job. Sutton Brown quickly made new professional affiliations to

reflect his new role, joining the Institute of Urban Administrators of Canada and the

Municipal Finance Officers Association of the U.S. and Canada. That he lacked financial

training did not seem to matter – clearly his job title was enough to warrant his membership

in the latter organization.[118] Indeed, Council changed the logic of the BOA in order to

accommodate him. The initial BOA by-law called for a Commissioner of Finance (Jones)

and a Commissioner of Works (Oliver). Essentially, what mattered most was Sutton

Brown's standing.

But this was all fairly mute, especially after the 1961 change in the BOA's structure.

In lieu of meetings, Oliver and Sutton Brown split the city's administrative duties. Oliver

took on the engineering, electrical, civil defense, fire, and court departments; Sutton Brown

was responsible for social services, health, building, planning, and the budget. Finance,

legal, and the City Clerk were under joint jurisdiction and matters that cut across departments

were dealt with on an ad hoc basis.[119] These distinctions were important. In a direct way,

Sutton Brown was charged with the local state's provision of welfare, not unlike what he had

endeavoured to provide as city planner. And certainly, Sutton Brown's passion was for

administration anyway. He argued forcefully that the key to planning was developing an

administrative structure that ensured the implementation of plans.[120] More than ever, Sutton

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[117] "Putting the Board Back on its Feet," *Vancouver Province*, Editorial, 19 December 1959, 4.
[118] Richard Stillman notes that city managers were continually unable to define or enforce professional boundaries. Stillman: 43; Member cards, PRS 476, 111-C-4 File 193, CVA.
[119] BOA memo re: Revised Procedures, 1 February 1961, PRS 578, 73-D-2 File 1, CVA.
[120] Sutton Brown, "Planning Administration," 2.

Brown's role was to shape and find financing for high modern planning initiatives and to administer them through an attendant bureaucracy.

The BOA structure left civic power centralized in the hands of the commissioners. Not only did they oversee the operation of the municipal bureaucracy, for all intents and purposes they shaped policy as well.[121] This was not, however, a fait accompli. In 1956, the BOA replaced thirty-four issue-based aldermanic committees.[122] In lieu of those duties, Council met only weekly to discuss policy and BOA recommendations. This arrangement worked well for longstanding representatives, but Ald. Frank Baker soon pointed out that new aldermen without experience on committees were in the dark as to how the city actually operated.[123] This kind of desire by politicians to stay informed and involved in the city's business ensured that a small number of Standing Committees were formed and maintained. These Standing Committees became the chief avenues by which the BOA communicated with politicians. Most aldermen, though, felt overburdened by administrative detail and Council voted in 1962 in favour of asking the commissioners to provide less detail in their reports.[124] Ald. Marianne Linnell lightheartedly remarked that, "I came in awful cold. I didn't know anything about city operation. I didn't know Sutton Brown or John Oliver and didn't even meet the mayor until after I was elected."[125] She unknowingly revealed the increasing dominance of the two commissioners in civic affairs. In 1967, Mayor Tom

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[121] Gutstein, "Vancouver," in Magnusson and Sancton, op. cit.: 198; Norbert MacDonald, *Distant Neighbors: A Comparative History of Seattle and Vancouver* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1987): 168-169; Vancouver Urban Research Group, "Forever Deceiving You: The Politics of Vancouver Development (Revised) – Election Special (November 1972)" (Vancouver: Vancouver Urban Research Group, 1972): 44.

[122] "Open Door Vital at City Hall Under New Board System," *Vancouver Sun*, Editorial, 18 July 1956, 4; Special Council Meeting minutes, 16 July 1956, PRS 20, 21-G-5 File 2, CVA.

[123] "New Alderman Wants in on Board Meetings Too," *Vancouver Sun*, 6 February 1957, 6.

[124] Report of the BOA, 7 December 1962, PRS 578, 73-D-2 File 1, CVA.

[125] Such was the male dominance in politics and bureaucracy that, aside from clerical staff, Marianne Linnell is the only woman in this entire story. "Woman Alderman Getting to Know How City Runs," *Vancouver Sun*, 22 April 1961, Add. MSS 1245, 618-D-1 File 14, CVA.

Campbell took the extreme step of discontinuing all committee meetings, but this was untenable.[126] By the late 1960s, a bare minimum of three Standing Committees was maintained. Deference to the BOA had become the norm.

With a waning of active interest from aldermen, the administrative powers delegated to the BOA took on more importance. For one thing, the BOA had a free hand in managing the city's bureaucracy. Aside from the everyday details, like trying to make the City Hall coffee shop more efficient,[127] this meant control over personnel. Sutton Brown was instrumental in backing his deputy, George Fountain, for the Director of Planning job in 1960, citing his experience and long service.[128] Similarly, Sutton Brown had the job posting sent to specific individuals and crafted a shortlist when the position opened up again in 1963. Bill Graham, an English-born and -educated planner working in Saskatoon, was hired on Sutton Brown's recommendation.[129] In this way, Sutton Brown continued to ensure the maintenance of the professional standards of the planning department. His widest influence, though, was likely through his control of all matters relating to the budget.[130] Council did not deal with the budget on an itemized basis – rather, it asked Sutton Brown for a yearly budget and then voted on it wholesale. In consultation with department heads, Sutton Brown decided on where and how money was spent, pending, and anticipating, Council approval. Another noteworthy element to bureaucratic power was in the way Sutton Brown and his department heads cobbled together the city's yearly requests to the province for Vancouver City Charter amendments. Essentially, the provincial legislature was being asked to pass the

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[126] "Planning Program Will Be Reviewed," *Vancouver Province*, 8 September 1967, 27.
[127] Oliver comments on a meeting with dept. heads, 27 September 1961, PRS 483, 36-D-1 File 12, CVA.
[128] Council minutes, 1 March 1960 and 29 March 1960, PRS 476, 111-B-7 File 162-163, CVA.
[129] "He'll Take Over City Planning," *Vancouver Province*, 16 May 1963, 23; Sutton Brown to J.L. Mark, Asst. Personnel Director, 20 January 1963, PRS 476, 111-D-1 File 230, CVA.
[130] Lorne Ryan, City Electrician to Commissioner Oliver, 5 October 1962, PRS 578, 73-D-2 File 1, CVA.

annual, on-the-fly administrative wish lists of the civic bureaucracy. Unelected officials, then, took on the responsibility of defining the powers of the local state.

The archival record suggests that Sutton Brown's main function was pushing paper. Indeed, he regularly expressed concern over the procedure on reports, the binding of documents, and weekly submission deadlines.[131] In the way he and his fellow commissioner directed administrative traffic, they controlled information at City Hall. This was critical, especially because the BOA was the only bureaucratic body to report to Council or Standing Committees. The BOA decided what issues to submit to elected officials and when. A typical item of city business would come to the BOA's attention in its exchanges with civic departments. The BOA would submit it to Council, which usually would vote to ask the BOA to study and report back on the matter. The commissioner overseeing the issue might write a report himself. Or, he would pass it on to an appropriate department. The department head's report, once discussed, amended and approved by the TPB, would come back to the commissioner bearing a recommendation. The commissioner would vet it and either recommend that Council adopt the TPB recommendation or amend the report as they saw fit. The final recommendation was then resubmitted to Council, which almost unfailingly accepted the expert advice. In sum, Council generally dealt with problems twice, yet rarely generated the policy it endorsed.

This administrative framework also helped shape the BOA's and Council's relationship with the public. All correspondence received by the City Clerk was turned over to the BOA daily for instruction.[132] The commissioners passed citizen letters on to Council, but Council regularly bounced them back to the BOA for reply. Sutton Brown delegated

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[131] Clerk memos to all dept. heads, 10 May 1960 and 16 December 1965, PRS 578, 73-D-2 File 1, CVA.
[132] Revised Board of Administration Procedures, 1 February 1961, PRS 578, 73-D-2 File 1, CVA.

complaints over property, nuisances, and the like to what he felt was the appropriate department. Residents in turn received letters from city bureaucrats advising them on this bylaw or that policy. Invariably, complaints were met with technical exposition, not political consideration.[133] Of even greater concern to the public and the press was how decisions and issues became public. Once the BOA no longer held public meetings, matters were only ever discussed on the day Council voted on them. Residents learned of Council's actions the next day in the media. As a result, Council was not really responsible to the voters.

And the BOA most certainly was not. Sutton Brown relied on non-association and a veil of silence to underline his objective expertise. In typical fashion, he refused membership to the Vancouver Historical Society, saying:

> As a matter of principle over many years I have not been a member of any society or association no matter how interesting or worthwhile its objectives might be. I have always tried to assist any such associations where I could, but the time usually comes when a society or association wishes to make representations of some sort to the city, and I have felt in my position of servant to the City I should be entirely free of any attachments.[134]

Furthermore, unlike his time as city planner, when he was very much a public advocate for planning initiatives, Sutton Brown refused to address the public or media throughout the 1960s.[135] "A very powerful, able and close mouthed civil servant," he rarely appeared in public and only then at events such as his role promoting the civic election in 1963.[136] His intention was to make all of his interventions ones backed by the BOA designation. Yet even he was moved on occasion to make his personal feelings known. He derided the professional

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[133] As demonstrated in City Clerk letter to Sutton Brown, 10 March 1960, PRS 476, 111-B-7 File 163, CVA.

[134] Gerald Sutton Brown to Mrs. F. A. Child, Secretary, Vancouver Historical Society, 11 April 1962, PRS 476, 11-C-4 File 193, CVA.

[135] This was even as Commissioner Oliver did. "They Direct City – Politely," *Vancouver Sun*, 6 February 1961, 7.

[136] "Retirement Nudge for Top City Official," *Vancouver Province*, 10 January 1973, 1; "Our Taxes Not Too High, Say City Commissioners," *Vancouver Sun*, 19 November 1963, 13.

competence of an architect during an April 1962 Council meeting. He was forced to apologize.[137]

This quiet, business-like administrative role, which Sutton Brown used to push high modernist policy, was entangled with the city's pro-growth coalition. John Logan and Harvey Molotch use the term "Growth Machine" to describe the market and government forces across North America that, from the beginning of the twentieth century, were concerned with the exchange value of land over its use value.[138] This ideological bent depended on the association of economic growth with social and political harmony.[139] The broadly shared postwar political consensus was that the role of the local state was to ensure and promote the ends of capital, a conviction indelibly linked to the context of the Cold War. In Vancouver, mayors, real estate agents-cum-aldermen, the NPA, the press, major corporations, and the development industry were the major proponents of pro-growth policies.[140] The critical dimension was that, while people lived in the city and businesses operated on city land, urban space *was* the business of the real estate and development industries. They looked to use space as a means of production. Theirs was abstract space, to use Henri Lefebvre's designation – the exchange-value oriented space of bourgeoisie capitalism.[141]

Planning's role in the local state growth machine was central, notably because high modernist planning also dealt in abstract space. Sutton Brown and planners of his time were

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[137] "Civic Head Makes Apology," *Vancouver Sun*, 4 April 1967, 2.

[138] Logan and Molotch:ix-x.

[139] Timothy J. Colton, *Big Daddy: Frederick G. Gardiner and the Building of Metropolitan Toronto* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1980): 58-59.

[140] Donald Gutstein, "Vancouver," in *City Politics in Canada*, eds. Warren Magnusson and Andrew Sancton (Toronto: University Press, 1983): 197.

[141] Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, Translated by Donald Nicholson-Smith (Oxford: Blackwell, 1991): 57; On space, Lefebvre and Manuel Castells, also see Mark Gottdiener, *The Social Production of Urban Space* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1985), chapter 4.

every much invested in the idea that economic growth, properly directed, was a positive

force. They were on the same ideological plane. The high modernist planning policies that

Sutton Brown espoused conformed to the logic of capital and the wants of powerful

downtown and real estate interests. Capital recast its ambitions as being in the common good

and planning was the basic way it was able to succeed. Though private interests were largely

reshaping the city, Sutton Brown had created a planning policy framework that enabled

growth. Zoning regulations regularized and stabilized the land market, making it predictable.

Freeway and civic centre proposals both diverted public funds towards encouraging

downtown-centric growth and driving up rents. When the federal government changed urban

renewal rules in 1965 to allow public spending on commercial initiatives, Sutton Brown

remarked that the legislation could have a fantastic effect on the city.[142] Furthermore, the

central authority of the BOA in planning matters meant that Sutton Brown was the first point

of call for developers and other powerful interests. He regularly received business inquiries

and was approached informally by major corporations in connection with several projects.[143]

The precepts of the "Growth Machine" also shaped the nature of public participation

in planning and governance. Where opposition existed, the silent majority was generally

invoked. But financing for planning initiatives in Vancouver had to be approved by

plebiscite, and it was generally difficult to convince the supposed majority to endorse higher

taxes. Sutton Brown and Council drew in civic groups on several occasions in an effort to

generate wider support for planning. This public participation, though, was tied to powerful

interests. His ongoing pursuit of allies led, for instance, to the creation of the Downtown

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[142] "Slum Fund a Bonanza, City Learns," *Vancouver Province*, 28 May 1965, 33.
[143] Robert W. Collier points to Sutton Brown's role in the Project 200 development. See Collier, *Contemporary Cathedrals: Large-Scale Developments in Canadian Cities* (Montreal: Harvest House, 1975): 70-71; H.W. Pickstone to A.D. Geach, 7 March 1958, PRS 648, 77-E-7 File 10, CVA.

Redevelopment Advisory Board (DRAB) in 1962, which was given an official consultative role by Council and populated by members of the DBA, the BOT and the AIBC. DRAB backed Sutton Brown's planning policies and validated his appeals for public support, but in a predictable and non-representative way.

In 1964, John Oliver quit his commissioner post to go into private practice as a consultant. This briefly reopened the debate about the BOA. On the one hand, Mayor Bill Rathie worried that the BOA was not efficient enough and backed a three-man board with a chairman to make final decisions.[144] On the other, Ald. Phillip Lipp attacked the BOA as a costly structure that stood in the way of good government. He also worried that an internal replacement would lead to "empire building" within the bureaucracy.[145] Nevertheless, Lorne Ryan, the city electrician, was named Oliver's successor.[146] It was really from this point forward that the mythology around Sutton Brown grew. Sutton Brown became a focus as the policy program he championed in Vancouver unraveled in the face of the changing attitudes of the late 1960s.

In the wake of the TCMHP's 1959 report, the *Province* argued, "The thoroughness of the original freeway plan left little room for broad disagreement. The authors of the multi-volume report came from every level of authority in the province and their qualifications as a group cannot be topped."[147] This was not really true, though, for there was plenty of criticism of freeways and their cost. Civic candidates uniformly considered freeways a pipe dream and the press reported on the cost and shortcomings of plans in other North American

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[144] "John Oliver Quits Post on Administration Board," *Vancouver Sun*, 1 September 1964, 23.
[145] "3 Aldermen Hit Administration, Want Board Out," *Vancouver Province*, 20 June 1964, 20; "City Hall Battle Shaping over Successor to Oliver," *Vancouver Sun*, 4 September 1964, 3; "2 Commissioners Called Bureaucrats," *Vancouver Sun*, 2 December 1964, 2.
[146] "Ryan Gets Top City Position," *Vancouver Province*, 16 December 1964, 25; Mayor Rathie to Council, 14 December 1964, PRS 20, 81-C-1 File 10, CVA.
[147] "Freeway Still All Talk But No Action," *Vancouver Province*, 21 October 1960, 21.

cities.[148] One quotable commentator said that Vancouver was suffering from a case of

"expertitis" and the city was going to be "experted into the poorhouse."[149] For his part, Ald.

Reg Atherton claimed that freeways were a "Roman holiday" that would benefit engineers

and contractors.[150] When asked why certain homeowners had had their property values

frozen, Sutton Brown wryly noted that the action had been taken when "freeways were not

the dirty word they are today."[151] The 1962 article entitled, "Freeway plan gasping its last?"

seemed apt.[152] A rapid transit study was undertaken as Vancouver kept a close eye on the

freeway versus transit debates across North America.[153] And yet Sutton Brown, always in

the know, underlined in 1963 that while freeways were "dead," they might be revived if the

provincial and federal governments came up with the money.[154]

Though the lack of political decisiveness kept freeway planning in the works, the

contingency of expert decisions began to be revealed from the mid-1960s. The problems

with deference to planning experts and the centralized exercise of authority towards high

modernist goals were increasingly evident. The earliest flashpoint concerned the Georgia

Viaduct. The Viaduct, built in the mid-1910s, was by the 1960s in disrepair. Reinforced

more and more by timber supports, it was both a liability and an expense for the city. In

1963, Sutton Brown insisted that building a replacement was Vancouver's top transportation

priority.[155] Financing for the construction was included in the 1964 five-year capital works

[148] "Freeway Plan a Pipe Dream to All Civic Candidates," *Vancouver Sun*, Editorial, 26 October 1959, 4; "No. 1 Problem: Traffic," *Vancouver Province*, Editorial, 8 January 1960, 4.
[149] "Freeway Could Ruin Vancouver, Warns Bate," *Vancouver Province*, 7 February 1961, 1-2.
[150] "Freeway Plan Attacked as a 'Roman Holiday,'" *Vancouver Province*, 1 February 1961, 3.
[151] "City Urged to Drop Plan for Freeway, Sell Land," *Vancouver Province*, 20 August 1961, 3.
[152] "Freeway Plan Gasping its Last?" *Vancouver* P*rovince*, 24 April 1962, 5; BOA re-submission of 23 November 1967 memo to Council on Freeways, 12 February 1968, PRS 483, 45-C-4 File 7, CVA.
[153] "Rapid Transit Means Saving," *Vancouver Province*, 8 November 1963, 8; Pendakur: 49-50.
[154] "Don't Worry: The Heart's Strong," *Vancouver Sun*, 16 February 1963, 13.
[155] "Freeway Connection Put Ahead of Inlet Crossing," *Vancouver Province*, 28 January 1963, 16.

plan, overseen by Sutton Brown. When the plan was defeated at the polls, pro-growth

advocates were spurred into a fervour of boosterism. The administrative solution was to hold

a new plebiscite in September 1965 with a reduced plan as one ballot item and money for the

Viaduct as a separate $10 million question. Council and its pro-growth allies launched a full-

scale campaign to endorse the plebiscite, putting the matter in the stark terms of "Progress or

Stagnation."[156] The vote no campaign, backed by the former Ald. Orr, stood little chance.[157]

Once the referendum passed, though, it came to light that the city's engineers were

fitting the Viaduct to the prospective freeway system. The public and aldermen reacted with

anger, claiming that they had been duped into approving freeways. A great deal of the anger

probably had to do with the fact that the Viaduct was presented as a separate, essential ballot

item. The response emphasized that Council and the public only knew as much as the BOA

told them. Additionally, in allowing the freeway plans to persist without making a final

decision on them, local politicians had set in motion ongoing planning. The prospect and

necessity of freeways was very much a reality for the civic bureaucracy. From the simple

engineering logic of Sutton Brown and Ryan, not only had they not duped the public, the new

Viaduct hardly tied any hands. By technocratic reasoning, endorsing a new Viaduct would

be less expensive than propping up an old one. After all, freeways were inevitable. For

example, the city's traffic engineer, Kenneth Vaughan-Birch, summarized the thinking by

stating that freeways, however noisy and ugly, were the name of the day until another

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[156] "What is it to Be? Progress or Stagnation," *Vancouver Province*, 25 September 1965, 5; "The Men You Elected to Represent You Say This About the 5-Year Plan," *Vancouver Province*, Advertisement, 24 September 1965, 6; City of Vancouver 1966-1970 Capital Programme, September 1965, PRS 578, 114-E-6 File 6, CVA.
[157] "Revolt Brewing on Five-Year Plan," *Vancouver Province*, 21 August 1965, 5.

solution was found. The conscious efforts of engineers and planners to orient the Viaduct to a potential freeway network only made abundant sense.[158]

Seen within this closed system of internal logic, there was little objectionable about the bureaucracy's comportment. But not only was the public not that naïve, nor were the experts. Planners regularly, for budgetary and political reasons, used a piecemeal strategy to advance their projects.[159] And internal documents show that cost estimates on a new Viaduct were at $20 million in 1962 and $25 million in 1963.[160] Did Sutton Brown simply see the $10 million plebiscite figure as more amenable to getting political approval? It is difficult to say, especially since, though Sutton Brown oversaw the budget, Ryan dealt with Viaduct matters directly. Certainly, public interest was piqued and furor grew in 1967 when freeway plans were made public.

Sutton Brown remained involved with freeway planning in Vancouver in the 1960s in various ways. Though he largely acted in a leadership role, he more shepherded an existing technocratic consensus on freeways than manufactured consent. But the political consensus of the planning process he marshaled was what turned public opinion against him. One of Sutton Brown's clearest roles was his chairmanship of an eleven-man metropolitan technical committee, formed in 1966 to recommend a site for a new First Narrows Crossing, an element of the proposed freeway system.[161] The role meant that he retained his position as lead administrator of the plan.

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[158] "Freeways to Stay Until Traffic Chaos Solved," *Vancouver Province*, 25 September 1967, 32; City Engineering Dept., "Georgia Viaduct Replacement," July 1963, PRS 476, 72-F-7 File 3, CVA.
[159] Nowlan and Nowlan: 62.
[160] City Planning Department, First Report to City Council on 20 Year Capital Budget Estimates for the Period 1964 to 1983, 13 April 1962, PRS 476, 72-F-4 File 4, CVA; City Engineering Dept., "Georgia Viaduct Replacement," July 1963, PRS 476, 72-F-7 File 3, CVA.
[161] "City Official to Head Brain Trust on Bridge," *Vancouver Province*, 11 August 1966, 17; "Crossing Site Studies Begin," *Vancouver Province*, 5 October 1967, 27.

He exerted further influence in his entanglement with consultants. While institutionalized planners were new, consultant planners and engineers were an entrenched part of civic governance. Stanley Schultz argues that engineering consultants made themselves indispensable to municipal government in the late nineteenth century because they offered solutions to real problems.[162] Vancouver turned to sanitation engineers, for instance, to solve health issues from 1889 on and, of course, hired Bartholomew's planning firm twice before 1952. [163] A product of this dependence was the emergence of a network of consulting firms that sought contracts continent-wide. Engineers, planners, and administrative professionals regularly solicited business from the city, offering letters, brochures, and glossy re-prints of speeches detailing their services.[164] Common wisdom was that consultants were a neutral second expert opinion, a view consultants were eager to encourage.[165] Consultants were hired to re-examine the conclusions of the city's staff, to design specific elements of the freeway network, and to come up with cost estimates. Sutton Brown regularly inserted himself into the selection process and was attentive to the particular "qualifications" of the different consultants on offer. He expressed a preference for firms whose more acute knowledge seemed to fit the particular task.[166] In employing parallel statistical and technical methodologies, and in using the city's data, consultants invariably reinforced the conclusions of the civic bureaucracy. In all of this, Sutton Brown furthered the case that the expert logic of freeways was unassailable.

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[162] Schultz: 183.

[163] See Arn Keeling, "Sink or Swim: Water Pollution and Environmental Politics in Vancouver, 1889-1975," *BC Studies* 142-143 (2004): 69-101.

[164] Norman D. Lea, "The Hour of Destiny for Engineering," an address given to the First Annual Principals' Dinner of N.D. Lea & Associates Ltd., March 1963, PRS 476, 111-D-1 File 223, CVA.

[165] Sandy Walker to Ald. Halford Wilson, Notes on Freeways Report, 1959, Wilson Family fonds, Halford Wilson papers, Add Mss. 362, 551-B-1 File 2, CVA.

[166] Sutton Brown to R. Martin, City Engineer, 2 June 1966; Sutton Brown talk delivered to the TPB, 11 April 1969, PRS 476, 111-A-5 Files 34-35, CVA.

The co-dependence of city officials and consultants became a matter of popular concern in 1967. In excess of forty-five studies where conducted on freeways between 1952 and 1972, but the *Vancouver Transportation Study* by San Francisco consultants was, in June 1967, the first one to make the freeway route public – one that cut through the middle of Chinatown. When Council ratified the study in October 1967 a public outcry immediately erupted. The wave of protest led several aldermen to reconsider their decision. Sutton Brown was quickly the focus of attention as politicians and the public discovered that he had drawn up narrow terms of reference for the consultant's work. Such were the restrictions of their contract that a Chinatown link was ensured. Sutton Brown had predetermined the freeway route without ever engaging the political process.[167] Now-alderman Tom Alsbury railed that Sutton Brown had led Council "down the garden path in that the consultant's terms of reference are too narrow."[168]

To Sutton Brown, though, freeway studies had always followed a logical progression. Early studies and decisions had narrowed freeway route options. There was no reason for Sutton Brown to reopen other possibilities. After all, he was looking for the most efficient administrative means of getting freeways built. And, as BOA documents had alluded to earlier, narrowing the terms of reference for consultants was a way of reducing the costs of third-party reports.[169] However, money was not really an object as the BOA authorized $1 million of spending on freeway planning.[170] Indeed, the financial outlay on plans was even

[167] "How to Pick a Freeway," *Vancouver Sun*, 4 November 1967, 1 and 12.
[168] "2nd Opinion on Freeway Defended," *Vancouver Sun*, 6 November 1967, 29.
[169] Memo on meeting held in the office of the Director of Planning, 20 August 1963, PRS 476, 73-A-4 File 4, CVA.
[170] Pendakur: 66-67.

construed as a reason to proceed with freeways, lest the money go to waste.[171] In the end,

Sutton Brown's administrative work may have been directed at shaping Council's thinking

on freeways. By Setty Pendakur's account, voting for consultant report after consultant

report was a tactic of political delay.[172] Conversely, an open endorsement of the Chinatown

route was quite decisive. For a number of reasons, then, narrow terms of reference were

good business for the BOA.

By late 1967, Vancouver was in the thrall of what Donald Gutstein has called "The

Great Freeway Debate."[173] Members of the Chinese-Canadian community were incensed

that a decision on the exact location of the roadway had been taken without public

involvement and without an official decision on freeways more generally. Mayor Tom

Campbell at first looked to dismiss the protest by calling it "a tempest in a Chinese

teapot."[174] But unlike early 1960s protests over urban renewal, the Chinese-Canadian

community was now backed by professionals, some politicians, students, community

activists, and concerned citizens.[175] The debate was marked particularly by a number of

raucous and well-attended public hearings prompted by citizen demand. Campbell and

Council members tried to insulate themselves from criticism by allowing low-ranking

engineers and planners to hold the floor at length at the start of the meetings. This fit an

earlier pattern where bureaucrats took on the role of public educators. Before 1967, residents

had opposed planning actions that affected their immediate interests, such as zoning

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[171] Nowlan and Nowlan: 62.
[172] Pendakur: 50.
[173] Gutstein, "Vancouver": 202; Gutstein, *Vancouver, Ltd.* (Toronto: James Lorimer, 1975):152-166.
[174] MacKenzie: 77.
[175] Kim Livingston, "Urban Social Movements: Urban Renewal and Neighbourhood Mobilization in Vancouver during the 1960s and '70s," MA Thesis, Simon Fraser University (2002): 3.

restrictions, but planners had little trouble resisting isolated objections to citywide policies that they construed as being for the public good. [176]

However, expert logic could not contain the 1967 protest or the protests that followed. The difference was that now opponents were able to mobilize broad-based coalitions with significant social capital. Such movements were unique enough for Manuel Castells to call them "urban social movements": they were cross-class alliances concerned with the problems of collective consumption.[177] Where at first anti-freeway advocates simply picked apart the proposed road system, their critiques quickly escalated to focus on the centres of power in the local state. As Myrna Kostash has argued, this was a typical progression of 1960s social movements.[178] Indeed, freeway protests must be seen within the context of the Sixties. The Sixties were global in scope, driven by a passion for change, marked by a shift in politics to the left, and shaped by the rise of social activism as the primary mode of agency.[179] In Canada, the cultural and political changes of the period, generally instigated by a broad range of youthful social movements, were about the democratization of society. Their effect was to liberalize cultural and social norms and introduce a greater plurality to Canada's political sphere.[180] Theodore Roszak argues that rejecting the technocracy of mainstream society was one of the distinctive features of

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[176] Lemon: 208.

[177] Manuel Castells, *City, Class and Power*, Translation Supervised by Elizabeth Lebas (New York: St. Marion's Press, 1978).

[178] Myrna Kostash, *Long Way from Home: The Story of the Sixties Generation in Canada* (Toronto: J. Lorimer, 1980): xxiv.

[179] For a good overview of how Sixties scholars have treated the period, see Karen Dubinsky, Catherine Krull, Susan Lord, Sean Mills, Scott Rutherford, eds., introduction to *New World Coming: The Sixties and the Shaping of Global Consciousness* (Toronto: Between the Lines, 2009): 1-6.

[180] The strongest works on the Sixties in Canada are Sean Mills, *The Empire Within: Postcolonial Thought and Political Activism in Sixties Montreal* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2010); Bryan Palmer, *Canada's 1960s: The Ironies of Identity in a Rebellious Era* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2009); and Doug Owram, *Born at the Right Time: A History of the Baby-Boom Generation* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996).

Figure 2 Protesters opposing Council's decision to build a freeway link through Chinatown. Note the offending sign, "Is Sutton Brown God?" in the centre, partially hidden. *Source*: *Vancouver Sun* 4 November 1967, 12.

counterculture.[181] Certainly, the rejection of the technocratic expertise that drove freeway

and urban renewal planning was an important rallying point for social and political urban

activism.

Anti-freeway advocates in Vancouver were keenly aware that their local struggle took

place in a broader context. They followed similar protests in the United States and Canada

and could visit cities like Seattle and San Francisco to see the negative effects of freeways.[182]

Through their critiques, activists articulated a new understanding about the relationship

between citizens and the city. They began to emphasize the use value of the urban

environment and increasingly demanded an active role in planning. Citizens, then, turned not

just on high modernist policies, but on the planning experts whose methods excluded social

and cultural considerations. At one of the protest rallies, one of the placards architectural

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[181] Theodore Roszak, *The Making of a Counter Culture: Reflections on the Technocratic Society and its Youthful Opposition* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1969), chapter 1.
[182] MacDonald: 163; MacKenzie: 61. Richard Mohl, op. cit., examines anti-freeway protests in the U.S.

students held asked, rhetorically, "Is Sutton Brown God?"[183] It ridiculed a faith in expertise that had never seemed so misplaced.

Council rescinded its decision on the Chinatown freeway link in January 1968.[184] Ald. Alsbury commented on the decision by saying: "The experts were completely wrong and I intend to look very carefully at any technical advice in the future."[185] While this was a symbolic shift in opinion, the legislative decision changed little. It did not constitute a rejection of freeways, but rather of that particular route. Sutton Brown maintained that involving citizens in planning was "dangerous" because sensitive details might be made public.[186] And planners and consultants continued to coordinate their efforts behind the scene. A 1968 BOA report said that a technical and political decision on freeways was needed soon or the city's traffic problems would worsen. It predicted one half mile of freeways per square mile of urbanized area.[187] While Pendakur suggests Sutton Brown continued to pursue freeways because of an emotional attachment to the plan, it is more likely that he simply continued to see freeways as the only possible course of action.[188] Only when citizens successfully blocked a freeway link between the Georgia Viaduct and the Trans-Canada Highway in late 1971 did the technical initiative come to an impasse. The barrage of protest, largely arguing that Council was acting in the interest of a privileged few, encouraged the federal government to withdraw its financial backing.[189] As Sutton Brown

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[183] Pendakur: 61.
[184] "Chinatown Link Plan Rescinded," *Vancouver Sun*, 10 January 1968, 1-2.
[185] "Aldermen Fear Another Council Freeway Switch," *Vancouver Sun*, 11 January 1968, 37.
[186] "Planners Will Get Private Views," *Vancouver Province*, 8 September 1967, 27.
[187] Memo on coordination between consultants engaged with transportation studies, 19 November 1968; BOA report to the Civic Development Committee on "Vancouver's Transportation Situation," PRS 476, 111-A-6 Files 33 and 36, CVA.
[188] Pendakur: 6.
[189] Cassiar Ratepayers Association to Council, 19 July 1971, PRS 476, 114-A-4 File 23, CVA.

had said all along, the city was never going to be able to raise taxes and go it alone.[190] Soon, a change in the provincial and municipal governing regimes made dominant the view that rapid transit and freeways were mutually exclusive goals.[191]

Between 1967 and 1972, the public, aldermen, provincial politicians, academics, the press, and elements within the civic bureaucracy repeatedly criticized the role of planning expertise in the affairs of the local state. "Who is really running the city?" was the headline that summed up sentiment.[192] Increasingly, Sutton Brown became the focus of personal attack. Most colourfully, MLA Bob Williams lashed out at Sutton Brown's influence by calling him a "city slicker," "a grey eminence in Vancouver's civic power structure," and "a former Jamaican aristocrat, a man who hails from a country that only recently became a self-governing democracy."[193] Elsewhere, the press criticized Sutton Brown for rejecting an independent study of False Creek in 1972. As ever, he wanted control over planning matters and dismissed the study idea: "It's not a big job. I've had the responsibility for developing whole towns. This is peanuts."[194] But this position was seriously losing its political currency. Lastly, his management style came under scrutiny. He came off as the "firm-handed dictator of city services."[195]

In the end, Sutton Brown was caught extolling planning ideas that belonged to the 1950s. Walter Hardwick argues that Sutton Brown's failure was that he pursued policies in

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[190] "Snag Seen over Freeways," *Vancouver Province*, 11 April 1969, 10.
[191] A paraphrasing of the argument made by Ald. Harry Rankin in the Minority Report from the Liaison Committee on the Highway 401 link, PRS 476, 114-A-4 File 23, CVA.
[192] "Who is Really Running the City?" *Vancouver Province*, 28 October 1971, 5.
[193] "Three Accused of Hatchet Job," *Vancouver Province*, 31 January 1969, 1 and 36; "Keep Personalities Out, Say Aldermen," *Vancouver Province*, 1 February 1969, 13; "MLA Vows Answer," *Vancouver Sun*, 1 February 1969, 20; "City Risks 'Pig in Poke'," *Vancouver Province*, 26 September 1969, 35.
[194] "False Creek Battle Brewing," *Vancouver Sun*, 2 August 1972, 14.
[195] "Masters of City Welfare," *Vancouver Province*, 29 March 1972, 5.

the 1960s better suited to the problems of a decade earlier.[196] Indeed, Sutton Brown backed

the same expert-executed planning prescriptions in 1972 as he had when he was hired in

1952. Moreover, the intellectual tradition he identified with had its origins in the New Deal

era.[197] For one, he was blind to structural changes in the economy. His commitment to

industry, and to ensuring industrial space within Vancouver, was sorely mistaken given the

emergence of a postindustrial economy. For another, growing affluence, the baby boom, and

the expansion of post-secondary education produced young white collar professionals who

increasingly saw the downtown not simply as a place of business, but also as a place to live.

Combined with the definitive cultural shifts of the Sixties fomented by liberation movements,

and crystallized by freeway protest, the environment and the use value of the city became the

predominant concerns of an empowered civil society. These perspectives were foreign to

Sutton Brown's own professional experience. His limited vision paralleled that of the

planning profession itself - planners project the future based on the now, to their peril. In

addition, experts demonstrated themselves to be not only resistant to change but also

incapable of dealing with anything that proved unquantifiable. Finally, Sutton Brown's

experience speaks to high modernist planning. Faced with postwar society and its increasing

complexity, high modernity ended up being an attempt to impose a simplistic order on

society. Popular protest laid this bare.

John Mollenkopf argues that the success of pro-growth coalitions undermined their

own political and economic support. This was certainly true in Vancouver where constituents

reacted against the active role of the local state in promoting and bringing about significant

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[196] Walter Hardwick, *Vancouver* (Don Mills, Ontario: Collier-Macmillan Canada, 1974): 49.
[197] Some planners challenged this tradition throughout the 1960s and looked to articulate a new vision of what city planning should be. Notably, see Paul Davidoff, "Advocacy and Pluralism in Planning," *Journal of American Institute of Planners* 31, no. 4 (1965): 544-555.

change.[198] The discontent coalesced in 1968 in a political party, The Electors' Action

Movement (TEAM). A number of writers have argued that TEAM and other concurrent

reform movements in cities across the continent were conservative in approach.[199] TEAM,

however, combined both conservative and radical elements, in the same vein as Jane Jacobs'

ideas did.[200] TEAM's policies included a decentralization of city hall, a limit on

development, a concern with aesthetics, a focus on the environment, and an adherence to

greater democracy.[201] TEAM was able to break the NPA's hegemony in 1968 and 1970, but

only when the pro-growth agenda continued unabated did TEAM convincingly win power in

December 1972.

In what was a telling move, the TEAM-led Council's first action was to turn on

Sutton Brown. Council voted decisively to work out a settlement to force the commissioner

into retirement.[202] Sutton Brown likely anticipated the move, skipping the meeting. He then

passed in his resignation letter, quitting before he could be fired. Mayor Phillips explained

the action by saying that it came from a desire "to change the way the city has operated in

line with new ideas."[203]

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[198] John H. Mollenkopf, *The Contested City* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1983): 3; Hardwick: vii;
John Punter, *The Vancouver Achievement: Urban Planning and Design* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2003): 25.
[199] Paul Tennant, "Vancouver Politics and the Civic Party System," in *Problems of Change in Urban
Government*, eds. M.O. Dickerson, S. Drabek, and John T. Woods (Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier University Press,
1980): 25; Warren Magnusson, introduction to *City Politics in Canada*, eds. Magnusson and Andrew Sancton
(Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1983): 35; Danielle Robinson, "Modernizers and Traditionalists in
Postwar Hamilton, Ontario: The Fate of a Farmers' Market, 1945-1965," *Urban History Review* 36, no. 1
(October 2007): 45-59.
[200] Klemek: 326. Indeed, TEAM would fall apart through 1974-1978 because of internal divisions. Gutstein,
"Vancouver": 209. Jane Jacobs' 1961 critique of contemporary city planning remains a remarkable read,
Jacobs, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* (New York: Random House, 1961).
[201] A more socially conscious and left-leaning party, Coalition of Progressive Electors, was also formed in 1968.
Gutstein, "Vancouver": 203-207; Patricia Roy, *Vancouver: An Illustrated History* (Toronto: J. Lorimer,
1980):157.
[202] The only holdovers from the previous Council, Marianne Linnell and Harry Rankin, voted not to force him
out. "Sutton Brown Out in Council Vote," *Vancouver Sun*, 10 January 1973, 1-2.
[203] "Commissioner Sutton Brown to Resign," *Vancouver Sun*, 11 January 1973, 2.

With the deed done, many apologias were made. The *Province* wrote that his firing was a "guillotine job," citing his twenty-one years of "brilliant service," even if he was "an aloof dictator."[204] Similarly, Ald. Hardwick said he did not blame Sutton Brown for being the real mayor of Vancouver as Council had pushed the role on him instead of doing its job. Hardwick concluded that Sutton Brown was, "a very clever man, an honourable civil servant in that tradition. He has served his masters well."[205] John Oliver defended his ability, integrity and effectiveness, saying that Council's action was "deplorable."[206] Others were less forgiving. Phillips offered Sutton Brown faint praise and a businessman expressed relief over Sutton Brown's dismissal, calling him arrogant.[207] The most telling comment on Sutton Brown's career, though, was something that the *Sun*'s editorial writer said in passing, proclaiming that, "Almost by default, given his principles, Sutton Brown was obliged to take the dominant role."[208] Indeed, it was his high modernist understanding of planning expertise that shaped his professional career. In keeping with these ideals, Sutton Brown refused to speak to the media. Replying to the question of whether he had any comment, he said, "No, none at all. Seriously, I have nothing to say. I've never commented [to reporters' questions] and I don't propose to start now."[209] A day later, he reiterated his stance by referring to the "guillotine job" headline: "I can't improve on the editorial in this morning's *Province*. There it is. There is nothing to add."[210] As ever his "no comment" actually conveyed a clear meaning.

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[204] "A Guillotine Job," *Vancouver Province*, Editorial, 11 January 1973, 4.
[205] "Commissioner's City Hall Days Appear Numbered," *Vancouver Sun*, 4 January 1973, 14.
[206] John Oliver letter to the Editor, *Vancouver Sun*, 15 January 1973, 5.
[207] "Sutton Brown Accepts $66,000," *Vancouver Province*, 12 January 1973, 27; Frank A. Doyle to Mayor Phillips, 27 March 1973, PRS 483, 46-A-5 File 7, CVA.
[208] "Shabby Return for Excellent Public Service," *Vancouver Sun*, Editorial, 13 January 1973, 4.
[209] "City's Top Official Won't Talk," *Vancouver Province*, 11 January 1973, 23.
[210] "Sutton Brown Accepts $66,000," *Vancouver Province*, 12 January 1973, 27.

Sutton Brown's firing stood as a powerful symbol of regime change in the local state. Crucially, it marked the end of the high modernist planning order. Political and policy change from all three levels of government ended any prospect of public funding for freeways. The civic centre idea faded into obscurity. Local advocacy convinced the federal government that renewal was a violation of democratic rights of citizenship.[211] The collapse of urban renewal policy in Vancouver mirrored that across the Western world, something powerfully denoted by the implosion of the Pruitt-Igoe homes in St. Louis in 1972.[212] The shift from high modernity to post modernity was by no means a rejection of modernity, though; it was simply a reimagining. Citizen involvement in planning, a focus on regional planning, and an effort to accommodate downtown living became norms. TEAM turned from long-range planning to short-range "action oriented programs."[213] It looked to improve the quality of life in the city on a smaller scale in ways that benefitted the middle class. Yet zoning remained the primary way to organize and rationalize land use and developers continued to build high-rises, albeit more attractive ones, across the Vancouver landscape.[214]

In the end, Sutton Brown was not the only one fired. Five of the fourteen department heads, including the Director of Planning, were dismissed in an effort to wrest power from the bureaucracy.[215] In general, local government became more consultative. A multitude of

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[211] See Livington, op. cit.; All told, three public housing projects were built as part of renewal between 1963 and 1967. MacLean Park, Skeena Terrace and Raymur Place accommodated about 2,500 people. Revisions to Progress Report No. 7 – Appendix B, 23 August 1966, PRS 648, 924-E-1 File 1, CVA.

[212] Klemek: 309; On the last page of their attack on pro-growth government in Vancouver, the Vancouver Urban Research Group included a picture of the Pruitt-Igoe homes implosion. Vancouver Urban Research Group, op. cit.: 96.

[213] Council minutes, 9 July 1974, PRS 578, 73-D-3 File 1, CVA.

[214] Punter, op. cit., details what he sees as the "Vancouver achievement" in postmodern planning and development.

[215] "Council Gets Graham Resignation," *Vancouver Province*, 21 February 1973, 12; John Stone, "Political Factors in the Rebuilding of Mass Transit: An Investigation of Failure in Melbourne Since 1970 Through Comparisons with Perth and Vancouver," PhD. Diss., Institute of Social Research, Swinburne University of Technology (2008): 157.

links between politicians, the public, and bureaucrats were encouraged. Committee meetings were reestablished and functioned again as spaces where differences of opinion among elected and unelected officials were encouraged. No longer was the BOA the only point of contact for Council, and no longer were bureaucrats the sole determiners of policy. Council became more firmly in control and any delegation of authority to committees of elected and/or unelected city employees had to be ratified with a two-thirds majority. Additionally, the mayor's job was made full-time. While the change did not give the mayor any more power, it made the position more one of advocacy. With respect to public participation, Council meetings were moved to evenings so that the general public could attend. Finally, the planning department instituted a mandatory preliminary dialogue with citizens in the earliest, conceptual stages of planning.[216]

The ambivalence of the post-1973 changes was also apparent in the reforms of the city's administrative structure. In August 1974, both the BOA and the TPB were abolished. This was a departure in appearance only. The move was made at Ryan's suggestion and he was merely renamed City Manager.[217] A new Manager's Advisory Committee simply took the place of the TPB and the majority of the TPB's powers were turned over to the purview of the Director of Planning.[218] And where the old mainstays of the postwar bureaucracy were dismissed, new planners and experts were hired on to replace them. So, while it may seem paradoxical and surely ironic, the sum of Vancouver's experience with high modernist

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[216] Andre Bernard, Jacques Leveille, and Guy Lord, *The Political and Administrative Structures of the Metropolitan Region of Vancouver* (Ottawa: Ministry of State Urban Affairs, 1975): 47-51; Gutstein, "Vancouver": 207; Punter: 30.
[217] "Lorne Ryan Promoted – To New Title," *Vancouver Province*, 28 August 1974, 25.
[218] The Advisory Committee had fewer members than the TPB and included the Director of Finance, City Engineer, Director of Planning, Director of Legal Services, and Director of Social Planning. New Director of Planning Ray Spaxman worried the Director of Planning was being given too much power. Council minutes, 27 August 1974; Spaxman memo to Ryan, 5 November 1974, PRS 578, 73-D-3 File 1, CVA.

planning was an enduring understanding that institutionalized and professionalized planning

expertise was central and indispensible to the operation of the local state. The "Is Sutton

Brown God?" sentiment was a rejection of high modernity and of unconditional credulity in

planning expertise. Nonetheless, expertise was not something that civic society and the local

state could really envision doing without.

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