

PARTICIPATORY SOCIAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT:
INVOLVING VANCOUVER'S DOWNTOWN EASTSIDE NEIGHBOURHOOD

by

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Summary

Vancouver's Downtown Eastside (DTES) neighbourhood is a historically low-income area that faces numerous social challenges. The City of Vancouver has been engaged in an extensive planning and community development program that aims to deal with these issues (City of Vancouver 2009). As part of its EcoDensity initiative, the City of Vancouver has also been exploring ways to use density in the DTES and on a city-wide scale as a means of making the city more sustainable, livable and affordable (City of Vancouver 2009b). Today, the DTES is undergoing increasing change, especially with the introduction of more density through market housing, higher-income earners and 'revitalization' strategies.

In the wake of this rapid change, some community groups have expressed fear of its implications and over what will happen to them and their community's assets. In response to pressure from community leaders and as part of the Historic Area Height Review (HAHR), Vancouver City Council directed Staff (planners) to undertake a Social Impact Assessment (SIA) to understand the effect of new developments in the historic area on the existing low-income community and where opportunities for enhanced affordability and livability may be achieved.

SIA is the "systematic analysis, in advance, of the likely impacts a proposed action will have on the life of individuals and communities" (Burdge 2003, 85). When utilized by government institutions, it helps them to understand and be able to anticipate many of the possible social consequences for communities of planned and even unplanned social change that results from proposed policies, projects and programs (Ibid, 85).

This paper reflects on the participatory SIA process that the City of Vancouver initiated but has yet to complete in the DTES neighbourhood. It describes SIA and its evolution to include the participation of community members; illustrates the approach the City of Vancouver took in developing a framework for a community-driven SIA study; offers an analysis of the eventual outcome of the City's process and suggests ways for the City of Vancouver to move forward with this process. It also asks what key elements were found within the City's attempt and whether or not it is worth continuing.

In such a contested, political and pressured neighbourhood as the DTES, planning for and working with community members is not easy. Planning and creating public policy for areas such as the DTES requires an openness to different approaches to dealing with the properties of complex problems. The process that the City of Vancouver initiated pushed boundaries in a beneficial way. It built trust and positive momentum between the City and a community with whom it has had a long and complicated history.

The story of the City of Vancouver's participatory SIA framework process contained significant elements of fear, power, trust and hope and now rests and waits at a vital juncture. Whether or not this story will truly be a catalyst for change depends on how it continues. Working with this community to plan for its future and protect its residents from harmful impacts is an opportunity for the City to engage in transformative planning that could ultimately deepen its democratic function.

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Acronyms

BCS	Building Community Society (of Greater Vancouver)
CCAP	Carnegie Community Action Project
DNC	Downtown Eastside Neighbourhood Council
DTES	Downtown Eastside
HAHR	Historic Area Height Review
ICF	Interactive Community Forum
LAP	Local Area Plan
LAPP	Local Area Planning Program
PASIAM	Participative Approach to Social Impact Assessment and Management
SIA	Social Impact Assessment
SPA	Strategic Perspectives Analysis

“For politicians involved in urban governance, the greatest risk of all is to think beyond the short term, yet that is precisely what’s necessary when the sustainability of cities is at stake. The second greatest risk is to involve the public in decision-making...because it involves surrendering some control and people who hold power are not usually predisposed to share or devolve it.”

(Sandercock 2003, 214)

Introduction

From addiction and mental illness to inadequate housing and homelessness, Vancouver’s Downtown Eastside (DTES) neighbourhood is a historically low-income area that faces numerous social challenges. Since 1998, the City of Vancouver has been engaged in an extensive planning and community development program that aims to deal with these issues (City of Vancouver 2009). As part of its EcoDensity initiative, launched in 2007, the City of Vancouver has also been exploring ways to use density in the DTES and on a city-wide scale as a means of making the city more sustainable, livable and affordable (City of Vancouver 2009b). Today, the DTES is undergoing increasing change, especially with the introduction of more density through market housing, higher-income earners and ‘revitalization’ strategies. In the wake of this rapid change, some community groups have expressed fear of its implications and over what will happen to them and their community’s assets (Pedersen and Swanson 2010). Using this concern as a springboard, such groups have proceeded to oppose such development, density and ‘revitalization.’

In 2009, in response to pressure from community leaders and as part of the Historic Area Height Review (HAHR), Vancouver City Council directed Staff (planners) to undertake a Social Impact Assessment (SIA) to understand the effect of new developments in the historic area on the existing low-income community and where opportunities for enhanced affordability and livability may be achieved (see Council motion in Appendix I). SIA is the “systematic analysis, in advance, of the likely impacts a proposed action will have on the life of individuals and communities” (Burdge 2003, 85). When utilized by government institutions, it helps them to understand and be able to anticipate many of the possible social consequences for communities of planned and even unplanned social change that results from proposed policies, projects and programs (Ibid, 85).

The major events that led up to and followed this motion are summarized on the timeline below:

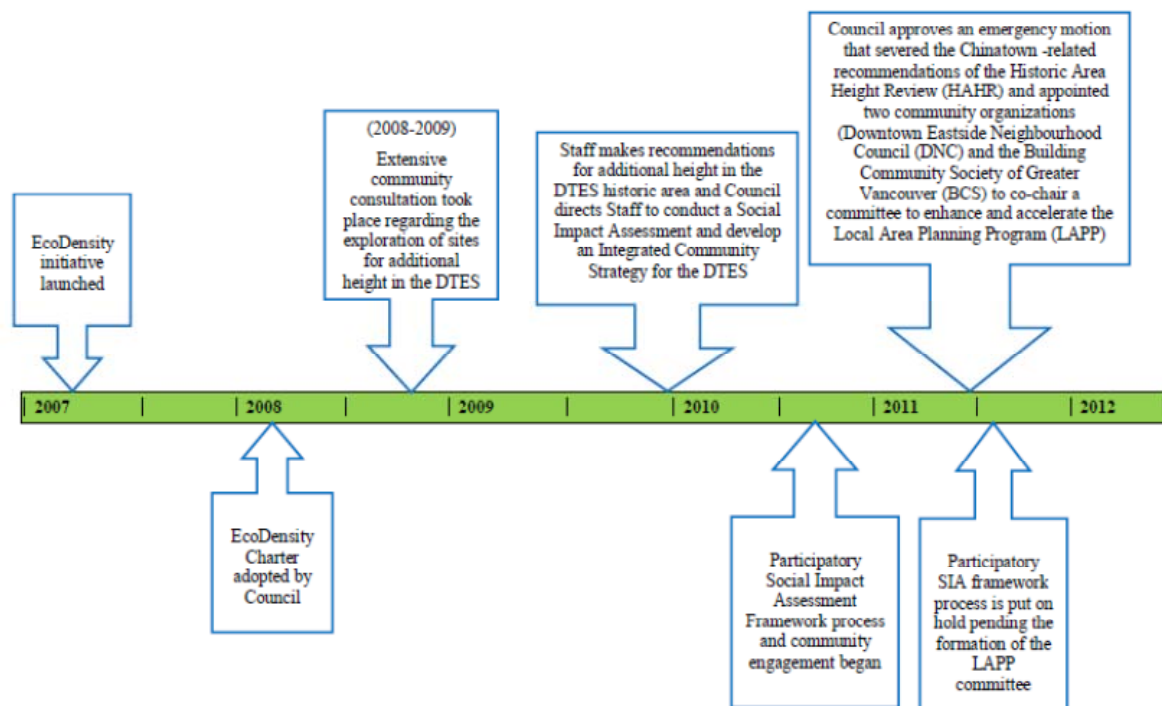


Figure 1: Historic Area Height Review (HAHR) and Social Impact Assessment (SIA) Process Timeline

City Staff began the process of creating a framework for what that SIA may eventually look like in October 2010. Using a participatory approach from the outset, the plan was to have the community drive the process and identify the potential indicators, measures and social impacts of the future assessment (see process outline in Appendix III). After soliciting a Masters student intern (myself) to work on the project and do background research, hiring a facilitator, designing the community engagement structure, engaging a group of community ‘Observers’, gaining community trust and setting the dates and venue for the series of community workshops, the SIA framework process was put on hold by the City in early 2011, following a Council motion instructing the City Manager to oversee a process to develop a Local Area Plan (LAP) for the DTES (see Council motion in Appendix II).

Senior management also raised concerns about the structure of the process and the focus on involving only the low-income community. The engagement process, however, was not focused exclusively on the low-income community but, rather, the intent was that the project would engage all

sectors of the community. However, the Observer Committee—tasked with overseeing the process to ensure it was representative, inclusive, engaging, and participatory—consisted solely of self-identified, low-income residents, which represent the majority of the community. Staff consulted with an academic expert, Pilar Riaño-Alcalá, Associate Professor at the University of British Columbia’s School of Social Work and the Liu Institute for Global Issues shortly after stopping the process to get recommendations on the process and, in particular, to seek advice on the participatory nature of it. Riaño-Alcalá concluded that the process was ‘healthy.’ She encouraged the City to work more closely with the community and develop SIA indicators with them that go beyond the planning perspective. She advised that a participatory research process that engages community members in identifying (based on their in-depth local knowledge) indicators for the assessment will result in a research and instrument design with greater validity. She also recommended using some of the research the community had already gathered in order to assess impacts.

In late Spring 2011, the participatory SIA framework process remained on hold. Following the emergency motion approved by Council to sever the Chinatown-related motions of the HAHR and the appointment of two community organizations to co-chair a committee to accelerate and enhance the development of a LAP for the DTES, Staff felt there needed to be clarity on the role of the new Local Area Planning Program (LAPP) committee and its mandate in relation to the development of the SIA. Currently, the City is working with the two community organizations chosen to co-chair the LAPP (the Downtown Eastside Neighbourhood Council (DNC) and the Building Community Society of Greater Vancouver (BCS)) and maintains that the SIA is still a priority but it has yet to be reinstated.

This paper describes SIA and its evolution to include the participation of community members; illustrates the approach the City of Vancouver took in developing a framework for a community-driven SIA study; offers an analysis of the eventual outcome of the City’s process and suggests ways for the City of Vancouver to move forward with this process. It also asks what key elements were found within the City’s attempt and whether or not it is worth continuing. This paper is a careful reflection that has been crafted with a sense of deep privilege. As both a witness and a participant in this process, I occupy a unique position that has resulted in unique insights. I was born and raised in East Vancouver and for the last two and half years, I have been a volunteer at a low-barrier homeless refuge in this neighbourhood. I have volunteered for several of the neighbourhood’s food provision non-profit organizations and I currently sit on a DTES social housing society board. I have also done several projects in the DTES as part of my Masters program. Through my involvement in the area

and my exposure to its residents, assets and issues, I have grown to love and care deeply for the DTES and its people. While involved in this project, I have had the time (that most of the planners involved have not) to analyze what happened. I offer these reflections to the planning staff with whom I collaborated, to the City's senior management and, above all, to the community observers I worked with who selflessly gave their time to help their community. I hope that it helps in some small way and that the learning that this process manifested continues.

The Downtown Eastside (DTES) Neighbourhood

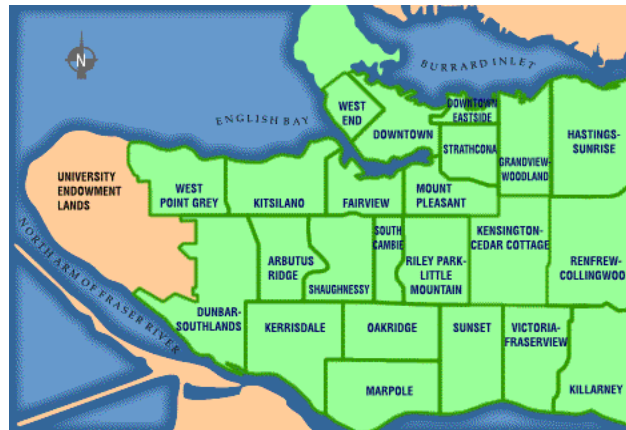


Figure 2: Vancouver's Neighbourhoods and the Downtown Eastside (DTES) (City of Vancouver 2005a).



Figure 3: Vancouver's Downtown Eastside (DTES) Planning Area and Neighbourhoods (City of Vancouver 2009).

The DTES is Vancouver's oldest neighbourhood and was once the region's main civic, retail, commercial, transportation, and entertainment district. It was a vibrant home to many people with low to moderate incomes and the businesses that served them. In addition, it played a valuable role as a provider of a primary stock of affordable housing (City of Vancouver 2005b, 5).

Beginning in the 1960s, the DTES experienced increased, yet gradual, economic and social decline. A westerly shift of the city's downtown and retail core, deindustrialization and decline in resource work, the deinstitutionalization of thousands of the city's psychiatric patients, changes in the province's Welfare provision and a shift in the type of illicit drugs being used all contributed to this reality. The gradual loss of affordable housing in other parts of the city also pushed many people into the area in search of housing. Throughout the 1990s, conditions in the neighbourhood worsened dramatically. The area was soon after deemed no longer able to function economically and socially as a viable low-income community amidst its overwhelming challenges (City of Vancouver 2005b, 5).

Today, the DTES is home to approximately 18,000 people, many of whom can be classified as Canada's poorest individuals. There are high percentages of people who are seniors, Aboriginal, or homeless, as well as a growing number of people with mental or physical disabilities and substance users. Most of its residents live in social housing or in Single Room Occupancy (SRO) units and incomes are approximately a quarter of the city average. There is an open drug-market operating on its main streets and this contributes to a sense of disorder that is beyond the actual rates of crime. The life expectancy of those who live in the area is 5-10 years less than the city average.

In spite of its challenges, the DTES is also home to many people who have a strong sense of loyalty and pride for their neighbourhood. There is a strong support network for people in need of social services and a broadly agreed upon neighbourhood agenda for social justice and equity. Community activism is high and groups such as the Carnegie Community Action Project (CCAP) and the Downtown Eastside Neighbourhood Council (DNC) work to plan and prepare for the neighbourhood's future.

The City of Vancouver, in partnership with the senior governments, has also put a great deal of effort into planning and protecting this neighbourhood's future. It has been involved in numerous initiatives to revitalize the area without displacing its low-income population. Since the mid-1990s, it has had the goal of transforming the area into a sustainable and inclusive community with emphasis on low-income and affordable housing (City of Vancouver 2005b, 13).

Yet, market development has been surging ahead in this neighbourhood, much in stride with the rest of the city (Ibid., 3). This has, inevitably, caused tension between the City of Vancouver and several

community groups that are trying to plan for and protect the future of the low-income population. It was out of this tension that the community call for a SIA was made and, to its credit, the City responded.

NOTE: 'Community' is a highly contested term that is open to much interpretation and definition (Creed 2006). When it comes to the DTES, there are actually many 'communities' of people and some DTES residents claim membership in more than one at a time. In addition, there are people who don't live in the DTES who claim membership in DTES 'communities.' This is acknowledged, but for the purposes of this paper 'the community' is used to represent the DTES individuals and groups that actively participated in this story in relation to the City of Vancouver, its planners and the participatory SIA framework process.

SOCIAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT (SIA)

History

SIA has both a theoretical and practical history. Freudenburg (1986) traced the history of SIA and highlights both its ancient lineage and more recent political emergence. He concludes that while SIA is most readily drawn from several traditions in Sociology (i.e. environmental sociology, human ecology, social change, social problems, social indicators and evaluation research), SIA includes facets of all of the social sciences (452). Concerns about the social impacts (or impacts on people) of human activity have been considered throughout history in many different contexts — from anthropology and tourism, to mining, oil exploration and development studies.

Within the field of planning, the need to assess the social impacts of development was first acknowledged in the 1960s. SIA emerged as a practice field and a planning tool in the 1970s as a response to environmental legislation that addressed concerns with environmental degradation and the social implications of technology. The earliest SIA procedures grew out of the need to assess social impacts of developments subject to National Environmental Protection Agency legislation in the US and the Environmental Assessment and Review process in Canada. The first time the term ‘social impact assessment’ was used was in 1973, in the case of a pipeline project in Alaska that would have had considerable impacts on the human population where it was located. Early impact assessors were usually either social scientists working for different levels of the government, or consultants hired by firms preparing larger environmental impact statements. Early users of SIA were based in Canada, the United States, New Zealand, Australia and a broad range of third-world countries where international development projects were taking place.

Early SIA work was very ‘project-specific.’ The late 1970s saw a proliferation of large-scale energy development projects in rural areas which paved the way for early empirical work dealing with specific construction projects all over North America. Manuals began to surface on how to conduct SIAs and the field experienced significant growth. C.P. Wolf, chair of the American Sociological Association’s (ASA) special committee on developing guidelines for sociological contributions to environmental impact statements, is described as the founder of the field. He published the first special journal issue on SIA and started the first SIA newsletter, “Social Impact Assessment,” which is regarded as the field’s most

important channel of communication. He wrote the first methodology for SIA and received the ASA's award for Distinguished Contributions to Environmental Sociology in acknowledgment of that work.

By the 1980s, SIA had become a widely-adopted and important tool all over the world. With the publication of the first textbook on SIA, the political dimensions of SIA became more of an issue. The first successful case decision on SIA was made in 1985 and the World Bank started using it in their project evaluation procedures. Come the 1990s, SIA had completely gone mainstream and was formally recognized as an important part of the policy-making process. The ASA began giving professional SIA workshops and many universities started offering courses on the topic. It was also at this time that guidelines and principles for SIA processes were adopted internationally (these are described in greater detail in Appendix IV).

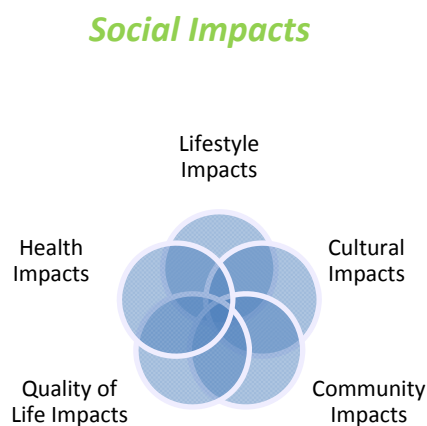
Today, as those involved in urban politics and planning question the actual impact of planning activity, SIA is increasingly seen as useful and relevant. Planners particularly see SIA as a tool to help create more ecologically, socio-culturally and economically sustainable and equitable environments (Vanclay 2005, 2). It is now commonly believed that SIA can promote community development and empowerment, build capacity and develop social capital (Ibid., 2). More and more, it is used as a proactive, constructive step for ensuring impacts of development are properly anticipated in order to achieve better development outcomes and assist communities and other stakeholders identify development goals, maximize benefits and minimize harm (Ibid., 1).

SIA as a Planning Tool

SIA is especially relevant as a planning tool for municipalities dealing with marginalized areas such as the DTES since no other level of government has such direct contact with the community. Over the last decade, the City of Vancouver has undertaken a number of intense planning initiatives in the DTES in effort to improve various neighbourhood conditions, including its economic development potential. It has also been looking at ways to increase density in the DTES through the EcoDensity initiative. At the same time, there is increasing market pressure to develop in the area due to the attractiveness of its close proximity to the downtown core and rising land values in the region. There is growing concern over the rate and manner of change that development is causing in the neighbourhood. This neighbourhood change is undoubtedly having an effect on the people who live there and SIA is a tool that can give Vancouver the evidence/data it needs to effectively monitor and manage this rate of change.

Development can bring both benefits and costs to communities. 'Social impacts' refers to the effects that both of these have on people. SIA identifies these impacts in order to reveal who benefits and who loses (Centre for Good Governance 2006, 4). Social impacts may include changes in an individual's or a community's way of life, culture, community, political system, environment, health, well-being, personal and property rights, fears and aspirations (Ibid., 5). In addition, human perceptions and attitudes play an important role. They are included as part of social impacts because they can lead to real consequences, such as reactions to perceived change that result in psychological effects (Burdge 2004, 3).

Social impacts can be categorized as being direct/primary, meaning they are triggered directly by the proposed action; or indirect/secondary, meaning they have resulted from changes due to the proposed action but are further removed in space and time (Ibid., 4). The main types of social impacts fall into five overlapping categories:



- 1) **Lifestyle impacts**—impacts on the way that people behave and relate to family, friends and acquaintances on a daily basis
- 2) **Cultural impacts**—impacts on shared customs, obligations, values, language, religious belief and other factors that make a social or ethnic group distinct
- 3) **Community impacts**—impacts on infrastructure, services, voluntary organizations, activity networks and community cohesion
- 4) **Quality of life impacts**—impacts on sense of place, aesthetics and heritage, perception of belonging, security and livability, and aspirations for the future
- 5) **Health impacts**—impacts on mental, physical and social well-being (also may be the subject of a Health Impact Assessment).

Figure 4: Social Impacts (Centre for Good Governance 2006, 5).

There are many more possible social impacts (listed in Appendix V) and it is important to note that they should never be generalized and that they are subject to a Western cultural bias (Vanclay 2002, 208). Perhaps the greatest social impact is the stress that ensues as a result of the uncertainty associated with projects or policies (Burdge and Vanclay 1996, 60) — for example, living in a social housing unit beside a proposed, luxury condo development might make the social housing residents feel unsure about the future of their housing and their surrounding neighbourhood with the influx of newcomers to it. Even living through periods of rapid change can cause significant stress and result in negative social impacts on populations (Ibid., 60).

The most common causes of social impacts are certain social change processes. While it is impossible to identify all of them, the following are some of the significant ones and some possible examples of each:

Social Change Processes

Demographic	Economic	Geographic	Institutional and Legal	Emancipatory and Empowerment	Socio-Cultural
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In-migration • Out-migration • Presence of newcomers • Presence of (temporary construction workers) • Presence of seasonal residents • Presence of weekenders • Presence of tourists • Resettlement • Displacement and dispossession • Rural-to-urban migration • Urban-to-rural migration 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conversion and diversification of economic activities • Impoverishment • Inflation • Currency exchange fluctuation/devaluation • Concentration of economic activity • Economic globalization 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conversion and diversification of land use • Urban sprawl • Urbanization • Gentrification • Enhanced transportation and rural accessibility • Physical splintering 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Institutional globalization and centralization • Decentralization • Privatization 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Democratization • Marginalization • Capacity building 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social globalization • Segregation • Social disintegration • Cultural differentiation

Figure 5: Social Changes Processes (Vanclay 2002, 193-200).

Through a greater awareness of these processes that cause social impacts, better scoping of SIA processes will occur which will lead to better impact predictions (Ibid., 209). The prediction of impacts is not the only way social impacts are assessed. In spite of its future-oriented focus, some of the most important contributions of SIA have been empirical analyses of impacts experienced after development has proceeded (Freudenburg 1986, 452).

As professionals who work towards ensuring the public good, planners need tools that help them anticipate, mitigate and monitor these effects. As a process and as a methodology, SIA is a technique that measures and predicts the effects and consequences of developments on people and can

make a valuable contribution to the political decision-making process. Social impacts need to be identified and measured but also managed in a way to ensure that the positive externalities are maximized and the negative externalities are minimized (Center for Good Governance 2006, 1).

SIA Process

SIA is an iterative process that typically takes place in several stages: public participation, identification of alternatives, profile of baseline condition, scoping of the impacts, identification and analysis of estimated effects (both indirect and cumulative), prediction and evaluation of responses to impacts, evaluation of alternatives and impact mitigation and monitoring (Center for Good Governance 2006, 10-19, Becker 2001, 314-315). Typically, an SIA is performed by an assessor who follows a project-specific Terms of Reference (TOR) and uses social science methods in conjunction with public involvement procedures while in consultation with the impacted community (Burdge 2004, 3). The average SIA process provides direction in understanding, managing and controlling change through the following steps:

Steps in a Typical SIA

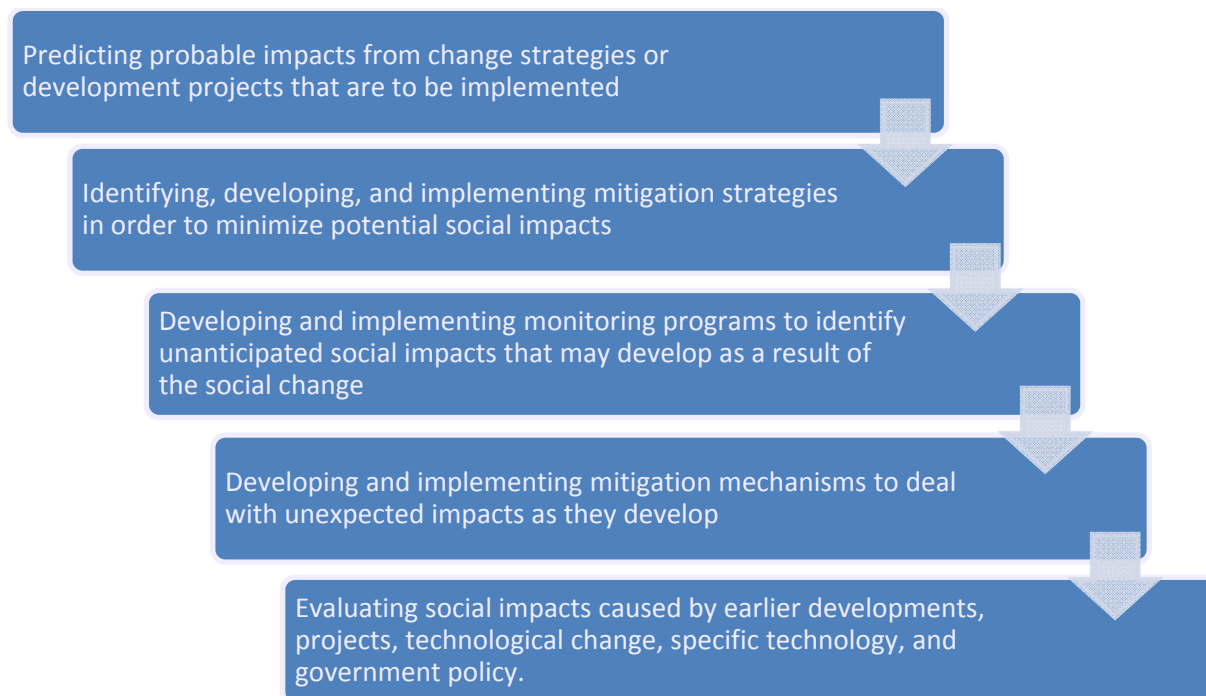


Figure 6: Steps in a Typical Social Impact Assessment (SIA) (Burdge and Vanclay 1996, 60).

The following diagram gives an example of the various practical stages in a typical SIA process:

Practical Stages in Social Impact Assessment

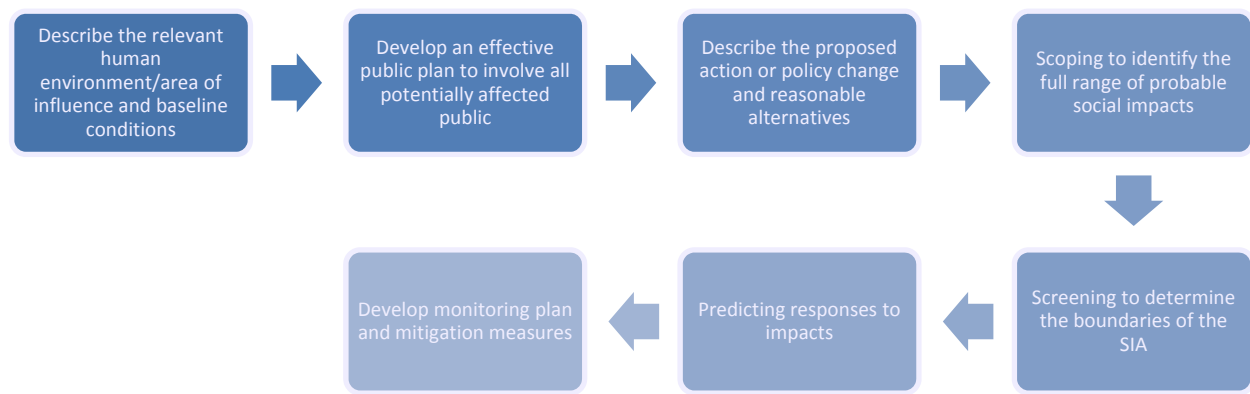


Figure 7: Practical Stages in Social Impact Assessment (SIA) (Misra 2005, 2).

A list of specific SIA tools and methods is found in Appendix VI.

Participatory SIA

The most recent evolution of SIA emphasizes public participation in its process. There are many ways to include the people who are potentially affected by a plan or proposal in the SIA process and this is now widely regarded as essential to an effective outcome (Buchan 2003, Peltonen and Sairinen 2010, Canan and Hennessy 1982, Becker et al. 2003, Renn et al. 1993, Vanclay 2005, Webler et al. 1995, Heiberg 2009). In the ideal case, public involvement enables affected community members to decide on the indicators and measures of effects, evaluate their relative importance, and monitor the effectiveness of mitigation measures during the project implementation period (Buchan 2003, 169).

There are many different ways to involve the public in Participatory SIA. The following are documented methods:

Interactive Community Forum (ICF)

ICF uses dialogue as the basis for developing critical judgements and reflective perceptions of people's own community by sharing different viewpoints and alternative perspectives (Heiberg 2009, 2). This method employs a participant-driven approach where the community describes the social system and community constructs to help identify the potential social impacts (Becker et al. 2003, 367).

Participative Approach to Social Impact Assessment and Management (PASIAM)

PASIAM consists of four phases: 1) profiling the key characteristics of a community through the use of key informants, 2) projecting estimates of the future state of the community if the project goes ahead using public education, workshops, visioning and goal-setting, 3) assessing the effect of the impacts on the community using community leaders and key informants and shared with the broader community through publications, open houses and workshops, 4) managing ways to maximize benefits and minimize losses of the impacts on the community using individual feedback from community members and leaders, publications, open houses and workshops (Connor 1998, 66).

Strategic Perspectives Analysis (SPA)

SPA is used as a procedural framework for identifying all stakeholders and exploring their interests thoroughly (Lane, Ross and Dale 1997, 304). It organizes qualitative data around land-use

perspectives of various local stakeholders and facilitates the integration of SIA research with planning processes and outcomes (Ibid. 303). It entails a field visit to make primary contact, a detailed research phase and a final phase where the interested groups are informed and able to validate the research findings (Dale and Lane 1994, 258). Through this model, community members (with assistance) formulate their own preferred land use strategies, allowing plural perspectives to be better integrated in planning processes and outcomes (Lane, Ross and Dale 1997, 304).

Other methods that have not been named include the use of surveys, focus groups, advisory groups, citizens juries, community forums, participatory modelling, consensus conferences, scenario analyses, participatory planning, values assessments, iterative communication between government and community, regular and continuous involvement of community, and community-defined Terms of Reference, among others (Buchan 2003, 170, van Asselt and Rijkens-Klomp 2002, Renn et al. 1993, 193, Burdge and Robertson 1990, 85, Rowe and Frewer 2000, 8-9)(Appendix VII).

Regardless of which method is used, in order to have a successful community participatory approach, adequate funding, time, flexibility, willingness to involve the public in true decision-making and a skilled SIA practitioner are essential factors (Buchan 2003, 169).

Examples of Participatory SIAs

Many municipalities around the world have used Participatory SIA with various methods. The following examples:

Dodds-Roundhill, Alberta, Canada

As part of her Masters research project, Kierstin Heiberg (MA Candidate, Capacity Development & Extension Studies, School of Environmental Design & Rural Development, University of Guelph) analyzed a Participatory SIA on a proposed strip coalmine and gasification project in central Alberta. The process for this assessment drew on a method called Interactive Community Forum (ICF) developed by Becker et al. (2003). This method uses dialogue to create critical judgments and reflections while bringing together differing perspectives and viewpoints. Becker et al. argue that this discussion and deliberation brings community members to a greater understanding of the complexities of the situation and can, therefore, make better judgments about potential impacts of the project.

The goals of this particular Participatory SIA were to allow participants to share their knowledge and hear different perspectives, understand the baseline situation in the community, assess

social impacts from the perspective of the community, and explore the community members' ideas about how to strengthen their community. Facilitators guided participants through a five-phase dialogue and reflection process designed to achieve those goals. The result was a list of potential impacts that were very different from a similar study previously conducted by the company with no direct input from community members. The indicators chosen by the participants were more tangible, qualitative and difficult to measure but gave insight to issues that were fundamental to personal well-being and healthy communities (Heiberg 2009, 4).

The outcomes of this process were positive: Participants were more successful coming to informed judgments; they described the process as 'therapeutic,' 'fun,' and 'healthy'; they saw it as a chance to share new ideas and widen their perspective; they were excited about building a cohesive, interconnected community group to deal with the potential impacts; and realized that their community needed a vision for the future (Ibid. 2009, 4).

Kakadu National Park, Northern Australia

Lane, Ross & Dale (1997) conducted a Participatory SIA for Australia's Resource Assessment Commission (RAC) regarding a proposed gold, platinum and palladium mine located in the Kakadu region. This area is known for its natural and cultural conservation value and continuing Aboriginal presence. The study involved a comprehensive assessment of impacts of development together with participatory techniques. The researchers used Strategic Perspectives Analysis (SPA) which organizes qualitative data around land-use perspectives of various local stakeholders and facilitates the integration of SIA research with planning processes and outcomes (Ibid. 1997, 304).

The goal of the participatory segment of this study was to explore how people themselves perceive events. The researchers wanted to enable the entire SIA process to become part of the participants' means of defining their own goals and ambitions. They were especially interested in using a participatory technique that would fully involve all of the groups with an interest in land use outcomes in the area and to improve the ability of different interest groups to have input into the inquiry process through the promotion of their advice and concern on negotiations with those agencies exerting control on land-use. This was achieved through the solicitation of land-use plan frameworks from each potentially affected group (Ibid. 1997, 304).

Island of Moloka'i, Hawaii, United States

This approach to conducting an SIA was based on the value structure of the impacted community while trying to plan a socially desirable energy future for the island (Canan and Hennessy 1982, 352). The purpose of the study was to identify the values of the community so that decisions about certain alternative energy options would be based on the community's preferred way of life. The methodology used is known as Galileo (Woefel and Fink 1980) and identifies values of the community members themselves, not by imposing the constructs of the researchers. Researchers achieved this in Moloka'i through a series of in-depth interviews with a broad range of community members using open-ended questions regarding their quality of life and energy self-sufficiency. The researchers then used the responses to create a list of major concepts used by the community members to define their lives on the island. This list then became the basis of a questionnaire that was administered by trained, local volunteers to a random sample of the entire community. The same questionnaire was also administered to a group of community and state decision-makers.

The results of the community questionnaire showed the similarities and differences between the community residents and the decision-makers' values (Canan and Hennessy 1982, 358). The results of the study turned out to be a valuable tool for the island and the state; subsequent planning decision-making on alternative energy development continued to use the study results. This study also showed that it is possible to conduct an SIA based on community values and that such data should be given serious consideration when planning for communities.

Korteniitty, Jyväskylä, Finland

Finnish urban policy has demonstrated attentive awareness to the social dimensions of urban planning since the late 1990s (Sairinen 2004, 511). Changes in legislation and a new way of thinking about the social sustainability of the city have led to increased political support for developing SIA as a policy instrument for urban planning. Now, in the Finnish land use planning system, a 'participation and assessment scheme' is a mandatory component in the assessment and approval of all new development plans (Peltonen and Sairinen 2010, 332). This case involved a development plan with a high potential for planning conflict from the current residents because of two conflicting topics—mixed housing and infill development. After the initial first phase draft plan was submitted by the project team of planners and other city officials, 99 written comments were filed by residents of the town. A method was created to analyze this group feedback under different thematic areas which revealed several

aspects of the plan that were of significant concern to the residents. The feedback was then used to alter the plan and the second draft subsequently resulted in only 27 written comments. These were analyzed again along with the earlier feedback and the plan was completed with changes to the second draft plan completed. Only five written objections were then received after city council approved the plan.

Participatory SIA projects have become mainstream in this country. As seen in this case, the use of participatory methods can be a very useful tool for planners. The process used here clearly demonstrates that conflicts can be successfully addressed and resolved or, at least, managed and alleviated through the integration of a Participatory SIA in the planning process (Ibid., 334).

Hutt City, New Zealand

Hutt City hired Buchan (2003) as a social impact consultant to develop a report for a proposed development that included a four-lane road bridge into the city, the widening of a river adjacent to the city's centre, the demolition of part of a shopping centre and the construction and relocation of some roads, walkways and cycling paths. She used a Participatory SIA process that included over 100 potentially affected residents, business people and representatives of community organizations. The community members formed three 'community resource groups' who worked with the consultant to review the plans and to identify potential impacts. The participants agreed to a terms of reference with the consultant and council and were partners and informants in the consultant team's demographic and land-use analysis data-gathering exercises. The community members had to agree on the draft SIA report and were subsequently involved in meetings with the engineers, planners and landscape architects involved in the development. Based on their suggestions and comments, staff altered the plan to be more suitable for the community.

This was a truly iterative process and the community members involved had a great degree of control over the final project plan as a result (Buchan 2003, 170). The final project plan was approved by Council and subject to many of the conditions that were identified in the Participatory SIA process. At the request of the city's mayor, the community resource groups continued to meet during the construction phase to make sure that the contractors complied with the conditions. This was a three-year involvement, whereby the community increased their knowledge of City processes, Council functions, planning and project development — an unexpected benefit. This case shows how much can be gained from a truly participatory SIA process. It was an empowering process that gave the

community members a way to protect their community's interests during the construction of the development and the ability to act as a vehicle for keeping decision-makers more accountable to the communities they serve (Ibid., 171).

Lower Snake River, Pacific Northwest Region, United States

This case involves a Participatory SIA to identify the range of impacts of proposed salmon recovery alternatives on a large region's communities. Assessors employed the ICF method, centred on structured, interactive forums with residents from 27 diverse communities (Harris et al., 2003). The intent of the process was to empower the communities with an understanding of the results of concurrent biological, economic and impact studies in order to make better and more informed judgments. Other objectives of the process were to understand the communities' current situations, learn how they have changed over time, provide the opportunity to assess how their communities would be affected both positively and negatively by the three major development options, and give people an opportunity to have input into the final decision process (Ibid., 111).

Assessors viewed the community participants in this large process as a principle source for identifying impacts; so data collected through the community involvement was seen as very useful for the decision-makers. The deliberative nature of the process led to richer input and a more collaborative assessment and the process was very suited to the large-scale nature of the proposal (Ibid., 117).

Benefits

There are advantages to using a Participatory SIA over a more technical one or incorporating participatory methods into standard SIA procedures. Utilizing Participatory SIA leads to a better overall process. First, it creates the conditions for a collaborative problem-solving approach (Saarikoski 2000, 681). A truly participatory process becomes a vehicle for sharing knowledge, building awareness, building consensus, and increasing decision-making accountability (Buchan 2003, 171). With the engagement and direct involvement of community members in planning teams, the entire SIA process benefits by reducing uncertainty, enhancing the legitimacy of the project, increasing the accuracy of the SIA and maximizing the ability to mitigate impacts (Burdge and Vanclay 1996, 61). When done well, it also saves money for government, communities, and developers who incorporate it into their planning processes (Ibid., 61).

Participatory SIA also results in more reliable indicators and less, overall, social impacts. Community-defined indicators are key to a successful SIA (Butt 1994, 1 and 6). Participatory SIA has the

ability to bring very different indicators to the table than those developed by the government, SIA assessors or proponents of projects (Heiberg 2009, 5). Identifying these indicators also increases a community's capacity to prepare for and mitigate them in the future (Ibid., 5). Furthermore, fear and psychological stress are, in and of themselves, social impacts and best mitigated by careful management through a community involvement procedure (Burdge and Vanclay 1996, 73).

SIA has evolved to include participatory methods for good reasons. Including citizens in the decision-making that will affect them only makes common sense. Communities that are given an active role in the entire SIA process are empowered (Buchan 2003, 171). In a comprehensive review of literature on the advantages and disadvantages of citizen participation, Irvin and Stansbury (2004) show that citizen participation, in general, leads to better education, political suasion, empowerment, cooperation, cost-effectiveness, and environmental management (56-58).

Using Participatory SIA also helps society function better in the long-term. Public participation is a way to bring about the phenomenon of 'social learning' ("the process by which changes in the social condition occur—particularly changes in popular awareness and changes in how individuals see their private interests linked with the shared interests of their fellow citizens") on a societal level (Webler et al. 1995, 445).

Other benefits of including the community in the SIA include minimizing local resistance to projects, reducing disruption, increasing project success, and preventing major planning disasters and the associated costs (Burdge and Vanclay 1996, 61). Enhancing community capacity to contribute to decision-making creates buy-in, social capital and reduces costs in the long run (Buchan 2003, 171).

Challenges

There are disadvantages and weaknesses to this method as well. Burdge and Vanclay (1996) identify many concerns with the use of public participation in SIA. They start with the concept of 'community' and how that is defined when looking at what impacts it. If the 'community' is experiencing rapid change and an influx of newcomers, the question arises about whether the newcomers are part of the 'community' and should therefore have their concerns documented, or whether they are actually part of the problem and seen as separate from the established 'community' (71). The question of 'whose views are to be considered?' emerges in such cases and makes it difficult for SIA assessors to produce an adequate assessment (72). The authors illustrate how more problems arise such as the weighting of impacts, the decision to whether they are positive or negative, and the question of who in a society is most able to adapt to and bear most of the social impacts (75).

Another concern is that the community is not skilled enough to make adequate scientific appraisals. The general community does not necessarily know what the future effects of a development might be and may be influenced by advertising or tricked by promises of economic prosperity (Ibid., 73). Whether the public supports or opposes a project could just be a matter of timing or the developer's activities around media or public relations (Ibid., 73). Furthermore, strong support for a project by a community does not mean that there will not be any social impacts or that the project should proceed, nor is opposition to a certain project always justified (Ibid., 73). These factors lend credence to those who insist that an impartial expert should be in charge of the SIA (Ibid., 73).

Achieving fair and representative participation is also a challenge. People, simply, may not be inclined to participate. The public might be overloaded with invitations to cooperate in consultation or participate in decision-making and purposefully opt out (Becker 2001, 317). Parry and Wright (2003) state that public participation is time-consuming and communities often question the value of investing so much time and effort into a project (388). They also express concern with the fact that community members are often too busy to become heavily involved in participatory activities and that there is no way to know whether those who do participate really represent the wider community (388). They warn against attempting to use this approach without having the time or resources to bring about meaningful community participation (388). In addition, elite community groups may dominate and work against the general community good (Rickson et al. 1990, 236) and it is these groups that usually gain representation while people in social under classes are often excluded from public participation (Burdge and Vanclay 1996, 74). Depending on the nature of public participation methodologies used, the view gained may not actually be representative of the community (Ibid., 74).

Burdge and Vanclay (1996) predict that a truly fair SIA is impossible, whether participatory or not, because decisions about projects are, at the end of the day, inevitably political (76). This is made apparent especially in the resource industry where companies must consult with communities but these communities often have no recourse to ensure that their interests are addressed, leaving the companies with all the power (Heiberg 2009, 1). External factors can also have a negative effect on Participatory SIA. Cities with massive urban poor who are pessimistic about development are not the best environment to conduct participatory SIAs because of the tendency of the people to be struggling just to live from day to day (Rickson et al. 1990, 240). And professionals working in these types of situations are often pressured to worry more about economic development goals than consequences of development (Ibid., 241).

Direct involvement of citizens in public policy is increasing throughout the world and is viewed as a means of contemporary democratization (Silver et al. 2010, 453). Ultimately, the rationale for including average, everyday people, is the belief that their involvement will change the content of the decisions and ensure that public policy is 'socially just' (Ibid., 472). Arnstein (1969) warns that not all participation is beneficial for citizens and communities and questions whether citizen participation always equals citizen power (216). In fact, citizen participation can double as manipulation, tokenism and placation according to Arnstein's Ladder of Citizen Participation (218).

With some of these benefits and drawbacks in mind, the planners who initiated the City of Vancouver's participatory SIA framework process decided that the advantages of this method far outweigh the challenges. The following is an outline of the approach the City took.

The City of Vancouver's Approach to Participatory SIA in the DTES

Social Policy staff, with support from Central Area's DTES Planning Team and Housing Policy staff, responded to the Council motion to undertake a social impact study by designing a participatory engagement process with the low-income and broader community to create a locally-based SIA framework (process outline in Appendix III). The goals of this process were to obtain the relevant indicators and measures and methodologies essential for conducting a future SIA in partnership with the community.

The participatory nature of the process was intended to give DTES residents the opportunity to explore, share and identify what was important to them regarding the future protection and enhancement of the DTES from their individual perspectives. The process would not have any predetermined social indicators, measures or methodology. This information would come directly and solely from the community engagement process. Broad community member recruitment was planned so that no one was missed. After organizations were invited to participate, they were given a follow-up phone call by a member of the City staff team to confirm potential involvement.

Process versus Content

A defining feature of the City of Vancouver's approach was the emphasis on the process as what ultimately mattered—not the content that it would garner. This is important because it shows that the planners were willing to cede some of the traditional power that planning holds and give some critical control over to the community. In early planning meetings, there was much consideration given to what makes a good process and debate over what the planners wanted to achieve through this process. The planners acknowledged that the relationships they had with community members and organizations were a priority. They saw the design of this process as a way to build trust and as a method of planning for such a complex and pluralistic community. That being said, the planners designed this process knowing that it was Council who would make the final decisions regarding the future SIA.

The Process

The process would include a small number of facilitated workshops involving diverse residents of the DTES, a small number of follow-up meetings with the broader community to share

results and get feedback from the initial workshops, and a final report documenting the proceedings and outcomes from all events. The planning team would be collaborating with an academic researcher engaged to observe, monitor and evaluate the process throughout the entire planning and implementation of the process. Staff acknowledged that this process would not ‘rubber stamp’ approval for developments and that due process would still be required. Instead, they saw this process as a tool for Council and the community to gain a better understanding of potential impacts before developments proceed.

Staff planned to recruit community members to attend these workshops by first engaging over 40 community organizations and asking them to extend the invitation to community members. These community members would then actively participate in the workshop sessions to help identify the components of the future SIA. The organizations were also asked to submit names of any community members who were interested in being on the Observer Committee. They also discussed poster the neighbourhood with invitations in order to reach out more broadly. The number of participants in each of the large community workshops was anticipated to be from 60-100.

Staff was ready to incorporate translation services into the workshops to ensure that everyone was able to fully participate. On the topic of language, Staff also hoped to utilize common/everyday language through this process in order to properly translate between the bureaucracy and the community. Food and refreshments would also be made available at every workshop/focus session. A list of local social enterprising catering companies was compiled as possible vendors. An accessible venue was selected in consultation with community members.

The Facilitator

A consultant was hired to facilitate the community workshops and focus sessions involving diverse representatives from the DTES to identify indicators and measures for assessing social impacts and develop the methodological framework for Council to consider for a future SIA. He was also tasked with organizing and facilitating follow-up meetings with the broader community to share the results and get feedback on the initial workshops, preparing a final report documenting the proceedings and outcomes from all events and collaborating with the Academic Observer engaged to observe, monitor and evaluate the process.

The Academic Observer

As an MA student at UBC’s School of Community and Regional Planning, I interned as an independent Academic Observer to convene and coordinate a group of 10 DTES volunteer

representatives to ensure that the terms of reference for the process and any criteria for the engagement process were respected and incorporated.

The Observer Committee

The role and responsibility of the Observer Committee was to observe the overall process of the SIA framework process to ensure that it was inclusive, engaging, participatory and representative of the community. In addition, they were expected to attend an information session and sign an agreement contract (See Appendix VIII), work with the Academic Observer to establish criteria for gauging whether the process is inclusive, engaging, participatory and representative, meet as a team regularly (as outlined), complete a questionnaire during each community workshop/special focus session observed and submit it to the academic observer to use in the final report and provide evaluative feedback to the academic observer throughout the observation and engagement process.

It was also noted that the Observer Committee and the Academic Observer would not directly be participants in the SIA framework process; nor would they produce or select the content of the future SIA. They would, however, attend all workshops and focus sessions as observers/witnesses. 10-15 hours of commitment were required and a small honourarium was offered for each Observer Committee volunteer.

The Outcome

After much planning and design consideration, the City of Vancouver's participatory SIA framework process was finally underway in early 2010. The consultant was hired to facilitate several community workshops with DTES residents to identify the social indicators, measures and possible methodologies for a future impact study. A venue was identified and confirmed. Invitations were sent and follow up phone calls were made to community organizations. The Observer Committee was convened and held its first workshop to identify criteria for the observation process (see Appendix IX). The Academic Observer had taken the criteria back to the planning team and held discussions about what was being negotiated. After much discussion, community organizations were slowly coming on board and showing trust. In early 2011, the process was put on hold after Council passed an emergency motion to make the LAPP the priority. The City then consulted an academic expert on participatory research and she encouraged the City to continue the process. The process has not been continued to date (August 2011).

Analysis

The importance of stories and storytelling in planning has yet to be fully recognized and validated in planning practice (Sandercock 2003, 183). Yet, stories can be powerful tools for planners and communities and aid in public participation processes, mediation, negotiation, conflict resolution, collaboration, identity and policy (Ibid., 186-194). For much of the past year I have been involved in a planning story that has been told and performed in a fascinating way. Not only is it a story of a unique community but also of a forward-looking city and a deep, historical and sometimes traumatic relationship. It is a story of the past but also of the future. It is a story of fear but also hope. It is a story told, a story muffled and a story left to still unfold.

My position in this story has gifted me an incredible vantage point. I played the role (often all at the same time) of a planning student, a planner, a community member, a mediator, a messenger, a facilitator, a neutral observer, an academic, a professional, a learner, a bureaucrat, an advocate and a concerned Vancouverite, among possible others. Therefore, my analysis of the situation is multi-dimensional and may seem incongruent if taken from only one of these perspectives alone. But when taken together, they paint a picture of a complex and nuanced narrative.

The story that unfolded in the case of the City of Vancouver's participatory SIA framework process contained many poignant themes. The following is an analysis of the different elements or properties that I found to be particularly salient in this tale of an attempt to involve a historically marginalized neighbourhood. The story begins with a lot of fear, on everyone's part, and contains many different kinds of power relations. Yet, this story also ends on a note of trust and hope. It is also important to note that a final ending to this story remains to be written.

Fear

"We may know abstractly that a developer fears the false assurances of permitting officials, that a neighbour to a site fears the "good intentions" of city hall, but we really know quite little here unless we know emotionally what it might be like to feel such fear in the particular circumstances of this developer and this neighbour"

(Forester 1999, 40)

This story begins on a foundation of fear. Fear is found from every angle and within all of the characters. It is necessary to acknowledge this and examine where this emotion comes from and through which means it is manifested. Planners need to be conscious of fear and to look out for it in their work, their community partners and their selves. For fear, in relation to our notions of cities, home and belonging, has to be explored in the management of our co-existence in the shared spaces of our neighbourhoods (Sandercock 2003, 110).

Urban fearing can be analyzed from both a social psychological reading (where urban dwellers are unsettled by the presence of strangers) and a political economic one (where such fears are collectively mobilized as a response to moments of significant change)(Sandercock 2003, 123). Often, the existence of fear in the city is a complicated production of social reality experienced through the power of discourse (Ibid., 123). This discourse then defines who and what is to be feared in the process of change (Ibid., 123).

The Council motion to conduct a SIA to assess the impacts of new development on the historically low-income and marginalized DTES stemmed from a community's fears regarding its security, sustainability, control and future. Examples of such discourses of fear are illustrated in posts on CCAP's website regarding the change being experienced in the neighbourhood. These posts, written before the Council motion to conduct an SIA, show that fear and a sort of fear mongering is palpable in the DTES:

(NOTE: all misspellings appear in the original posts and have not been altered).

April 6, 2008

"For Immediate Release—Development tsunami could squeeze more into homelessness

..."The city's own numbers show that even without greater density, condo development is almost tripling social housing and is beginning to overwhelm the low income neighbourhood and destroy our community."...."If low income residents are pushed out of the neighbourhood," said Pedersen, "they have to go somewhere. They tell us that if they lose their housing in the DTES they will go to alleys...shelters....Some say they will commit suicide or die."

July 8, 2008

"On July 5th, about 80 Downtown Eastside residents and friends marched from Pigeon Park to the site of Concord Pacific's proposed condo development at 58 W. Hastings and then on to Concord's glitzy Presentation Centre at the south end of Carrall St. At the Centre, the marchers chanted "Corcord: Get Out!" over and over. Then Streams of Justice presented a tableau from the back of a pickup truck decked out with paper mache person labelled "Downtown Eastside" who wore a hangman's noose

around his neck. Dave Diewert presented this speech showing how the Downtown Eastside is being colonized by developers from outside the community who are denying the humanity of the community to justify destroying it:

Hear Ye, Hear Ye

What you are witnessing today is the tragic and unnecessary elimination of a real community at the hands of profiteering developers and supportive city officials...Recall the explorers of old. Sustained by financial backing from state and private funders, they sailed off to “discover” new lands, fuelled by a desire for untold wealth and resources....they used their power to remove the people who stood in their way, through deceptive legal strategies, philosophical and theological argumentation, and the violent use of coercive force. Rooted in an ideology of cultural superiority, they destroyed indigenous people and their cultures to clear the way for their own appropriation of land and wealth...Today we have new explorers; they are the large real estate developers who are invading the community....They build condos for wealthy city-dwellers and displace the current low-income residents....They promote their efforts as creating “communities for world-class living” while the actual community of people struggling with poverty, ill-health and trauma are removed from serious consideration and criminalized...Real estate speculation, increased rents, soft conversions, loss of land, and the influx of upscale amenities are the local fallout of this invasion of condo development, and it means displacement, eviction and increased homelessness for the people of this community...And city officials applaud and approve this pattern of settlement.”

November 3, 2008

“Impact of development

New condo development outnumbers social housing development at a rate of 3 to 1 as of 2010. As of April 2008, we’ve lost or are about to lose housing in half the privately owned hotels due to their closure, their transformation into student rentals and/or rent increases. DTES condo speculation is taking away land which could be used for social housing and is putting extreme pressure on our low-income rental stock—the residential hotels rooms which are the last stop before homelessness. 2008 is the watershed year for preserving any semblance of affordable housing for current DTES residents. We act now or are forever dispersed from our DTES home.”

January 19, 2009

“Yippee! Yaletown is not moving east as quickly as we thought. The infamous V6A condo project who’s giant hole graces Union Street between Main and Gore, has stalled thanks to the global market crash...We can’t get too excited. This is only one stalled condo project. At a rate of 3 condos to every 1 social housing unit under development between 2005-2010, our neighbourhood may soon be overwhelmed. New condos and the new stores that come along with them, mean rents will continue to spiral upwards. Say hello to more poor bashing and more “NIMBY’s” (people who don’t want to live near people with “problems.”)”

January 19, 2009

"A poem by Diane Wood sums up our situation:

Goodbye

Say goodbye 2 the DTES as we know it
The yuppies buyin condos don't wanna see us
Don't wanna know about sandwich & souplines
When they shop at Nestors
Don't care what a great pair shoes U scored at the 1st United
While they're buyin a leather jacket 4 their dog
Won't B looking 4 a dollar bag at Sunrise, or in any dumpsters
Don't wanna know where 2 get a free haircut when their shoppin 4 a wig And
they flinch when they see us
Th people who made this community what it is
Doin what we do
In broad daylight.

The fear has only increased since early 2009. Recent posts on CCAP's website include:

October 27, 2010

"November is gentrification month!

...Gentrification is the process where richer people take over a neighbourhood from poorer people. It's happened in hundreds of cities across the world and it's happening in the DTES right now."

January 16, 2011

"Rents and taxes for small businesses that serve low-income residents increase and these businesses have to close. They are replaced by businesses that serve condo residents. You can see this in Gastown with new restaurants serving soup that costs \$9.50 a bowl in places where low-income people feel really uncomfortable and unwanted. Hotels like the American and Burns Block close and are renovated and for richer residents. Police and security guards harass low-income people that business doesn't want near them. The power structure in the neighbourhood changes. More residents start lobbying to stop the social housing and services that low-income people need. The sense of community and acceptance that low-income people have because they are the majority weakens and the Downtown Eastside, the Soul of Vancouver could be wiped out like Hogan's Alley was."

Fear of what will happen to their community is also expressed in various images that CCAP and the DNC have published and/or posted in the neighbourhood:



Figure 8: Fight the Height Campaign Against Condos in the DTES (DNC 2011).

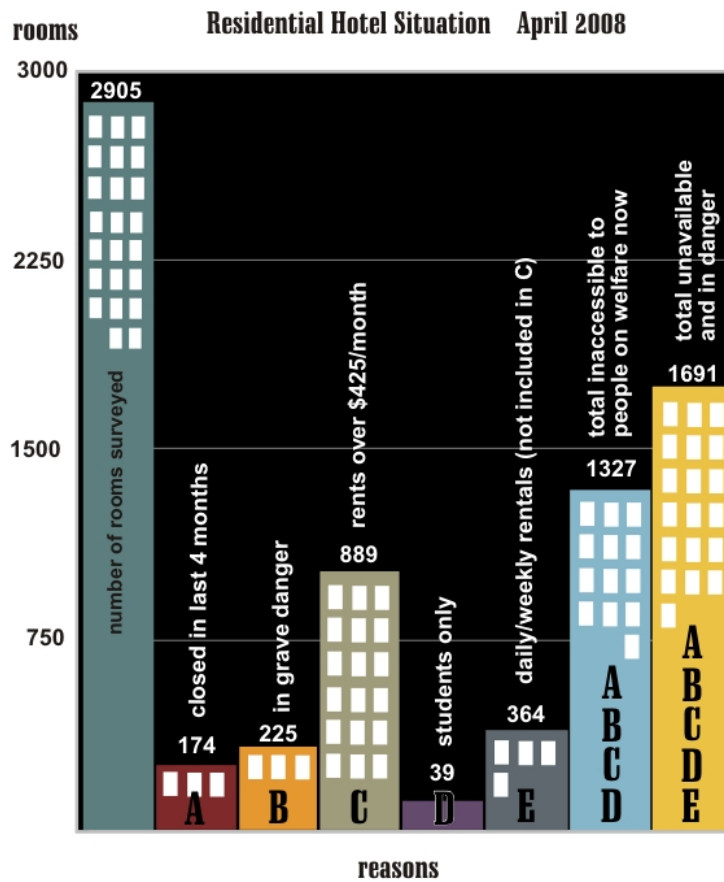


Figure 9: Residential Hotel Situation (CCAP 2011).

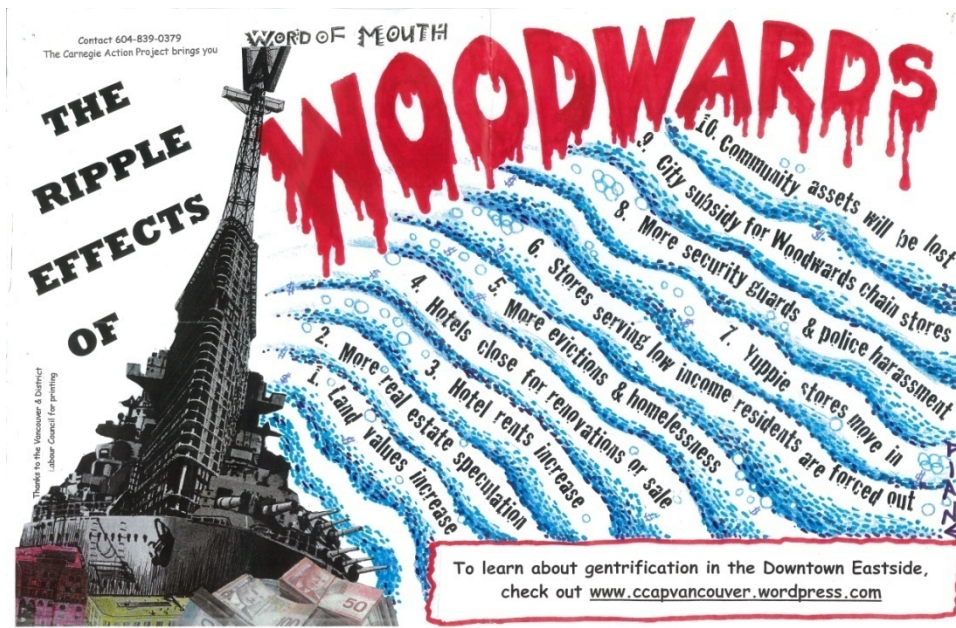


Figure 10: The Ripple Effects of Woodward's (CCAP 2011).

MORE CONDOS IN CHINATOWN?

City council wants to allow developers to build 5 high-rise condos near Main and Georgia St.

They say this is what Chinatown residents want.

CHINATOWN – THE NEXT YALETOWN?

After Expo '86, the city targeted Yaletown for gentrification by allowing developers to build condo towers.

Low-income housing and historic warehouses were replaced by high priced eateries, trendy night spots, and high rise condo towers.

Today, the average Yaletown resident is 37 years old and makes over \$70,000 per year. English is the dominant language. Two-bedroom apartments rent for more than \$2500/mth.

The local grocery store, Urban Fare, sells square watermelons for \$100.



COME TO A CHINATOWN RESIDENTS' MEETING TO DISCUSS WHAT WE CAN DO:

Saturday, March 12

3pm – 5pm

**CARNEGIE CENTRE THEATRE
(main and hastings)**



DOWNTOWN EASTSIDE NEIGHBOURHOOD COUNCIL

<http://dnchome.wordpress.com> | <https://sites.google.com/site/fightfor10sites/>

Figure 11: More Condos in Chinatown? (DNC 2011).

On one hand, from CCAP's posts and images, fear of losing land, housing security, community, acceptance, indigenous ways, control and dignity seem obvious. In addition, there is a repeated articulation of the fear of displacement, community destruction and discrimination. The group also uses fear to mobilize DTES residents into action, which could be alternately interpreted by some as an exploitation of this vulnerable population. On the other hand, the posts and images posted by CCAP can also be viewed as more of a political positioning of opposition against a development/revitalization strategy led by the city and a form of exercising citizenship in a democracy. Nevertheless, for the purposes of this analysis, these posts and images are being considered within the frame of an emotional response of fear.

Regardless of whether or not these fears are substantiated, fear also exists in the act of collaborating with the City on this process. During initial meetings and workshops, several Observer Committee members expressed suspicion and doubt regarding their participation and the outcome of the future SIA. Planners also admitted to fearing how the process would pan out, who would end up participating, and how the low-income community would accept the process and its outcomes. Lastly, whether admitted or not, there was probably some fear on the part of the City concerning the amount of control being given over to the low-income community through this process which may have been a factor in its decision to put it on hold.

One of the tasks of planners is to deconstruct these discourses of fear and provide alternative ones (Sandercock 2003, 124-125). Simply identifying and acknowledging the forms that fear has taken in this process is important to this process and they should be taken into account if the process is reinstated. In doing this, the positions and motives of the various stakeholders are better understood and dealt with. Deeply listening to the emotions (including fear) that underlie contentious community issues leads to better mediation and learning (Forester 2009, 54). Analyzing the fears that motivate such disputes and which underlie such processes (as the City of Vancouver's participatory SIA framework process) will undoubtedly lead to better and more achievable outcomes (Ibid., 54).

Power

"If planners understand how relations of power shape the planning process, they can improve the quality of their analyses and empower citizen and community action."

(Forester 1989, 27)

Just like fear, power also played a central role in this story. Unlike the fears described, the evident power structures were always at the forefront of the minds of all those involved in this process,

especially the planners. Planning in the face of power is a daily duty and a constant ethical challenge for those working with and for communities (Forester 1989, 3). Planners are never working on a neutral base; they are intrinsically tied to political institutions and must face this reality (Ibid., 3). Power underlies many of the practicalities, difficulties, challenges and opportunities that planners encounter in their pursuit of the public good in modern society (Ibid., 4). Power is also linked to fear and must also be dealt with before any community engagement process can be a success.

The DTES, as a marginalized community, has historically lacked power in many ways. One way that this is true is when it comes to issues of property and development rights. Even with the various protective measures the municipality has been able to put in place in the DTES, most power regarding the future of this neighbourhood continues to rest in the hands of those who own the land. The power a developer has to essentially 'erase' community memory—through the destruction of physical infrastructure and the creation of a new structure for an incompatible use—is the biggest perceived threat to the residents of this neighbourhood. With the constant perceived threat of displacement held over their heads, DTES community members often feel powerless when it comes to the insurmountable pressure to develop the area.

Even though planners have very little formal power, they do have the ability to influence decision-making processes (Forester 1989, 9). One way this is possible is through the deeply social and communicative process of design (Ibid., 9). When presented with the task of designing a process to address the social impacts of development on the DTES neighbourhood, the planners involved set out to involve the community to a point where power was essentially redistributed to them. . Giving communities an active role in the entire SIA process has been shown to empower them amongst a host of other capacity-building benefits (Buchan 2003, 171). The participatory nature of the process was conceptualized as a way to recognize the DTES residents as the 'experts' and to position them in a more influential stance. Furthermore, it was a way to accede to the local knowledge that exists in the community. This is significant because 'ways of knowing' based on talking, listening, seeing, contemplating, and sharing (in addition to the standard technical and scientific ones taught in planning schools) must be recognized as valid and legitimate knowledge in modern planning processes (Sandercock 2003, 76-81).

Another critical element relating to power within the design of this process was the inclusion of the Observer Committee. This group of ten, self-identified, low-income, DTES residents was assigned an important position of ultimately deciding whether or not the entire process was successful. This group

took this duty very seriously and developed detailed criteria to measure whether the process was participatory, inclusive, representative and engaging. I personally brought many of their requests to the planning team and delivered the planners' concessions back to the group. Power was continuously negotiated through this iterative feedback loop and confirmed, in the minds of its members, that the community had some essential sense of control. Such a communicative conception of planning holds the most promise for a democratic form of planning in the contemporary context (Healey 1992, 236).

The emphasis on process versus content was also a great illustration of how ceding power to a community is essential to planning for its future. This power dynamic was clear from the very beginning and planners recognized the importance of letting go of control over what content the process would generate. This illustrates the foresight that the relationships planners had with the community were more important than anything the process could have concluded.

Critical and argumentative accounts of planning practice that integrate structural, organizational, and interactive levels of analysis are crucial to today's planning context (Forester 1989, 162). From the outset of the City of Vancouver's participatory SIA process, certain historical, structural and relational power dynamics were foreseen and acknowledged and there were attempts made to both deal with them upfront and ensure avenues were available to continue to do so even while the process unfolded. Planners attempted, through the process design, to even out the distribution of power by giving what they could to the community. Now, more than ever, there is a need for planning practices that deal with the narrow, scientific rationalism of planning's past and offer new methods and ideas on how to achieve the profession's goals (Healey 1992, 239). While there is no chance of changing all of the imbalances of power that face this case, this process offered an alternative.

Trust

"Without the foundation of trust, all our efforts to achieve education, action, inclusion, nourishment and governance fall short."

(Sarkissian et al. 2009, 185)

From fear and power the story of this process slowly shifted to encompass a new element—trust. The City of Vancouver's participatory SIA framework process with the DTES community achieved a base of trust that seems incredible given the short duration of time that the community was actually engaged. Trust is vital to community engagement processes and central to this type of work (Sarkissian et al. 2009, 161). Many factors can hamper the formation of trust in such processes: fears of deception and betrayal, historical legacies, incompetent facilitators, unclear intentions and inappropriate process

design are examples. Several of these factors were present in this attempt but, in the end and in spite of them, a fragile yet notable level of community trust was achieved.

Much of the trust in this process was related to the control that the planners deliberately let go of over the content of the process. The planning team placed the most importance on the actual process and not the content it would collect or the outcome it would deliver. The planners believed that a good process would yield the best outcomes and that it would build the trust necessary for its future dealings with this neighbourhood. They believed that some of the best values of a good process are the relationships that develop, the trust that is built, and the extent of the network that gets formed as a result. Finally, there was an assumption that when a process encompasses all of these factors, it invariably leads to a plan that is less challenging to implement.

Another important illustration of trust came in the formation of the Observer Committee. The first information session held for people interested in being part of the committee could have been viewed as an utter failure. Of the twelve people that showed up, only 3 were low-income residents of the DTES. During the meeting, a DTES activist/community organizer who was present insisted that the committee not include people who didn't live in the neighbourhood and who were not low-income. As a result, the attendees who did not fit this description ultimately agreed that they should not be part of the committee. Part way through the meeting, the original agenda was abandoned, shifting to facilitated conversation regarding the composition of the group. On behalf of the group, I, acting as the Academic Observer, went back to the planners and explained the situation. We then started over and began to recruit solely low-income, DTES residents through word of mouth and community recommendations. Instead of holding another information session with those interested in being on the committee, I met with each possible committee member personally and discussed their involvement on the committee. In the end, a group of ten, self-identified, low-income DTES residents agreed to be on the committee.

NOTE: The Observer Committee consisted solely of low-income DTES residents but the overall participatory SIA framework process was to include broad community engagement throughout the DTES.

As the Academic Observer, I acted much like an intermediary between the committee and the planners. This also played a role in establishing crucial community trust. Community planners need to have emotional intelligence or 'soft skills' in order to build trust with community members (Sarkissian et

al. 2009, 168). Through humour, recognition, humility and determination, I gained the trust of the committee in the first couple of meetings but it was not easy. My prior experience in the neighbourhood and involvement in many of its issues gave me an advantage; yet my position as a member of the City's planning team for this process made some members of the group regard me with scepticism. At one point, members of the group expressed that they thought I was being used by the bureaucracy. Through much effort, patience and dialogue, I was ultimately able to relate to both sides and bring them together on the issues that mattered.

A post on CCAP's website on February 1, 2011 illustrates the trust gained in the early stages of the process:

"A year ago CCAP was worried that the Downtown Eastside (DTES) had taken a serious blow from pro-developer forces at City Hall. City Council wanted more condos built in the DTES. CCAP wanted the City to do a study on the effect of gentrification on the low-income community first. Council voted to give the developers a go-ahead. It was bad news but it wasn't completely bad: City council was barreling on ahead with their development plans, but they agreed to the study. That study is starting this month; it's called a "Social Impact Assessment" (SIA) and CCAP is taking part in it.

The SIA is supposed to figure out what happens to low-income people when the city lets (or helps) developers build condo towers and other market developments in the DTES. And yes, you're right, we already know what happens when new condo projects are built; rents go up, students take over hotel rooms, fancy boutiques take the storefronts where cheap stores used to be, more security guards roam the streets. Our community explained all this and wrote it out together through CCAP's Community Vision report writing process. But city planners are determined to redo all this work.

So, Ivan from CCAP is participating in the SIA observer committee, along with nine other low-income DTES residents. The observer committee is working with Vancouver city planners to set up workshops where low-income residents are comfortable showing up and talking about what we think and how we feel. We think a city-run gentrification study can help us, but we know that we have to work hard to be sure that there is space at these workshops for low-income residents to explain all the experiences, ideas, feelings, and worries that come from life amongst the condo towers...and we need your help.

The first workshop will be at First United Church, probably sometime in early March. Stay tuned for more updates and information: the city needs to hear your voice!"

(Carnegie Community Action Project 2011)

The new breed of planner consciously works towards building trust, developing relationships, mending broken ones and seeking opportunities for transformative practice (Sandercock 2003, 166). The project design and emphasis on process, the Observer Committee and the Academic Observer in this process did just that. While trust is important in any community engagement process, it is even more important in this particular example in this particular community. Understanding the importance of trust and how to repair and maintain it can heal the expectation of betrayal that is prevalent in many

community engagement processes (Sarkissian et al. 2009, 304). Furthermore, giving community members confidence that their contributions will reach decision makers, make a difference and not be trumped by 'expert' views can greatly assist challenging/demanding work for local governments and communities (Ibid., 292).

Hope

"Trust often involves hopefulness for a better future and therefore relies on follow-up action. A hope is a valuable and delicate commodity. For people living in extreme conditions of dysfunction, poverty and alienation, hope can be a vital survival tactic..."

(Sarkissian et al. 2009, 162)

Much of the work that planners do in participatory contexts is conflict-ridden and turning such factors as pain and suspicion around and towards hope and action is paramount (Forester 2009, 223). With the advancement towards a more communicative turn in planning, a new sense of hope has been found in the planning community as well (Healey 1992, 253). As illustrated in the previous section, an initial trust was fostered in the City of Vancouver's participatory SIA framework process with the DTES community. This trust opened up the possibility of hope for many aspects related to this process.

Beyond the hope that this process could give the residents of this neighbourhood (of actually being heard, having their fears dispelled or mitigated and gaining more power) there were larger notions of hope being developed. This hope is for the broad concepts of 'revitalization without displacement' and social sustainability which are two concepts that the City of Vancouver has been striving to attain over the last couple of decades.

Since the mid-1990s, the City of Vancouver has worked under a philosophy of 'revitalization without displacement' in the DTES. Such a philosophy assures that certain aspects of this marginalized neighbourhood are protected while also making sure that it is viable into the future. 'Revitalization without displacement' assures that:

- The future community includes people with diverse social and economic backgrounds and an equal amount of low-income residents as moderate-income earners, businesses and workers
- The residents have equal access to health, social service, and economic development supports
- There will be a good level of safety and security for all
- New residents will provide a base to support existing and new businesses and retail outlets and that low-income residents will have access to the inexpensive goods and services they need

- Civic facilities in the area will meet the demand of the diverse population
- The individual neighbourhoods within the DTES will retain their distinct identities
- The diverse elements of the community will enjoy mutual acceptance and respect, with less internal conflict than in the past

(City of Vancouver 2009, 8)

Since the adoption of this philosophy there have been doubts expressed in both the community and the bureaucracy over whether it is indeed realistic. The increasing development pressures on this neighbourhood, its skyrocketing land values, the pace at which market housing is being built there, the indirect effects of the gentrification taking place, the increasing inequality and the inability of all three levels of government to work together to solve some of its challenges have led some to question the philosophy's intention and implementation. Today, this philosophy is still at the heart of planning for this neighbourhood and at the core of many initiatives—but it is also at stake more than ever before.

The participatory SIA framework process that the City of Vancouver is attempting offers a tool for gauging what is actually happening in the neighbourhood and whether or not revitalization is leading to displacement. When used as a tool in this way, assessing the community-defined impacts will help to better manage them, minimize them and prevent them. Processes such as this offer a new and creative way to improve and create new policies that ensure revitalization without displacement is possible.

This process also offers hope for Vancouver's sustainability goals. Throughout its history, planning has often attempted to achieve the common good from development; while still laudable, this attempt needs to be reinvented for each new age (Newman, n.d., 9). For planners, this means achieving the common good in an age of sustainability (Ibid., 9). Social sustainability is a concept that the City of Vancouver has championed city-wide along with its greater ambition to become the world's 'greenest city' by 2020.

The City of Vancouver first adopted 'sustainability' as a guiding principle for City development, actions and operations in the spring of 2002 (City of Vancouver 2005c). The City approved the following definition:

A sustainable Vancouver is a community that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. It is a place where people live, work, and prosper in a vibrant community of communities. In such a community sustainability is achieved through community participation and the reconciliation of short and long term economic, social and ecological well-being.

(City of Vancouver 2005c)

Although it originated in concern for ecological systems, it is now commonly accepted that sustainability encompasses three distinct yet highly interconnected realms: economic, social and ecological. As the City of Vancouver began to think more seriously about sustainability, it realized that a simple definition of sustainability would not suffice. Recognizing that social sustainability has significant implications for the long-term health of communities and citizens, the City mandated a definition and understanding of it in order to move forward (City of Vancouver 2005c). The City of Vancouver's Social Planning department began working on a definition of social sustainability that would give more clarity to Council on this issue. In 2005, the following definition of social sustainability was adopted by Council:

Social sustainability can be understood to be made up of three required components and four guiding principles. The three components of social sustainability are:

- (1) basic needs,
- (2) individual or human capacity and
- (3) social or community capacity

1. Basic needs of residents can continue to be met through:

- Appropriate, affordable housing, with flexibility to meet changing needs - the needs of those on low and moderate incomes, the needs of those with special circumstances such as physical and mental illness, and the needs of all as they age
- Appropriate, affordable health care available in the community
- Locally produced, nutritious food that is affordable
- Jobs that enable people to be productive and utilize their skills and abilities
- Sufficient income for people to be able to financially support themselves and their families
- Safe communities and workplaces

2. Individual or human capacity can be maintained and enhanced through:

- Opportunities to develop and upgrade skills
- A variety of local employment opportunities throughout the region
- Opportunities to develop and make use of creativity and artistic expression
- Appropriate, affordable formal and informal life-long learning
- Appropriate, affordable recreation, leisure and cultural facilities and programs
- A range of opportunities for individuals to contribute to the health and well-being of the community

3. Social or community capacity can be maintained and enhanced through:

- Support and encouragement for community economic development
- Community “identity” is reflective of community diversity
- Involvement in public processes and their results, and in government
- Opportunities and places for social interaction throughout the community
- Opportunities, resources and venues for a variety of arts, cultural and community activities
- Support and encouragement for community organizations and networks.

There are four guiding principles that are referred to in the definition and direct socially sustainable work. They are described as follows:

1. Equity –when individuals have access to sufficient resources to participate fully in their community and have opportunities for personal development and advancement and there is a fair distribution of resources among communities to facilitate full participation and collaboration. Inequities can be minimized by recognizing that individuals and groups require differing levels of support in order to flourish, and that some individuals and groups are capable of contributing more than others to address disparities and promote fairness of distribution. Lower levels of disparity in societies result in longer life expectancies, less homicides and crime, stronger patterns of civic engagement and more robust economic vitality.

2. Social inclusion and interaction – both the right and the opportunity to participate in and enjoy all aspects of community life and interact with other community members; where the environment enables individuals to celebrate their diversity and react and act on their responsibilities. Social exclusion limits the levels of involvement and impedes optimal healthy development of individuals and the community as a whole.

3. Security - individuals and communities have economic security and have confidence that they live in safe, supportive and healthy environments. People need to feel safe and secure in order to contribute fully to their own well being or engage fully in community life.

4. Adaptability – resiliency for both individuals and communities and the ability to respond appropriately and creatively to change. Adaptability is a process of building upon what already exists, and learning from and building upon experiences from both within and outside the community.

(City of Vancouver 2005c)

The City of Vancouver’s development of a definition and principles for social sustainability offer hope that the goal is realistic and achievable. In fact, hope, vision, symbolic and iterative change are fundamental principles of sustainability and sustainability is now a key concept for how cities plan for

their futures (Newman, n.d., 1 & 11). The hope created by the City's participatory SIA framework process can further the goals Vancouver has regarding social sustainability.

Forester (2009) offers the following definition: "planning is the organization of hope" (6). He continues to say that "planning well done helps us imagine our communities as we might really live in them; planning poorly done diminishes our sense of what we can do, weakens our hope, and discourages our action" (6). Planning has the ability to foster real possibilities out of what formerly felt impossible (6). It is on a hopeful note that this story rests and waits to be continued. Hope, in many forms, was a fundamental part of the City of Vancouver's participatory SIA framework process. It is because of the hope inspired by this process that it needs to be carried through to its yet-undetermined ending.

Going Forward

“Once-and-for-all solutions in planning practice should not be expected, however, because the object of planning, future action, routinely involves the unique and novel. Even when planning serves to rationalize economic decisions, it must be attentive to the special problems presented by the case at hand. Even technical problems that can be solved with standard methods exist amid conflicting interpretations and interests, established power, and excluded segments of the population—all of which inevitably limit the efficacy of purely technical solutions. But despite the fact that planners have little influence on the structure of ownership and power in this society, they can influence the conditions that render citizens able (or unable) to participate, act, and organize effectively regarding issues that affect their lives.”

(Forester 1989, 28)

Technically, the emergency motion approved by Council in January 2011 to sever the Chinatown-related motions of the Historic Area Height Review and the appointment of two community organizations to co-chair a committee to accelerate and enhance the development of a LAP was responsible for putting the SIA process on hold. Staff felt there needed to be clarity on the role of the new LAP committee and its mandate in relation to the development of the SIA. The City also insists that the SIA is still a top priority within the LAPP. Two years have now passed since Vancouver’s City Council passed the motion to conduct a SIA, attempting to measure the impact of new development on the historic, low-income area of the DTES. Since then, community groups have continued to pressure the City to complete this study before new development permits are allowed (Carnegie Community Action Project 2011). While Vancouver’s Social Planning department made a promising start by engaging the community in a participatory SIA framework-building process, the reality is that those promising efforts have ultimately been put on hold and no specific date has been set to continue the process.

There was a sense of frustration given the trust that had been built and the work that had been done to get the process off the ground amongst all those involved. We were all inspired by the progression of the process through fear and power dynamics to the building of trust and hope. I learned that working with communities within a municipal bureaucracy is rarely a linear process. There were likely a myriad of complex factors that resulted in the SIA being put on hold - complex reasons based on power, control, and politics. It also has to do with a bureaucratic comfort with rational planning theories and the fear of using more communicative/participatory methods. Both the SIA and LAP processes were pushed forward only after much pressure was placed on the City by the DTES community. And, now that

both are underway, it will be seen whether real control and participatory power is given to the community that demanded them in the first place.

In such a contested, political and pressured neighbourhood as the DTES, planning for and working with community members is not easy. In the January 2011 Council motion regarding the LAP, the DTES was described as a community that “requires special consideration in planning” (City of Vancouver 2011). Planning for the DTES is a unique task because of the history, location and social challenges. This is a reality because of the complexity of its issues not because this neighbourhood is a ‘complicated problem to solve’ (as commonly thought by some). Complex situations can involve both simple and complicated problems but cannot be reduced to either (Goodwin 1994 as cited in Glouberman & Zimmerman 2002, 1). These types of planning situations have special requirements, unique local conditions, interdependency, an attribute of non-linearity and the necessity to adapt as conditions change (Goodwin 1994, Stacey 1992, Holland 1995, Lorenz 1993, Kauffman 1995, Kelly 1994 as cited in Glouberman & Zimmerman 2002, 1-2).

Planning and creating public policy for areas such as the DTES requires an openness to different approaches to dealing with the properties of complex problems. Rational theoretical models dominated the early history of planning and accurately reflected bureaucratic norms, institutional logic and political demands. For the past two decades, there has been a call for more collaborative and communicative models (Innes & Booher 2010, 25). Below is an example of one such model:

Diversity, Interdependence, Authentic Dialogue (DIAD) Theory of Collaborative Rationality

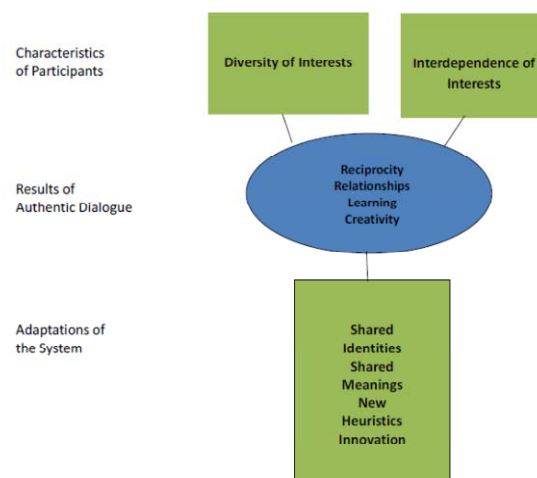


Figure 14: Diversity, Interdependence, Authentic Dialogue (DIAD) of Collaborative Rationality (Innes & Booher 2010, 35).

By using a more collaborative and communicative approach, more robust and resilient planning outcomes and processes are possible (Innes & Booher 2010, 34). Policy planning for complexity requires operating on a systems scale rather than focusing on individual problems and solutions in isolation from one another (Innes & Booher 2010, 33). It is necessary to build dispersed intelligence, to link diverse players together through networks and dialogue, and to search for and apply many kinds of knowledge in order to operate effectively in our complex, uncertain and continuously changing world (Innes & Booher 2010, 33).

Social learning also results from more collaborative processes—for bureaucracies and communities. Social learning refers to the learning that takes place within a social practice context and is not easy to achieve through traditional research methods (Friedmann & Abonyi 1976, 929). In this case, there was potential for a mutual learning that would have facilitated an effective translation between bureaucratic and community languages (which can be quite different). This learning would have highlighted the fact that neither the City nor the community individually has ‘the right plan’ but, rather, that both come to the table with a willingness to learn together about the issue at hand. Forester (1999) says that participatory rituals and dialogue give participants more relevance, value and richer deliberative political rationality (p. 116) and that learning through emotional response (as often happens in Participatory SIA) encourages relating and understanding in ways that are typically overlooked in traditional planning processes (p. 80). Social learning has the power to transform (Forester 1999, 130). Through dialogue in participatory processes, participants can not only find that their arguments change but that they, themselves, change (Forester 1999, 130-132).

There are many instances where communicative and equity planning theory can be applied to this case. And when practice and theory converge they can certainly enhance each other (Innes & Booher 2010, 15). The beauty of this case is that there is great opportunity to use theory to enrich the process. If the City of Vancouver can become comfortable using this innovative approach, worthwhile gains can be made. Every story has a beginning, a middle and an end and, thankfully, the story of the City of Vancouver’s SIA framework process is not over. It remains paused at a critical moment. Whether or not it moves forward and how this would look are unfolding possibilities.

First, it is my opinion and recommendation that this process be continued and wrapped up in a way that is satisfactory to both the City and the community. The members of the community who were involved should be contacted, updated and given a specific date for becoming involved again. Leaving it hanging at this point would be the most detrimental option in regards to bettering relations and easing

tensions with this particular community. As I have attempted to illustrate, the community members who participated in this process thus far began to build trust with me and the City's planners. The process also offered hope to the community and to the city's broad goals as well. While continuing after the substantial delay will undoubtedly require hard work to restore the level of trust and hope that was built with participants, it would be well worth it as changes continue to take root in the neighbourhood.

Second, this process should definitely be a priority of the LAPP that the City is currently negotiating with the community. The two processes are highly compatible in the case of this neighbourhood and complement each other. A future vision for the neighbourhood would be vulnerable to critique, incomplete and potentially neglectful if it went forward without an understanding of the impacts of recent changes on current residents. In addition, ensuring a collaborative, participatory and communicative approach will ease the undeniably tense negotiations that are taking place between the City and community organizations over this LAPP.

Third, as participatory research expert Riaño-Alcalá recommended, some of the planning work that the DTES community has already completed could be incorporated into a future SIA. One of the advantages of working in this neighbourhood is the high level of citizen participation. Several reports and broad community surveys have already been conducted and offer valuable information regarding the impact of development on the neighbourhood and the future its residents envision. Through cooperation, collaboration and dialogue with community residents, rich planning outcomes are more possible. That being said, the process must be carefully managed to ensure that no single or select group of community organizations is able to dominate or claim representation for the community as a whole.

Fourth, the use of participatory SIA should be explored as a viable planning tool for neighbourhoods city-wide, as it is in other parts of the world. If this process is continued in the DTES and culminates successfully, it can be treated as a pilot for a process that would also benefit the many neighbourhoods in Vancouver that are experiencing increasing change. Involving the citizenry and acknowledging the impact planning has on their lives will undoubtedly lead to better and more equitable planning outcomes.

Lastly, more emphasis needs to be given to the social impacts of development throughout the City of Vancouver in order to strengthen its planning principles and likelihood of achieving revitalization without displacement and social sustainability. The DTES can be understood as a microcosm of broader issues that Vancouver and many other cities around the world are currently facing when it comes to

increasing inequality. The data collected from processes such as participatory SIA can also help other levels of government understand their potential roles and responsibilities in mitigating such impacts.

Conclusion

“For planners, the essence of risk taking is learning to surrender the obsession with control and certainty and developing the ability to listen to the voices of multiple publics. It would be safe to say that nothing new enters the world without a certain amount of risk taking on someone’s part and that encouraging a culture of risk takers is essential for managing our coexistence in the mongrel cities of the 21st century.”
(Sandercock 2004, 136-137)

To date, the City of Vancouver has engaged with the DTES communities on many of its programs, policies and projects in this neighbourhood. But it has yet to formally conduct an impact study to anticipate the effects of neighbourhood change on this vulnerable area. Due to pressure from community groups and leaders, the City of Vancouver attempted a SIA process that showed a lot of potential in its participatory nature. Participatory SIA ensures that all stakeholders are represented, engaged, and included (Hamelink, 2008, p. 296). The City of Vancouver’s Participatory SIA process would have adequately involved the community and laid the groundwork for a future, community-driven, SIA.

Participatory SIA can help to ensure that all the needs and voices of diverse groups and individuals in a community are heard and taken into account (Center for Good Governance 2006, 4). Communicative approaches such as participatory SIA can be an effective method of managing urban conflict (Ibid., 296) as societies get more diverse and planning becomes a more complex activity. Direct involvement of citizens in the creation, implementation and monitoring of public policy is increasing around the world (Silver, Scott and Kazepov 2010, 453). Top-down initiatives can often coincide with and complement bottom-up community mobilization and lead to better overall processes (Silver, Scott and Kazepov 2010, 453). In this particular case, the participatory nature of the project was paramount, since one of the overriding values expressed previously by this community is to be included in decisions made about it and to be involved in planning for its future (Pedersen & Swanson, 2010).

The process that the City of Vancouver initiated pushed boundaries in a beneficial way. It built trust and positive momentum between the City and a community with whom it has had a long and complicated history. It showed that participatory SIA could be a useful tool for planners, especially when working towards the goal of social justice and with communities such as those found in the DTES. The City of Vancouver needs to remain open to new ways of working with its diverse communities, especially ones that have been marginalized like the DTES. Because of the rate of change that this neighbourhood is experiencing, it is essential that planners working in this area deeply listen to its residents’ fears, needs and concerns about its future. Incorporating participatory methods into analytical SIA processes ensures

that planners engage in richer dialogue with community members and become more open to transformative planning outcomes that are ‘socially just.’

This paper has reflected on the participatory SIA process that the City of Vancouver initiated but has yet to complete in the DTES neighbourhood. It describes the history and evolution of SIA as a planning tool and shows how participatory SIA can lead to more collaborative learning processes, more effective process, and community empowerment. It then offers an analysis of the key elements involved in Vancouver’s attempt. It shows how this story started out on a foundation of fear and worry about unequal power dynamics. It then reveals how the process slowly built an element of trust and led to more hope—not only for the DTES but for the city on the whole. As an observer, participant and planner in this process, I have had a unique position from which to conduct this analysis. I end by making recommendations for how the City of Vancouver could move forward and continue this story.

Stories and storytelling are central to planning practice (Sandercock 2003, 203). Like many planning processes, we can think of the City of Vancouver’s participatory SIA framework process as a “performed story” (Sandercock 2003, 203). It is an example of story that presents itself in the form of a planning process—one that has the potential to not only create a space for stories to be heard but also where the ability to tell, listen and invent stories is nurtured (Sandercock 2003, 204). Sarkissian, Hurford and Wenman (2010) say that the ‘core story’ that planners have been following for the past century generally restricts them from engaging in creative processes such as truly empowering participatory SIA (107). They advocate for planners to “truly listen across difference and find new ways of being as professionals” (Ibid., p. 107). This process was a chance to achieve this.

Fear plays an important role in this story. It was apparent on the part of the community, the process planning team and, ultimately, the City of Vancouver. There is an understandable fear of including communities in decision-making processes and in letting go of bureaucratic control but this fear holds community planning back. Planning stories such as this can work as catalysts for change (Sandercock 2003, 204). The story of the City of Vancouver’s participatory SIA framework process also contained significant traces of trust and hope and now rests and waits at a vital juncture. Whether or not this story will truly be a catalyst for change depends on how it continues. But, in part, it has already achieved change by creating an acknowledged, formal space within a City process for the “imagination of alternatives” (Sandercock 2003, 204).

The City of Vancouver's participatory SIA framework process with the DTES community was innovative and progressive. Sandercock (2003) speaks of 'transformative planning' where citizens and planners can "dare to break the rules" and create "audacious planning practice(s)" in the face of powerful institutions, like bureaucracies (p. 214). Working with this community to plan for its future and protect its residents from harmful impacts was an opportunity for the City to engage in transformative planning that could ultimately deepen its democratic function.

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Appendices

Appendix I

City of Vancouver Council Motion (January 26, 2010)



REPORT TO COUNCIL SPECIAL COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

JANUARY 26, 2010

A Special Meeting of the Council of the City of Vancouver was held on Tuesday, January 26, 2010, at 9:47 am, in the Council Chamber, Third Floor, City Hall, for the purpose of dealing with Unfinished Business Items from the Special Standing Committee on Planning and Environment meeting on Friday, January 22, 2010.

PRESENT: Mayor Gregor Robertson
Councillor Suzanne Anton
Councillor David Cadman
Councillor George Chow*
Councillor Heather Deal
Councillor Kerry Jang
Councillor Raymond Louie
Councillor Geoff Meggs
Councillor Andrea Reimer
Councillor Tim Stevenson
Councillor Ellen Woodsworth

CITY MANAGER'S OFFICE: Penny Ballem, City Manager
Sadhu Johnston, Deputy City Manager

CITY CLERK'S OFFICE: Bonnie Eng, Meeting Coordinator (Minutes)
Lori Isfeld, Meeting Coordinator

*Denotes absence for a portion of the meeting.

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

MOVED by Councillor Jang
SECONDED by Councillor Deal

THAT this Council resolve itself into Committee of the Whole, Mayor Robertson in the Chair.

VARY THE AGENDA

Council agreed to vary the agenda in order to deal with Item 2 first. For clarity, the minutes are recorded in chronological order.

2. Historic Area Height Review: Conclusion and Recommendations
January 4, 2010

At the Special Standing Committee on Planning and Environment meeting on January 22, 2010, Vancouver City Council concluded hearing from speakers and referred discussion and decision on the above-noted matter to the Special Council meeting on January 26, 2010, as Unfinished Business.

Planning staff responded to questions.

MOVED by Councillor Louie

- A. THAT Council affirm the importance of the "Historic Area" as defined in the Historic Area Height Review (HAHR), including its distinctive sub-areas, for its social, cultural, economic and built form value contributing to Vancouver's civic identity, and affirm that building height and scale for the Historic Area should generally continue to reinforce the prevailing heritage context, including the existing heritage buildings, fine grain character and generally low to mid-rise development scale.
- B. THAT the appropriate building heights for the Historic Area be generally between 50' to 120' based on respective sub-areas' zoning, design guidelines and rezoning policies, noting the existing maximum building height range is 50'-100';

FURTHER THAT mid-rise development continues to be the primary form for new developments complementing heritage building rehabilitation in the Historic Area, considering its existing building scale, public realm, smaller lot pattern and the fragmented property ownership pattern; and

FURTHER THAT Council direct staff to prepare and report back with amendments to the Zoning and Development By-law, Design Guidelines and the Vancouver Building By-law and related by-laws and policies in order to provide a more supportive regulatory framework to facilitate development on smaller frontages (75' frontage or less) and mid-rise development scale (up to 120' in height) in the Historic Area.

- C. THAT Council endorse a moderate height increase in Chinatown and Downtown Eastside Oppenheimer District Sub-Area 1 (Main and Hastings) to support and enhance existing policy objectives in these sub-areas.

FURTHER THAT Council direct staff to:

- C.1. Prepare and report back on the following zoning and policy changes in Chinatown as part of the residential intensification strategy as identified in the Chinatown Community Plan:

- (i) amendments to the HA1 and HA1A District Schedules of the Zoning and Development By-law and Design Guidelines to increase maximum heights:
 - HA1: maximum height increase from 50' - 65' to 50'-75'
 - HA1A: maximum height increase from 70' to 90'
 - (ii) a Rezoning Policy for HA1A with a maximum height up to 120' in order to consider innovative heritage, cultural and affordable housing projects in Chinatown; and
 - (iii) options to the Transfer of Density Policy and Procedure to allow density to be transferred into or within the HA1A and the higher building sites in recommendation D, only.
- C.2. Prepare and report back on an interim Rezoning Policy for Downtown Eastside Oppenheimer District Official Development Plan (DEOD ODP) Sub-Area 1 with a maximum height up to 120' in order to consider special opportunities for affordable housing projects before completion of the DEOD ODP Review; and
- C.3. That a social impact study be conducted to assess the effect on the existing low-income community of new developments in the historic area and where opportunities for enhanced affordability and live-ability may be achieved.
- D. THAT two additional higher buildings (sites 1 and 2 in Figure 2, appendix E of the Policy Report dated January 4, 2010, entitled "Historic Area Height Review: Conclusion and Recommendations") as 'high points of the pattern' be proposed to provide additional strategic new development with resulting public benefits, within height limits that still reflect the prevailing mid-rise development pattern;

FURTHER THAT for the specific purpose of economic revitalization of Chinatown while also considering heritage values, staff report back on options for a limited number of carefully and strategically located additional higher building sites generally in the range of 150 feet to be further identified specifically in Chinatown South (HA1A);

FURTHER THAT Site 3 in Figure 2 of Appendix E of the above-noted Policy Report, known as the Keefer Triangle Site, is not supported by Council as a higher building site, and further that heights above the base zoning height of 90 feet on this site would be of concern due to potential impacts;

FURTHER THAT Council endorse that the maximum of the two higher buildings (sites 1 and 2 in Figure 2, appendix E of the above-noted Policy Report) above the prevailing height of 50'-120' may be considered with heights generally in the range of 150', having considered urban design and other performance

Appendix II

City of Vancouver Council Motion (January 20, 2011)

MOTION

1. Matter related to Item 4, Planning & Environment Agenda - Historic Area Height Review: Policy Implementation

MOVED by Councillor Louie

SECONDED by Councillor Deal

WHEREAS:

1. It is Council's desire to ensure adequate consultation and community engagement in the DTES community in local area planning.
2. The DTES is a vibrant, robust and creative community in Vancouver that requires special consideration in planning.
3. It is Council's priority to build and protect adequate housing to address low income, homeless and vulnerable people in our community.
4. It is the common practice to refer items to Public Hearing without hearing speakers as referral items cannot consider content and speakers to content have the ability to speak at Public Hearing.
5. The items relating to HA-1 and HA-1A (Chinatown Historic areas) have a high degree of agreement, evidenced in Appendix E and correspondence received from the community, that the process that led to those decisions in January 2010 and this subsequent follow up report were appropriate. Content issues are appropriately discussed at the Public Hearing.
6. More time is needed for City staff to complete a social impact study on low-income residents in the DTES, as was committed to by Council in January 2010.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT

- A. THAT Council refer items B, C, D, E and F (as it relates to HA-1 and HA-1A) to Public Hearing and ask the City Manager to ensure the report is severed accordingly and posted in the City website for public review before the Public Hearing.
- B. THAT Council refer item A to a future Council meeting to allow the City Manager to ensure the following is implemented:
 - i. The striking of a community committee to enhance and accelerate a DTES local area plan (DD-Area C2, HA-2, DEOD

districts) and to develop a clear strategy to implement the existing Council approved DTES Housing Plan;

- ii. The committee would be co-chaired by one member of the Downtown Neighbourhood Council and one member of the Building Community Society. There would be at least one representative from the Strathcona Residents' Association and liaison from the City's Planning Department. The rest of the committee members and the terms of reference would be decided by the co-chairs within the parameters of point i, above.
- iii. That the City Manager ensure that appropriate resources are allocated to the above to ensure timely completion and that the work of the committee be completed by December 31, 2011.

Appendix III

Outline for Vancouver's Participatory SIA Framework Process

DTES Community Engagement Process

Social Impact Assessment Study (SIAS)

Step 1

Community Workshop #1* (Identify Social Indicators/Measures)

Date: **Thursday, November 18, 2010**

Time: **1:30 pm to 4:30 pm**

Location: **First United Church - 320 East Hastings St**

Food: healthy light meal and refreshments – please confirm any food allergies, vegetarian preferences or other concerns in advance.

***Special Focus Sessions**

If necessary, a special focus session(s) may be held following each community workshop to outreach to specific sectors of the low income community for their input. These smaller special focus sessions would follow the same engagement and feedback process as the larger community workshops.

Step 2

Community Workshop #2* (Identify Methodology)

Date: TBD at Community Workshop #1

Time: [tentative] 1:30 pm to 4:30 pm

Location: [tentative] at First United Church- 320 East Hastings St

Food: healthy light meal and refreshments

Step 3

General Community Outreach

Findings and outcomes from the foregoing engagement process will be presented and shared with the larger DTES community for their comments and feedback.

Date and Locations: TBD after Community Workshop #2.

Roles and Responsibilities

Social Impact Assessment Study (SIAS)

For everyone's convenience here are a few notes on the different types of committees and their roles in the overall process.

1. City Staff, Consultant and Observer Roles

City of Vancouver's Social Policy staff: Debbie Anderson Eng and Dana Walker are coordinating the SIAS project with support from the Central Area DTES Planning Team: Celine Mauboules and Kira Gerwing, and from Housing Policy: Andrea Gillman. Raymond Penner from "the Strategic Action Group" has been retained to facilitate all community workshops and if necessary, any special focus session(s). Tanya Fink, UBC School of Community and Regional Planning Masters Candidate, will act as an independent academic observer and coordinate the Observer Committee.

2. Workshop Committee Role

- Attend and participate in all of the community workshops. Invited groups and organizations are encouraged to select up to two (2) representatives per group to ensure continuity throughout the engagement process. (please note: seating capacity is limited at 100),
- Actively participate in the development of Social Indicators, Measures and Methodology for SIAS framework.

3. Academic Observer's Role

The academic researcher, Tanya Fink (UBC School of Community and Regional Planning) will act as an independent Academic Observer for the overall process. The Academic Observer will:

- Work with the consultant, staff and the community to ensure that the terms of reference for the study, and any criteria established by the Observer Committee (as noted below) are respected and incorporated,
- Attend all meetings and share observations and findings during the engagement process, and
- Provide a final report documenting and evaluating the overall Observer's process.

4. Observer Committee Role

The Academic Observer will be convening an Observer Committee of up to 10 DTES volunteer representatives to ensure that the terms of reference for the study and any criteria for the engagement process are respected and incorporated. In addition, the Observer Committee will assist with the following tasks:

- Attend an Information Session and sign an agreement contract if willing to commit to be on the Observer Committee throughout the entire time schedule,
- Work with the Academic Observer to establish criteria for gauging whether the process is representative, inclusive, engaging and participatory,
- Attend and observe all community workshops and any special focus session(s) acting as a community witness/observer to the process only – not content,
- Meet as a team regularly, as outlined (tentative):

1. Information Session (1 hour) – pre Community Workshop #1
 2. Preparation Meeting (1-2 hours) – pre Community Workshop #1
 3. Attend all Community Workshops - (3 hours each)
 4. Attend at least 1 Special Focus Session (if necessary) - (2 hours each)
 5. Attend at least 1 Post Meeting – wrap up phase (1-2 hours)
- Complete a questionnaire during each community workshop/special focus session observed and submit it to the Academic Observer for use in a final report, and
 - Provide evaluative feedback to the Academic Observer throughout the observation and engagement process.

The Observer and the Observer Committee will not directly be participants in, produce or select the content of the SIAS. However, they are required to attend all workshops and special focus session(s) as witnesses/observers. A small honourarium may be provided upon completion of the agreement contract which includes approximately 10-15 hours of commitment: preparation, observation and reporting out services.

Observer Committee NOTE: Please be advised that an Information Session is tentatively scheduled for Friday, November 12, 2010 for all those who are interested. For those who decide to commit to being a part of the Observer Committee, the Preparation Meeting will take place on Tuesday, November 16th.

5. Information and RSVP

For more information or to express interest in being part of either the Workshop Committee or the Observer Committee, please contact: Dana Walker at 604-871-6780, dana.walker@vancouver.ca as soon as convenient.

RSVP deadline please:

Workshop Committee: **November 12, Friday**

Observer Committee: **November 9, Tuesday**

Community Invite Letter

Social Impact Assessment Study (SIAS)

Dear DTES community member;

Re: Social Impact Assessment Study (SIAS) – creating an evaluation framework for the low-income population of the DTES.

By now you may have heard that the City of Vancouver is carrying out a participatory engagement process with the low income community to create a locally-based SIAS framework. This is your

opportunity to explore, share and identify with other members of your community what is important to you and your organization for the future protection and enhancement of the DTES from your respective.

BACKGROUND:

As part of the Historic Area Height Review study (January 4, 2010), Vancouver City Council has directed staff to undertake the following work:

“THAT a social impact study be conducted to assess the effect on the existing low-income community of new developments in the historic area and where opportunities for enhanced affordability and liveability may be achieved”

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT PROCESS and OUTCOMES:

Two community workshops (and if necessary, additional special focus sessions) are being planned to engage various DTES community stakeholders in the identification of Social Indicators and Measures for assessing future social impacts on the low-income population from new developments; as well as the identification of the Methodology to be used to carry out future Social Impact Assessments.

COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION:

To help you and your organization participate in the overall process, two separate committees will be formed:

1. **The Workshop Committee** is to be comprised of people who will actively participate in all of the workshop sessions to help identify and define the ‘content’ of the SIAS (Social Indicators/Measures and Methodology).
2. **The Observer Committee** is to be comprised of people who will ‘observe’ the overall process of the SIAS using pre-established criteria (tbd by the Observer Committee) to ensure that the process is inclusive, engaging and participatory for everyone involved.

To assist you in understanding the overall process better please see the following attachments:

Attachment #1: Roles and Responsibilities

Attachment #2: DTES Community Engagement Process

Attachment #3: Invited Groups and Organizations

If you or anyone you know is interested in participating on either 1) the Workshop Committee (up to 100 people), or 2) the Observer Committee (up to 10 people), please submit the name and contact information for each person, and specify which committee s/he is interested in. We will be extending an invitation personally to each suggested participant and informing them of the overall time schedule, commitments and other details.

RSVP DEADLINE for COMMITTEE SIGN UP:

Workshop Committee: **November 12, Friday**

Observer Committee: **November 9, Tuesday**

On behalf of the City, the Observer and Consultant thank you for your time and interest and we all look forward to working together with you on this study.

Yours truly,
Dana Walker
Social Policy Planner – Project Coordinator

Appendix IV

SIA Guidelines and Principles

Why Have Principles for SIA?

- Assist in the development of legislation and policy at the national level;
- Provide standards for SIA practice in international contexts (transboundary projects, development cooperation, foreign investments, international banking);
- Increase the appeal of SIA to a wider range of audiences, through increasing its legitimacy/standing;
- Establish minimum standards for SIA practice;
- Provide an articulation of best practice in SIA as a model to aspire to;
- Remove confusion over terminology by establishing a definitive glossary;
- Establish the appropriate scope of the social component of impact assessments;
- Promote the integration of SIA in all impact assessments (especially environmental impact assessment and strategic environmental assessment).

Core Values of SIA

The SIA community of practice believes that:

1. There are fundamental human rights that are shared equally across cultures, and by males and females alike.
2. There is a right to have those fundamental human rights protected by the rule of law, with justice applied equally and fairly to all, and available to all.
3. People have a right to live and work in an environment which is conducive to good health and to a good quality of life and which enables the development of human and social potential.
4. Social dimensions of the environment – specifically but not exclusively peace, the quality of social relationships, freedom from fear, and belongingness – are important aspects of people’s health and quality of life.
5. People have a right to be involved in the decision making about the planned interventions that will affect their lives.
6. Local knowledge and experience are valuable and can be used to enhance planned interventions.

Fundamental Principles for Development

The SIA community of practice considers that:

1. Respect for human rights should underpin all actions.

2. Promoting equity and democratisation should be the major driver of development planning, and impacts on the worst-off members of society should be a major consideration in all assessment.
3. The existence of diversity between cultures, within cultures, and the diversity of stakeholder interests need to be recognised and valued.
4. Decision making should be just, fair and transparent, and decision makers should be accountable for their decisions.
5. Development projects should be broadly acceptable to the members of those communities likely to benefit from, or be affected by, the planned intervention.
6. The opinions and views of experts should not be the sole consideration in decisions about planned interventions.
7. The primary focus of all development should be positive outcomes, such as capacity building, empowerment, and the realization of human and social potential.
8. The term, 'the environment', should be defined broadly to include social and human dimensions, and in such inclusion, care must be taken to ensure that adequate attention is given to the realm of the social.

Principles Specific to SIA Practice

1. Equity considerations should be a fundamental element of impact assessment and of development planning.
2. Many of the social impacts of planned interventions can be predicted.
3. Planned interventions can be modified to reduce their negative social impacts and enhance their positive impacts.
4. SIA should be an integral part of the development process, involved in all stages from inception to follow-up audit.
5. There should be a focus on socially sustainable development, with SIA contributing to the determination of best development alternative(s) – SIA (and EIA) have more to offer than just being an arbiter between economic benefit and social cost.
6. In all planned interventions and their assessments, avenues should be developed to build the social and human capital of local communities and to strengthen democratic processes.
7. In all planned interventions, but especially where there are unavoidable impacts, ways to turn impacted peoples into beneficiaries should be investigated.

8. The SIA must give due consideration to the alternatives of any planned intervention, but especially in cases when there are likely to be unavoidable impacts.
9. Full consideration should be given to the potential mitigation measures of social and environmental impacts, even where impacted communities may approve the planned intervention and where they may be regarded as beneficiaries.
10. Local knowledge and experience and acknowledgment of different local cultural values should be incorporated in any assessment.
11. There should be no use of violence, harassment, intimidation or undue force in connection with the assessment or implementation of a planned intervention.
12. Developmental processes that infringe the human rights of any section of society should not be accepted.

(Vanclay 2003, 5-9)

Appendix V

Examples of Social Impacts

Box A: Indicative Health and Social Well-being Impacts

- ❖ Death of self or a family member – personal loss.
- ❖ Death in the community – loss of human & social capital.
- ❖ Nutrition – adequacy, security and quality of individual and household food supply.
- ❖ Actual health and fertility (ability to conceive) of family members.
- ❖ Perceived health and fertility.
- ❖ Mental health and subjective well-being – feelings of stress, anxiety, apathy, depression, nostalgic melancholy, changed self image, general self esteem (psycho-social factors).
- ❖ Changed aspirations for the future for self and children.
- ❖ Autonomy – changes in an individual's independence or self-reliance.
- ❖ Experience of stigmatisation or deviance labelling – the feeling of being 'different' or of being excluded or socially marginalised.
- ❖ Uncertainty – being unsure about the effects or meaning of a planned intervention.
- ❖ Feelings (positive or negative) in relation to the planned intervention – which may result in formation of interest groups.
- ❖ Annoyance – a feeling/experience such as due to disruption to life, but which is not necessarily directed at the intervention itself.
- ❖ Dissatisfaction (betrayal) due to failure of a planned intervention to deliver promised benefits.
- ❖ Experience of moral outrage – such as when a planned intervention leads to violation of deeply held moral or religious beliefs.

Box B: Indicative Quality of the Living Environment (Liveability) Impacts

- ❖ Perceived quality of the living environment (i.e. work and home environment or neighbourhood) – in terms of exposure to dust, noise, risk, odour, vibration, blasting, artificial light, safety, crowding, presence of strangers, commuting time etc.
- ❖ Actual quality of the living environment.
- ❖ Disruption to daily living practices (which may or may not cause annoyance).
- ❖ Leisure and recreation opportunities and facilities.
- ❖ Aesthetic quality – visual impacts, outlook, vistas, shadowing etc.
- ❖ Environmental amenity value – the non-market, non-consumptive aesthetic and moral value ascribed to a location or experience.
- ❖ Perception of the physical quality of housing.
- ❖ Actual physical quality of housing.
- ❖ Perception of the social quality of housing (homeliness) – the degree to which inhabitants feel that their house is their 'home'.
- ❖ Availability of housing facilities.
- ❖ Adequacy of physical infrastructure – impact on the existing infrastructure of the community (water supply, sewage, land, roads, etc.).
- ❖ Adequacy of social infrastructure – change in the demands for and supply of basic social services and facilities, such as education, police, libraries, welfare services, etc.
- ❖ Perception of personal safety and fear of crime.
- ❖ Actual personal safety and hazard exposure.
- ❖ Actual crime and violence.

Box C: Indicative Economic Impacts and Material Well-being Impacts

- ❖ Workload – amount of work necessary in order to survive and/or live reasonably.
- ❖ Standard of living, level of affluence – a composite measure of material well-being referring to how well off a household or individual is in terms of their ability to obtain goods and services. It is also related to the cost of living, and is affected by changes in local prices etc.
- ❖ Access to public goods and services.
- ❖ Access to government and/or other social services.
- ❖ Economic prosperity and resilience – the level of economic affluence of a community and the extent of diversity of economic opportunities.
- ❖ Income – both cash and in-kind income.
- ❖ Property values.
- ❖ Occupational status/prestige and type of employment.
- ❖ Level of unemployment in the community – underutilisation of human capital.
- ❖ Loss of employment options.
- ❖ Replacement costs of environmental functions – the cost of replacing a product or service that was formerly provided by the environment, such as clean water, firewood, flood protection, etc.
- ❖ Economic dependency or vulnerability – the extent to which an individual or household (or higher entity) has control over economic activities, the degree of incorporation into larger production systems.
- ❖ Disruption of local economy – the disappearance of local economic systems and structures.
- ❖ Burden of national debt – such as the intergenerational transfer of debt.

Box D: Indicative Cultural Impacts

- ❖ Change in cultural values – such as moral rules, beliefs, ritual systems, language, and dress.
- ❖ Cultural affrontage – violation of sacred sites, breaking taboos and other cultural mores.
- ❖ Cultural integrity – the degree to which local culture such as traditions, rites, etc. are respected and likely to persist.
- ❖ Experience of being culturally marginalised – the structural exclusion of certain groups because of their cultural characteristics, thus creating a feeling of being a second class citizen.
- ❖ Profanisation of culture – the commercial exploitation or commodification of cultural heritage (such as traditional handicrafts, artefacts) and the associated loss of meaning.
- ❖ Loss of local language or dialect.
- ❖ Loss of natural and cultural heritage – damage to or destruction of cultural, historical, archaeological or natural resources, including burial grounds, historic sites, and places of religious, cultural and aesthetic value.

Box E: Indicative Family and Community Impacts

- ❖ Alterations in family structure – such as family stability, divorce, number of children at home, presence of extended families.
- ❖ Changes to sexual relations.
- ❖ Obligations to living elders.
- ❖ Obligations to ancestors.
- ❖ Family violence – physical or verbal abuse.
- ❖ Disruption of social networks – impacts on the social interaction of household members with other people in the community.
- ❖ Changed demographic structure of the community.
- ❖ Community identification and connection – sense of belonging, attachment to place.
- ❖ Perceived and actual community cohesion.
- ❖ Social differentiation and inequity – creation of perceived or actual differences between various groups in a community or differentiation in level of access to certain resources.
- ❖ Social tension and violence – conflict or serious divisions within the community.

Box F: Indicative Institutional, Legal, Political and Equity Impacts

- ❖ Workload and viability of government or formal agencies – capacity of the formal institutions to handle additional workload generated by a planned intervention.
- ❖ Workload and viability of non-government agencies and informal agencies including community organisations.
- ❖ Integrity of government and government agencies – absence of corruption, competence in which they perform their tasks.
- ❖ Loss of tenure, or legal rights.
- ❖ Loss of subsidiarity – a violation of the principle that decisions should be taken as close to the people as possible.
- ❖ Violation of human rights – any abuse of the human rights, arrest, imprisonment, torture, intimidation, harassment etc., actual or fear or censorship and loss of free speech.
- ❖ Participation in decision making.
- ❖ Access to legal procedures and to legal advice.
- ❖ Impact equity – notions about fairness in the distribution of impacts across the community.

Box G: Indicative Gender Relations Impacts

- ❖ Women's physical integrity – refers to the right of women to be able to make informed decisions about their own body, health and sexual activity, having control over fertility and childbearing and child-rearing practices, and having the resources to implement those decisions safely and effectively, and to be free from coercion, violence and discrimination in the exercise of those decisions.
- ❖ Personal autonomy of women – the level of independence, self-reliance and self-respect in physical, economic, political and socio-cultural aspects.
- ❖ Gendered division of production-oriented labour – refers to the unequal distribution of workload between men and women in relation to production, in terms of cash cropping, subsistence food production, wage-labour and other household (cash) income strategies.
- ❖ Gendered division of household labour – refers to the gendered and uneven distribution of workload in relation to the maintenance of the household, that is fetching water and fuel, preparing food, washing, cleaning and decorating the house.
- ❖ Gendered division of reproductive labour – refers to the gendered and uneven distribution of workload in relation to the care and maintenance of household members, that is the personal burden of childbearing and childrearing.
- ❖ Gender-based control over, and access to, resources and services – including land, water, capital, equipment, knowledge, skills, employment opportunities and income, and services such as health facilities, education and agricultural extension services.
- ❖ Equity of educational achievement between girls and boys.
- ❖ Political emancipation of women – women's influence on decision making at household, community and society levels.

Appendix VI

SIA Tools and Methods

Analytical tools

Stakeholder Analysis is an entry point to SIA and participatory work. It addresses strategic questions, e.g. who are the key stakeholders? What are their interests in the project or policy? What are the power differentials between them? What relative influence do they have on the operation? This information helps to identify institutions and relations which, if ignored, can have negative influence on proposals or, if considered, can be built upon to strengthen them.

Gender Analysis focuses on understanding and documenting the differences in gender roles, activities, needs and opportunities in a given context. It highlights the different roles and behaviour of men and women. These attributes vary across cultures, class, ethnicity, income, education, and time; and so gender analysis does not treat women as a homogeneous group.

Secondary Data Review of information from previously conducted work is an inexpensive, easy way to narrow the focus of a social assessment, to identify experts and institutions that are familiar with the development context, and to establish a relevant framework and key social variables in advance.

Community-based methods

Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) covers a family of participatory approaches and methods, which emphasises local knowledge and action. It uses to group animation and exercises to facilitate stakeholders to share information and make their own appraisals and plans. Originally developed for use in rural areas, PRA has been employed successfully in a variety of settings to enable local people to work together to plan community-appropriate developments.

SARAR is an acronym of five attributes -- self-esteem, associative strength, resourcefulness, action planning and responsibility for follow-through -- that are important for achieving a participatory approach to development. SARAR is a philosophy of adult education and empowerment, which seeks to optimise people's ability to self-organize, take initiatives, and shoulder responsibilities. It is best classed as an experiential methodology, which involves setting aside hierarchical differences, team building through training, and learning from local experience rather than from external experts.

Consultation methods

Beneficiary Assessment (BA) is a systematic investigation of the perceptions of a sample of beneficiaries and other stakeholders to ensure that their concerns are heard and incorporated into project and policy formulation. The purposes are to (a) undertake systematic listening, which "gives voice" to poor and other hard-to-reach beneficiaries, highlighting constraints to beneficiary participation, and (b) obtain feedback on interventions.

Observation and interview tools

Participant Observation is a field technique used by anthropologists and sociologists to collect qualitative data and to develop in-depth understanding of peoples' motivations and attitudes. It is based on looking, listening, asking questions and keeping detailed field notes. Observation and analysis are supplemented by desk reviews of secondary sources, and hypotheses about local reality are checked with key local informants.

Semi-structured Interviews are a low-cost, rapid method for gathering information from individuals or small groups. Interviews are partially structured by a written guide to ensure that they are focused on the issue at hand, but stay conversational enough to allow participants to introduce and discuss aspects that they consider to be relevant.

Social Impact Assessment tools and methods

Focus Group Meetings are a rapid way to collect comparative data from a variety of stakeholders. They are brief meetings -- usually one to two hours -- with many potential uses, e.g. to address a particular concern; to build community consensus about implementation plans; to cross-check information with a large number of people; or to obtain reactions to hypothetical or intended actions.

Village Meetings allow local people to describe problems and outline their priorities and aspirations. They can be used to initiate collaborative planning, and to periodically share and verify information gathered from small groups or individuals by other means.

Participatory methods

Role Playing helps people to be creative, open their perspectives, understand the choices that another person might face, and make choices free from their usual responsibilities. This exercise can stimulate discussion, improve communication, and promote collaboration at both community and agency levels.

Wealth Ranking (also known as well-being ranking or vulnerability analysis) is a visual technique to engage local people in the rapid data collection and analysis of social stratification in a community (regardless of language and literacy barriers). It focuses on the factors which constitute wealth, such as ownership of or right to use productive assets, their relationship to locally powerful people, labour and indebtedness, and so on.

Access to Resources is a tool to collect information and raise awareness of how access to resources varies according to gender, age, marital status, parentage, and so on. This information can make all the difference to the success or failure of a proposal; for example, if health clinics require users to pay cash fees, and women are primarily responsible for accompanying sick or pregnant family members to the clinic, then women must have access to cash.

Analysis of Tasks clarifies the distribution of domestic and community activities by gender and the degree of role flexibility that is associated with each task. This is central to understanding the human resources that are necessary for running a community.

Mapping is an inexpensive tool for gathering both descriptive and diagnostic information. Mapping exercises are useful for collecting baseline data on a number of indicators as part of a beneficiary assessment or rapid appraisals, and can lay the foundation for community ownership of development planning by including different groups.

Needs Assessment draws out information about people's needs and requirements in their daily lives. It raises participants' awareness of development issues and provides a framework for prioritising actions and interventions. All sectors can benefit from participating in a needs assessment, as can trainers, project staff and field workers.

Pocket Charts are investigative tools, which use pictures as stimulus to encourage people to assess and analyse a given situation. Made of cloth, paper or cardboard, pockets are arranged into rows and columns, which are captioned by drawings. A "voting" process is used to engage participants in the technical aspects of development issues, such as water and sanitation projects.

Tree Diagrams are multi-purpose, visual tools for narrowing and prioritising problems, objectives or decisions. Information is organized into a tree-like diagram. The main issue is represented by the trunk, and the relevant factors, influences and outcomes are shown as roots and branches of the tree.

Workshop-based methods

Objectives-Oriented Project Planning is a method that encourages participatory planning and analysis throughout the project life cycle. A series of stakeholder workshops are held to set priorities, and integrate them into planning, implementation and monitoring. Building commitment and capacity is an integral part of this process. *TeamUP* was developed to expand the benefits of objectives-oriented project planning and to make it more accessible for institution-wide use. PC/TeamUP is a software package, which automates the basic step-by-step methodology and guides stakeholders through research, project design, planning, implementation, and evaluation.

(United Nations Environment Programme 2002, 489-491)

Appendix VII

Public Participation Methods

Table 1. A Number of the Most Formalized Public Participation Methods

<i>Participation Method</i>	<i>Nature of Participants</i>	<i>Time Scale/Duration</i>	<i>Characteristics/Mechanism</i>	<i>Examples/References</i>
Referenda	Potentially all members of national or local population; realistically, a significant proportion of these.	Vote cast at single point in time.	Vote is usually choice of one of two options. All participants have equal influence. Final outcome is binding.	Biotechnology in Switzerland (Buchmann 1995); waste repository in Sweden (af Wählberg 1997).
Public hearings/inquiries	Interested citizens, limited in number by size of venue. True participants are experts and politicians making presentations.	May last many weeks/months, even years. Usually held during week-days/working hours.	Entails presentations by agencies regarding plans in open forum. Public may voice opinions but have no direct impact on recommendation.	Frequent mechanism in, for example, United States (Florino 1990), Australia (Davison, Barnes, and Schibeci 1997); review by Middendorf and Busch (1997).
Public opinion surveys	Large sample (e.g., 100s or 1,000s), usually representative of the population segments of interest.	Single event, usually lasting no more than several minutes.	Often enacted through written questionnaire or telephone survey. May involve variety of questions. Used for information gathering.	Radioactive sites in United States (Feldman and Hanahan 1996); genetically modified food in the United Kingdom (Vidal 1998); biotech surveys (Davison, Barnes, and Schibeci 1997).
Negotiated rule making	Small number of representatives of stakeholder groups (may include public representatives).	Uncertain: strict deadline usually set days/weeks/months.	Working committee of stakeholder representatives (and from sponsor). Consensus required on specific question (usually, a regulation).	Used by U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (Hanson 1984); method discussed by Susskind and McMahon (1985) and Florino (1990).

Consensus conference	Generally, ten to sixteen members of public (with no knowledge on topic) selected by steering committee as "representative" of the general public.	Preparatory demonstrations and lectures (etc.) to inform panelists about topic, then three-day conference.	Lay panel with independent facilitator questions expert witnesses chosen by stakeholder panel. Meetings open to wider public. Conclusions on key questions made via report or press conference.	Used in Denmark and Netherlands on topics from food irradiation to air pollution (Joss and Durant 1994; Grundahl 1995); also used in United Kingdom on plant biotechnology (Ellahi 1995).
Citizens' jury/panel	Generally, twelve to twenty members of public selected by stakeholder panel to be roughly representative of the local population.	Not precise but generally involve meetings over a few days (e.g., four to ten).	Lay panel with independent facilitator questions expert witnesses chosen by stakeholder panel. Meetings not generally open. Conclusions on key questions made via report or press conference.	Examples in Germany, United States, and United Kingdom (e.g., Crosby, Kelly, and Schaefer 1986; Coote, Kendall, and Stewart 1994; Lenaghan, New, and Mitchell 1996).
Citizen/public advisory committee	Small group selected by sponsor to represent views of various groups or communities (may not comprise members of true public).	Takes place over an extended period of time.	Group convened by sponsor to examine some significant issue. Interaction with industry representatives.	Particularly evident in United States, for example, in cleanup of waste sites (Lynn and Busenberg 1995; Perhac 1998); see Creighton (1993) for guidelines.
Focus groups	Small group of five to twelve selected to be representative of public; several groups may be used for one project (comprising members of subgroups).	Single meeting, usually up to two hours.	Free discussion on general topic with video/tape recording and little input/direction from facilitator. Used to assess opinions/attitudes.	Guidelines from Morgan (1993); U.K. example to assess food risk (Fife-Schaw and Rowe 1995).

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Appendix VIII

Observer Committee Commitment Agreement

Observer Committee Commitment Agreement December 2010

The Academic Observer will be convening an Observer Committee of up to 10 DTES volunteer representatives to ensure that the terms of reference for the study and any criteria for the engagement process are respected and incorporated. In addition, the Observer Committee will assist with the following tasks:

- Attend an Information Session and sign an agreement contract if willing to commit to be on the Observer Committee throughout the entire time schedule,
- Work with the Academic Observer to establish criteria for gauging whether the process is representative, inclusive, engaging and participatory,
- Attend and observe all community workshops and any special focus session(s) acting as a community witness/observer to the process only – not content,
- Meet as a team regularly, as outlined (tentative):
 1. Information Session (1 hour) – pre Community Workshop #1
 2. Preparation Meeting (1-2 hours) – pre Community Workshop #1
 3. Attend all Community Workshops - (3 hours each)
 4. Attend at least 1 Special Focus Session (if necessary) - (2 hours each)
 5. Attend at least 1 Post Meeting – wrap up phase (1-2 hours),
- Complete a questionnaire during each community workshop/special focus session observed and submit it to the Academic Observer for use in a final report,
- Provide evaluative feedback to the Academic Observer throughout the observation and engagement process,
- Be a low-income resident of the Downtown Eastside neighbourhood,
- Be respectful and cooperative with fellow committee members and the Academic Observer.

The Observer and the Observer Committee will not directly be participants in, produce or select the content of the SIAS. However, they are required to attend all workshops and special focus session(s) as witnesses/observers.

A \$100 honourarium may be provided upon completion of the agreement contract which includes approximately 10-15 hours of commitment: preparation, observation and reporting out services.

I agree to the above stated roles and responsibilities and commit to fully taking part in the Observer Committee, effective immediately.

Observer Committee Member

Date

Appendix IX

Observer Committee Process Criteria (January 24, 2011)

Representative:

- 100% of the low-income community is the *primary* focus
- translation is provided (Cantonese/Mandarin/Spanish)
- sign language interpretation is provided
- at least 1/3 of the participants are Aboriginal
- that the rest of the participants proportionately reflect the population demographics of the Downtown Eastside with strong emphasis on historically marginalized groups (i.e. women, Chinese, Japanese, Aboriginal, African, transgendered, disabled, single parents, elders, youth, survival sex-workers, drug-users, people with mental health concerns)
- that the homeless are represented
- that families are represented—not just singles

Engaging:

- use of a ‘representative speakers list’ (i.e. intentionally making sure that a variety and representative group of people get to speak)
- language should be easy to understand
- technical language should be explained or avoided
- seating arrangement should be create a comfortable/personable atmosphere, in a circle to reduce a sense of hierarchy
- everyone should be introduced to each other
- the location should be a familiar low-income community space like First United Church
- someone from the Carnegie Community Action Project (CCAP) (co-facilitator?) should give an introduction to the event and explain the history of how it came about through community organizing against pro-developer zoning, and what exactly is it about

Participatory:

- everyone has a chance at the microphone (i.e. microphone is passed around at the beginning of each discussion point to get the discussion going)
- all participants are actively participating within their ability
- no individual or social group of individuals is dominating
- no cross-talking

Inclusive:

- that the goal of ‘inclusivity’ of all the DTES low-income community be an umbrella over the entire process
- community ownership and investment in the process should be striven for

- process connected to long history and difficult struggle of the community in relations to the City of Vancouver (use a community member to help facilitate by helping the community realize that this is a continuation of a process to defend the interests of the low-income community's assets and tenure)

Recommendations to facilitator:

- be conscious of his power/privilege
- be respectful of participants
- take leadership from the group
- set an inviting tone
- ensure everyone is comfortable to speak
- establish meeting ground rules with the group from beginning
- mention time limits to speaking
- set parameters
- sensitive to language barriers, disabilities and other things that may make communication difficult for some
- paraphrase for the benefit of the entire group

Vision for First Meeting:

- open with the history behind this process
- include introductions of each participant (self-identifying information voluntarily i.e. gender/racial identity)
- establish clear meeting agreements
- use a second facilitator based in the community
- provide (licensed) childcare
- invite Mayor Robertson to observe what the participants say
- use some sort of participatory exercise to start. For example: a visual slideshow of places that hold strong neighbourhood association and sites that contrast 'before and after development' to illicit an emotional reaction from the participants who would then shout out how they feel when they see certain places'. This would make it engaging for people with low-literacy
- ask people a general question to start such as 'How does condo development effect you?' and then go into discussion
- create an engaging environment and have the participants actively engaged throughout the entire process
- emphasize the importance of participation
- make it open and fun (engaging)
- make sure there is good outreach prior to the first workshop
- give adequate breaks (for bathroom, smoking etc.)

Recommendations to the City of Vancouver:

- that a second 'community facilitator' be hired to assist Raymond. the Observer Committee recommends Jean Swanson because of her extensive reputation as community leader and meeting organizer
- that both a weekday (evening?) and a weekend date be chosen for the major workshops
- that a meeting be called between the City, the Observer Committee and the facilitator.
Suggested date: February 10th at 10am
- that an honorarium be offered to low-income residents who attend BOTH the major workshops (indicators and methodologies)
- be open to holding more workshops if interest is strong
- expand the focus of the SIA to the whole DTES instead of just on the 'historic area'
- make sure that the audio at First United works well in advance of the first workshop
- do not rest on a general 'call-out' to social service agencies in the neighbourhood
- that an Outreach Coordinator is hired (suggestion: Stacey Bonefant) to go around and give short presentations to resident-based groups and others to explain the City's process. She could also coordinate a thorough promotional campaign that should include leafleting, thorough postering, going door-to-door, walking up and down alleys, giving information sessions, getting info in community newsletters etc. It would be difficult to get repeat participants without a paid outreach coordinator.
- that there is specific and targeted outreach to homeless, Aboriginal, and other socially marginalized residents
- advertise at the neighbourhood's many community centres
- that the meeting location be accessible
- that the 'power/privilege' dynamic be taken into account in all components of the process
- That an evaluation of the 'iterative feedback loop' between the Observer Committee and the City, City response to these recommendations for example, be part of the Observer Committee's evaluation of the SIA process as a whole.

Other:

- who is the facilitator and what experience does he have with anti-oppression work?
- some alternative locations to First United are LifeSkills Centre, Japanese Hall, Carnegie Theatre
- if the 'historic area' is used, First United doesn't fall within its reach and neither do other important neighbourhood places such as Raycam