THE DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL PLANNING
AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
IN THE CITY OF VANCOUVER. 1968 - 1976:

A CASE STUDY OF BARRIERS AND OPPORTUNITIES
FOR ORGANIZATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS

by

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ABSTRACT

This thesis addresses the subject of organizational effectiveness in municipal governance. It specifically examines the possibility that urban planning agencies may resolve complex social problems more effectively when using a management approach characterized by "transformational leadership," teamwork, flexibility, and creativity; an approach that fosters the development of innovative planning policies, procedures and/or designs.

Successful, innovative, and creative business enterprises that endorse such a holistic management approach have been called "learning" and "well-performing" organizations. The management and transformational leadership attributes that encourage an organization to "learn" relies on a combination of techniques, including non-hierarchical communications, enhancement of job satisfaction, continuous learning, emotive and motivational psychology, and team approaches to creativity and problem solving. A popular term has been coined that captures the essence of successful implementation of these attributes in combination: Excellence.

The rationale for examining the concept of Excellence in the context of urban planning agencies' organizational effectiveness derives from assertions made in the planning and governance literature suggesting that such a business management approach may significantly improve government operations. Some writers argue that a new approach to governance is sorely needed. The concept of encouraging attributes of Excellence in local government planning practices has been extolled as a cure for economic and political inequalities, restricted avenues of communication, outmoded operating procedures, "turf" wars, and various motivational barriers to innovative practices that limit the effectiveness of governments (and urban planners). Many of the innovative

practices lauded in the business management literature as attributes of Excellence appear similar to the community development concepts of individual empowerment, citizen participation in local planning and decision making, collective effort to resolve local issues, consensus building, and visionary leadership.

This thesis studies the case of the City of Vancouver's Department of Social Planning and Community Development from 1968 to 1976. The two primary research methods used are: analysis of archival documents concerning Vancouver's social planning department; and, open ended interviews conducted with sixteen key informants familiar with the history, practices, and planning approaches used by department personnel during the study period.

The findings of this thesis are that:

1) the social planning department originally exhibited elements of innovation, flexibility, teamwork, transformational leadership, and other attributes associated with the concept of Excellence;

2) in some cases, these attributes may have temporarily overcome various barriers to effective planning and problem solving by developing innovative solutions to minor urban social problems;

3) those innovative elements were not unanimously supported nor encouraged in other municipal departments or community agencies, thus indicating that diffuse innovative practices throughout other organizations was a difficult endeavor;

4) over time, attributes of Excellence faded from the social planning department as the early excitement and energy of planners wore off and new planners were hired to replace the original social planners who had decided to move on to other projects.

The important lesson learned is that these supposedly "new" management practices, introduced into business enterprises to help overcome barriers to productivity, efficiency, or effectiveness, are themselves vulnerable to similar organizational, political, or behavioral barriers over time. Constant vigilance, monitoring and evaluation of values, goals, communications strategies and structures, and organizational results are required to sustain Excellence. Greater promotion of Excellence concepts that explain business success may legitimize the expansion of participation of individuals in goverment institutions and result in improvements to their effectiveness.

Urban planners, and social planners in particular, should therefore be interested in concepts like Excellence and Learning Organizations as heuristic usable in their search for effective planning, organizing, and management practices toward intentional interventions in social welfare. Without a systematic approach and understanding of the complex variables and dimensions involved, concepts like Excellence may be treated simply as catch-words and trendy marketing ploys. However, as the thesis will show, planners may discover that further research into the qualities and attributes of individuals working in a collective organizational environment, may yield positive strategies for furthering institutional reforms that view workers as factors of human development rather than as units of productivity and efficiency.

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1.0.0   CHAPTER ONE

Every major social task, whether economic performance or health care, education or the protection of the environment, the pursuit of new knowledge or defense, is today being entrusted to big organizations, designed for perpetuity and managed by their own managements. On the performance of these institutions, the performance of modern society - if not the survival of each individual - increasingly depends. (Peter Drucker, 1973 :3)

1.1.0   Introduction

Are business management principles and practices applicable to the administration of local government planning agencies during periods of increasing fiscal restraint? More specifically, is the conceptual framework of business Excellence (the entrepreneurial, leadership, and creative qualities and characteristics of highly successful, innovative, and 'learning' business enterprises) relevant to an understanding of how government planning agencies can operate more effectively in a politically pluralistic and fiscally competitive public arena?

In the last few years post-industrial economic restructuring and increased global competition in the market place have compelled many private firms in North America to improve their business practices in order to keep up to changes in the global economy. Growing competition has compelled firms in the private sector to reject conventional management approaches and seek innovative ways to conduct their business in order to improve their efficiency, productivity, and profitability. Recent research findings in the industrial management and transformational leadership literature have emphasized the importance of particular business management concepts responsible for organizational effectiveness, entrepreneurialism, innovation, and financial success. These concepts, labeled by some writers as "Excellence" (Peters & Waterman Jr., 1982), have been vigorously promoted by management consultants to both large and small firms in pursuit of improved operating methods and profits.

Likewise, improvements in the organization and administration of public sector agencies are also being sought by some local governments in both Canada and the United States. In recent years much public attention has been focused on the supposed inefficiency of government and its lack of effectiveness in resolving many pressing social, economic and ecological problems, especially in urban areas. Unable to operate deficit budgets, local governments must simultaneously balance their budgets and maintain voter approval. They have limited choices to accomplish both. Neither tax increases nor significant reductions to the level or quality of social programs or services is considered an acceptable alternative by most voters. This leaves open a third possibility; improve the way local governments operate. In particular, encourage better performance from government employees, especially those who plan, design, and operate services, infrastructure, and participatory consultation and decision making processes.

Emerging from the private sector research, a new-age business management paradigm may hold substantial appeal for some local government politicians and civic administrators who fear the potential public backlash associated with either tax increases and/or government service reduction. Additionally, some urban and community planners, frustrated by the perceived lack of government effectiveness in resolving intractable social problems, are turning to this business paradigm as a potential response.

1.2.0   Problem Statement

The literature concerning organizational change, taken from both American and Canadian studies of corporate and public sector management practices, includes research on the qualities and attributes of well-performing organizations (see, for example, Peters & Waterman Jr., 1982; McDavid and Marson, 1990). The influential work of Peters, the American guru of business Excellence, has been directly referred to by urban planners who believe that his findings of attributes of business success may be usable in municipal planning agencies (McClendon and Quay, 1990).

However, while recent case studies in the private sector claim that financially successful and operationally effective organizations exhibit qualities and characteristics referred to as Excellence, it is not known whether such successes (or the qualities that give rise to such success) can be learned or otherwise acquired by local government planning employees. If they can, the literature does not reveal whether such qualities can be sustained within an organizational culture over the long term. Because much of the Excellence literature focuses on private sector organizations, the potentially significant structural differences and/or barriers and opportunities for innovation, creative planning, or problem solving that may exist between the two types of organizations are not sufficiently accounted for.

Additionally, since the assertion has only recently been made that entrepreneurial and/or Excellence practices have the potential for increasing the effectiveness of local government planning functions, procedures, and outcomes (McClendon and Quay, 1990), the literature on the subject in regards to public sector studies is incomplete. And, because the 'entrepreneurialism in government' literature is mostly speculative in nature and case studies are too recent to evaluate for their continuity over long periods of time, it is unknown whether this supposedly new business management paradigm is even relevant, usable, or sustainable within local government planning agencies. This deficiency in the literature leads to the following research question:

What can we learn from examining a case study of supposedly Excellence or well-performing management and employee attributes (transformational leadership, the encouragement of innovative and flexible planning strategies, and an empowered team-work approach among employees) within a Canadian municipal planning agency?

1.3.0 Purpose

This thesis examines the concept of Excellence in the context of one local government agency, the City of Vancouver's department of Social Planning and Community Development over a period of approximately ten years. The purpose is to inform our knowledge about what happens

when Excellence attributes in management, leadership, and participation strategies exist or are introduced in public agencies, and to identify the potential for sustaining an effective, innovative, and 'learning' planning organization (in local government) over the long term.

1.4.0   Rationale

The term 'reinventing government' is a recently coined term that is loosely based on some of the principles and attributes of Excellence that is now beginning to inspire a new vision of progressive, entrepreneurial, or well-performing government organizations. The terminology has also been recently used by some urban and/or social planners and municipal administrators in the City of Vancouver as an innovative model for organizational reforms (Warren, personal communications, 1994). The City's recent attempt to re-think, reorganize, plan, design, and deliver social services within the city, with the aim of fulfilling its social planning mandate and functions, is seen by some municipal staff and managers as an innovative move, promising to induce other functional and structural changes in the way the City operates urban planning functions.

Analyzing the organizational reforms that are taking place in the City of Vancouver provides an opportunity to identify the possible barriers and opportunities for sustaining an effective, innovative, and 'learning' urban planning agency. Catalytic leadership styles, creative and inclusive planning, problem solving, and participation strategies, as well as other characteristics of Excellence and effective, well-performing organizations may presently exist in Vancouver's urban planning agencies. However, because several barriers to innovation, creativity, and alternative management practices routinely exist in local government operations, the potential for backsliding into more conventional and inflexible organizational modes of behaviour and practice is a constant danger to organizational reform, and a possibility requiring further investigation.

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Analysis of the cyclical nature of organizational and operational changes taking place over a number of years may reveal interesting and useful lessons to those seeking to understand the conditions, qualities, and characteristics that sustain or inhibit effective urban planning operations. Therefore, the sustainability of qualities of organizational Excellence in public sector agencies need to be systematically examined over a period of time.

The lessons learned from such analysis may allow generalizations to be made concerning the relevance and utility of the concept of Excellence within municipal planning agencies. Analysis of the Excellence concept may also reveal the structures and procedures that are unique to local government planning agencies that act as either opportunities or barriers to foster or inhibit the conditions and characteristics of Excellence over time.

1.5.0   Research Methods

This section describes the research methods used in collecting data and other evidence to address the central concerns of this thesis. The primary research method used is the case study. Historical research on the City of Vancouver's department of Social Planning and Community Development (hereafter abbreviated the SP/CD), between 1968 and 1976, forms the basis of this case study. 1968 is the year the department was officially inaugurated. 1976 was selected somewhat more arbitrarily, limiting the temporal scope of the research to an eight year period. However, many of the significant events and transformations relevant to the central concerns of this thesis had already taken place by 1976. A brief addendum regarding the department's more recent history is also included for comparison purposes. The history of Vancouver's social planning department is a case of:

- opportunities being provided for introducing innovative management and leadership styles and,

- organizational barriers being confronted to reforming urban planning approaches and practices through a flexible, integrated team-work method.

The study of the SP/CD also allows analysis of the characteristics of Excellence that existed in the department over the eight year period and the structural and operating barriers and opportunities to promoting these characteristics.

Two principle sources of information were used to generate data in regard to the case study; interviews with key informants and archival documents.

1.5.1` Interviews With Key Informants

Lengthy interviews were conducted during the summer of 1994 with a total of sixteen individuals. Of these, eight individuals worked as social planners in the SP/CD during the eight year study period (1966-1978) and one person worked in the City Planning department. One of these earlier social planners was later elected as a City Alderman. Three other interviewees were elected City Aldermen during the study period.

Two individuals are currently (1996) employed as either urban or social planners by the City and have provided a more recent perspective on social planning. Another City of Vancouver employee interviewed for this thesis was, until 1995, the third Director of the SP/CD. She currently is employed by the British Columbia provincial government.

The other two other interviews were conducted with individuals not directly employed by the City but who worked closely with the City Administrators or the SP/CD during its early years. One person was involved in the preliminary discussions that took place between City administrators and a private service agency concerning the SP/CD's original mandate and terms of reference. The other worked as a community worker alongside City social planners in one the department's earliest neighbourhood initiatives.

The four aldermen interviewed belonged to two of the three civic political parties that made up the majority of seats on city council during the late 1960s and early 1970s. Their responses

provided insights into the relationship between the department and their political superiors, and as well, corroborated other evidence.

The first interview conducted was with the SP/CD's first Director, Maurice Egan. This interview, the first of two lengthy conversations, was loosely structured around the subject of the department's origins, roles and planning functions. At this early stage in the thesis' development, no formal problem statement existed and the direction of the research was yet to be determined. My intent was to stimulate a free flowing discussion to suggest possible avenues for more focused research to follow. The second interview with Egan had somewhat more structure and focused more particularly on specific issues regarding existing problems in fulfilling the department's mandate, functions, roles, and the accomplishments of social planning staff. The second interview included the following six open ended questions:

- "What objectives was the social planning department trying to achieve",
- "What did it actually achieve",
- "What was the department's contribution to local government planning approaches?"
- "What barriers obstructed the department's capacity to implement its role?"
- "What strengths or opportunities facilitated the department's role?"
- "What changes took place in the planning approach used by the department?"

The extensive interview with the original director of the SP/CD, Maurice Egan, provided several important insights. These insights assisted in large part to the development of a historical description of the department and the way it functioned. Its mandate, roles, the working style of its staff, issues of leadership, and of community relations were also discussed during these interviews. Personal impressions were also formed of Egan during these interviews, both as the Director of the social planning department as well as a leader, innovator, and committed agent of social change. He provided interesting information regarding the department's struggles to introduce creative mechanisms for addressing complex social problems. Egan also touched on some of the larger political and social attitudes that characterized the historical period of the mid 1960s.

Equally useful were the responses of two of the original three social planners (1968-1974). The last director of the SP/CD (Joyce Preston 1989-1995) also kindly agreed to answer questions concerning present conditions in the department for comparison purposes. Interviews with all the other informants were loosely structured. Some of the above questions were asked of some of the informants. The responses were not recorded in any statistical or systematic way. The purpose behind these interviews was not to collect data for any statistical analysis but to suggest possible topics and issues for further examination. Many issues were raised during these conversations. However, only after I had later examined the literature concerning the attributes of 'learning organizations' did I realize the information freely volunteered by some of the informants appeared to describe a picture of the SP/CD and its operations as such an organization, an agency capable of influencing changes within the large municipal governance institution. I returned to the materials gathered from the interviews and began to assemble a picture of the SP/CD, and in particular of its leadership, as organizationally effective and capable on introducing innovation into an urban planning department known for its conventional physical planning approach.

Table 1. List of Interviews Conducted

Maurice Egan (first SP/CD Director)	Joyce Preston (third SP/CD Director)
Jocelyn Kobylka (social planner)	Ray Young (social planner)
Jonathan Baker (social planner/Alderman)	Adam Stuart (city planner)
Ernie Fladell (social planner)	Doug Purdy (social planner)
Chris Warren (curent social planner)	Walter Hardwick (Alderman)
Libby Davis (Alderman)	Michael Clague (community worker)
Harry Rankin (Alderman)	John Jessup (social planner)
Michael Gordon (current city planner)	Basil Robinson (Community Chest & Council)

1.5.4 Deficiency of the Interview Method

The information collected through interviews is subject to some constraints, namely the subjective and selective nature of informants' recollection of activities and events, many of which

took place almost thirty years ago. Some events were vaguely remembered, if at all, by some informants. The chronological sequence of events was sometimes obscured. Conversations, reports, memos, etc., were likewise not always clearly or consistently recollected. Another factor affected by time was the informants' interpretations of past events after several decades of reflection. There may have been a tendency to generalize about the past, to place events, people, projects, and ideas, into a more "optimistic" light, and to reflect more on successes, on the positive features of relationships, and to selectively "forget" about failures.

While these constraints on the reliability of informant's evidence are noteworthy, they are not absolutely significant, nor do they discredit the insights gathered. Much documentary evidence exists to corroborate the sequence of events and other "hard" facts. The utility of this anecdotal information was in pointing toward salient features of institutional change.

1.5.5 Documentary Research

As the 'new kids on the block', the SP/CD's novel urban social planning approach earned them much favourable publicity and fanfare. A vast amount of historical materials relating to the SP/CD, consisting of reports, memos, correspondences, etc., are located in the City of Vancouver Archives.* This material shed much light on the SP/CD's mandate, functions, policies, structures, and the planning approaches used within the department. In the correspondence between social planners and their director, between the social planning director and other department heads, the City Manager, or councilors, or between the director and others in private agencies, etc., was found abundant evidence concerning the motivations, values, attitudes, and approaches to work, of the SP/CD planners.

Many of the programs and projects that social planners had described with pride as innovative in their interviews were documented in these reports, confirming in general the perception that the SP/CD was a 'special' department, at least during the particular period under study. At the same time, suggestions of political, behavioural, and institutional barriers to organizational

effectiveness were found such as indications of conflicts between the SP/CD and other civic departments whose operating styles, communications, and accountability structures were different from those of the SP/CD. Evidence of differences in organizational and planning approaches, as well as personal and professional conflicts between the SP/CD and the city planning department and the city manager were also uncovered.

1.5.6 Developing A Problem Statement

The qualities and attributes of transformational leadership, creative and empowered team-work, innovative working styles, etc., (which make up the concept of Excellence) was not the original focus of this thesis at the time that interviews were conducted and documents examined. Initially a broad description of the SP/CD was developed, a description that included the department's mandate, functions, structure, and planning approach, as well as numerous examples of programs and projects developed or administered by the agency. Consideration of issues concerning social planning successes and failures informed the author's original thinking regarding the case study and its implications for urban planning practice.

However, the limitations of researching and writing a graduate thesis required me to simplify and focus my analysis to more general and realistic issues and concepts. Over twelve months passed between the assembling of case study materials and the selection of an appropriate problem statement. The discovery of literature regarding Excellence and well performing organizations suggested a usable problem statement.

Some of the case study findings that were spontaneously offered as recollections of SP/CD history by key informants during the interviews (not as a direct response to questions) eventually pointed to the SP/CD as a 'learning organization', one capable of demonstrating attributes associated with the concepts of Excellence and of well performing organizations in an urban planning context. Other findings regarding changes over time to the planning approach used by

the SP/CD's Director and planners, suggested that there may have existed identifiable barriers and opportunities to sustaining an effective, innovative, and 'learning' urban planning agency.

1.6.0   Outline of Thesis Chapters

Chapter two addresses the conceptual issues and concerns raised in the problem statement. It examines the various arguments made in both the public planning and organizational change literature regarding the qualities that create effective organizations and effective planning practices. The requirement for empirical research on organizations such as the SP/CD is identified.

Chapter three examines the origins and conceptual roots of municipal social planning in general, and introduces the case study concerning Vancouver's social planning agency. The chapter is divided into several sections. The first section (3.1) explores the historical context behind the emergence of social planning as a municipal urban planning function. While general definitions of social planning are provided in chapter two, section 3.2.1 examines the conceptual roots of social planning and explores how these functions were conceived in conventional (physical) city planning and put to use by the City of Vancouver. The remaining sections of chapter three examine some of the specific events and issues in Vancouver that led to the creation of municipal social planning functions and guided the direction in which these functions would be administered.

Chapter four presents the principal research findings of this thesis, which are based on the interviews and archival documents concerning the early history of the SP/CD. This chapter documents the department's mandate, functions, structure, and planning approach. Examples of community social planning structures and civic-public partnerships are provided, as are examples of various social planning programs and projects. Of particular interest is the Local Area Plan (LAP) and its influence on social and institutional changes in the city. Events leading up to the development of the Britannia Community Centre are also described as an example of the Local

Area Planning function. Chapter four concludes with some of the recurrent themes in Local Area Planning and explains the gradual shift toward a more city-wide planning approach.

Chapter five summarizes the lessons learned from analysis of the case study in light of the literature regarding models and theories of effective planning practice. Generalizations are made about sustaining qualities of Excellence in public planning organizations given the complex, political environment they must operate in.

2.0.0   CHAPTER TWO

> While management is a discipline - that is, an organized body of knowledge and as such applicable everywhere - it is also 'culture'. It is not value-free science. Management is a social function and embedded in a culture -a society- a tradition of values, customs, and beliefs, and in governmental and political systems. Management is -and should be- culture conditioned; but, in turn, management and managers shape culture and society. (Peter Drucker, 1973 :xii)

2.0.1   Making a Case for Excellence

This thesis examines the question, "what can we learn from examining a case study of supposedly Excellence or well-performing management and employee attributes (transformational leadership, the encouragement of innovative and flexible planning strategies, and an empowered team-work approach among employees) within a Canadian municipal planning agency?"

In so doing, this chapter explores a supposedly new paradigm in business management, a paradigm embodied in the entrepreneurial concept of Excellence. The contribution of this concept and its applicability to urban planning practices in the public sector is likewise examined. The chapter also establishes a theoretical context for addressing the possibility that a local government planning agency, one presumably exhibiting some of the attributes of Excellence and well-performing organizations, can sustain these effective organizational and management practices in the long term in the face of persistent barriers and resistance to institutional changes.

It has been argued by Osborne & Gaebler (1993) that governments today (including local governments) are ineffective in fulfilling their mandates. For a variety of reasons, they say, administrators, urban or social planners, policy analysts, project managers and program coordinators in public bureaucracies are faced with multiple barriers to achieving their objectives. Relying on outdated and ineffective management techniques, they lack creative or

effective planning approaches. In an effort to model fresh solutions to familiar yet intractable public planning conundrums, some planners have turned to the private sector business management literature in the hopes that government institutions may learn something useful to apply to the way they function.

Osborne and Gaebler further argue that government structures, functions, and operations can be 'reinvented' along the lines of private sector organizations by encompassing the entrepreneurial and innovative characteristics developed from the business management paradigm referred to as Excellence. The expectation is that government operations will be transformed by learning, developing, or otherwise acquiring the special characteristics embodied in this paradigm.

By examining this genre of literature as it relates to planning organizations and practices, as well as the literature on industrial management and organizational change (where the Excellence paradigm originated), chapter two provides the conceptual context regarding the conditions, barriers, and opportunities for 'reinventing' local government.

2.1.0   Introduction to the Planning Problem

In constantly changing urban-industrial societies where new and complex social problems regularly arise, systematic efforts by planners to resolve difficult issues are constantly frustrated (Forester, 1987; McClendon and Quay, 1990). Barriers to effective management, planning, and problem solving exist in many dimensions (Ammons in Holzer (ed.) 1992; Zussman, in McDavid, J. C. and D. B. Marson (eds.) 1990). Rationality, a key planning resource, is bounded by many variables. Inadequate assets as time, money, education, or information, interfere with planners' attempts to effectively and efficiently make fair, informed decisions concerning the public good. Democratic principles of participation and equality are vulnerable to uneven power distributions resulting in domination, resistance, and illegitimate authority (Friedmann, 1988, Forester, 1987). Political conflicts among various interests spill over into the organizational domain of problem solving (Forester, 1987).

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Forester (1987) argues that within organizations, "formal mandates, informal routines, and various precedents frame participants' attention in complex ways" and "structure and change the beliefs of their members" (:159). SPARC (1993) argues that government, and in particular, their planning and policy making branches, are in need of transformation to make them more democratic, that is, open to broader participation by different public interests. They need to be responsive to more than a few narrow socio-economic interests, as well as responding to changing social, economic, and ecological circumstances that threaten human survival.

Because citizens at the local level possess relatively direct access to municipal planners and decision makers, and because these institutions are often considered ineffective, unresponsive, or unaccountable in the way they function, allocate resources, and resolve difficult social problems, the search for innovative conditions and practices in local government organizations seems a logical place to start examining the applicability of the concept of Excellence to government.

2.2.0   Urban Planning Theory and the Need for Institutional Reform

Much planning literature today, according to McLendon & Quay (1988) "tends to be utopian, radical, theoretical, or dogmatic" (:xv) and not too applicable, it seems, to the modern complexities of public planning.

Forester's (1987) conviction that a fresh approach to planning theory and practice is required is shared by other writers, both in and outside of the planning profession. He calls for harmonizing key features of various social science perspectives into a critical theory of rational planning and organization. The aim of this harmony is to encourage new thinking that will improve planning practice and problem solving capabilities. Further refinements are needed to the concepts, tools, and strategies of planning practice, as well as to the organizational structures and functions of planning institutions. Such refinements are sought from various sources of inspiration.

One fresh source of thinking in particular is concerned with the designing and managing of institutions, organizations, and decision making processes in non-conventional ways. This

perspective comes from the theories and practices found in the industrial management, transformational leadership, and organizational change paradigm of Excellence, as outlined in the private sector literature. Some of this material is reviewed in the next section.

2.4.0 The Need for Excellence In Government

Since the early 1980s a new rationale has emerged (at least in the United States) that attempts to account for the circumstances responsible for business firms' survival, growth, and success in the rapidly changing global economy. The emergence of new-age management consultants, busily promoting various 'cures' for poor business performance, have followed on the heels of various post-industrial economic re-structuring phenomena in North America.

De-industrialization, capital flight, jobless growth, growing foreign competition combined with allegedly obsolete and ineffective domestic business practices, the maturation of consumer preferences and demands; these and other events have stimulated the quest for innovative new business practices. However, the quest for organizational innovation in management and other business practices is not a new phenomenon. Mass production, division of labour, 'scientific management', and bureaucracy, are examples of practices and theories that have been with us for several decades. Some researchers and academics have simply studied the practices of numerous business firms and have 'discovered' some of the successful practices and attributes that have always existed!

The search for characteristics of Excellence (a term coined by Peters and Waterman Jr., 1982) in business practices is one analysis of long-existent effective business management practices. Peters and Waterman Jr. use case studies, surveys, and research on existing private-sector management and leadership practices to focus their attention on the best practices of already well-performing organizations. The importance of this type of literature lies in its acknowledgment of the need for integrating the best experiences, practices, and strategies of effective managers and leaders in the political, social, and technical dimensions of organizations.

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Drucker (1985), for example, claims that "management is the new technology" and that there is perhaps greater scope for "social innovation in education, health care, government, and politics than there is in business and the economy" (:17). McClendon and Quay (1988), both city planners, further argue that changes to planning processes, techniques, organization, and management are required if planning is to work better (:xv). They turn to the concepts of Excellence in planning as one means to 'reinvent government' and generate more effective results in planning and problem-solving organizations.

The following section will trace some of the salient features of the new paradigm of Excellence in business management before the thesis returns to discuss its relevance to planning theory and practice.

2.3.1 The Reality of Social Change

An important part of the search for Excellence in planning organizations and practices involves understanding the nature and complexities of social change and finding appropriate means for responding to it. Steiner (cited in McClendon & Quay, 1988) acknowledges the planner's need for flexibility in a turbulent world:

> ...because of a turbulent and rapidly changing environment, the ability of an organization to adapt properly to environment, internal and external, is becoming critical for survival. (:2)

Planners must be involved in formulating and exploiting new technologies, as well as adapting old approaches and techniques to new problems if they are to adjust effectively to changing social, economic, and political conditions. The above authors go further, however, and call for planners to become more proactive as managers of change "anticipating the need for productive change in local government" (:xxi).

Osborne and Gaebler, in <u>Reinventing Government</u> (1992), claim that the old ways of conducting government are no longer useful. They argue that agents of transformation should seek new opportunities to improve performance and not stick to old programs and approaches in this new environment (xix). This is a similar argument used by other proponents of the 'new-age' business paradigm (see, for example, Hammer and Champy, 1993; Drucker, 1973, 1985; Ray and Zinzler, 1993, Peters and Waterman Jr. 1982). Drucker (1973) believes that a manager, whether of business organizations or public institutions, needs to be "responsible for one's impacts, whether they are intended or not" (:327).

As modern society becomes increasingly governed by large organizations, managers assume a large degree of power and influence and, therefore, of social responsibility

> for their by-products, that is, the impacts of their legitimate activities on people and on the physical and social environment. They are increasingly expected to anticipate and resolve social problems. They need to think through and develop new policies for the relationship of business and government, which is rapidly outgrowing traditional theories and habits (:312).

The following section touches briefly on the characteristics some writers claim are usable in public sector organizations. These characteristics involve reforming organizational structures and processes and encouraging responsible leadership qualities and management strategies.

2.3.2 Attributes of Excellence in Responsible Organizations

The concept of Excellence is not based on new ideas or practices but is simply a recognition of the long-standing qualities and characteristics of responsible individuals and the responsible policies of those organizations within which they work. Policies and practices that have come to be labeled "Excellence" are simply those organizational and behavioural characteristics that have always worked (Peters & Waterman Jr., 1982 :XX).

Peters & Waterman Jr.'s principles of Excellence organizations, characteristically describe the many features of a corporate culture that breeds success. The basic framework includes a "remarkably tight - culturally driven/controlled set of properties" and "rigidly shared values" in a culture that exhibits both a "clubby, campus-like environment, flexible organizational structures, volunteers, zealous champions, maximized autonomy for individuals, teams and divisions, regular and extensive experimentation, feedback emphasizing the positive, and strong social networks." (:320). Excellence organizations also have an ability to manage ambiguity and paradox. Excellence practices have a tendency to promote both a sense of belonging to an group as well as that individual's sense of uniqueness (xxii).

The authors provide eight 'basic principles' or characteristics of innovative organizations. These are:

- a bias to action (a preference for doing something)
- a proximity to the client (learning their preferences)
- autonomy and entrepreneurship (encourage independent thinking)
- productivity through people (development of skills, belonging, and involvement)
- hands-on management (top stays in touch with essential company business)
- concentrate on strengths (do what you know best)
- simple structures (avoid rigid hierarchies, reduce administrative layers)
- centralization of core issues and decentralization of actions/implementation of day to day control (dedication to company's central values)

In laying out the foundation for their theory of Excellence, Peters and Waterman Jr. (1982) argue that effective companies have tapped into the deepest needs of their employees. They call this subsequent loyalty to a firm, "productivity through people", a quality which demonstrates an "unusual effort on the part of apparently ordinary employees" (xiii). Such ordinary people have internalized the values called Excellence. Well managed corporations, not unlike holistically operating communities, are able to encourage loyalty, commitment, and foster sense of belonging. Corporate cultures, like such communities, can provide a raison d'être, along with a sense of belonging and participation, and with this, a sense of personal control.

2.3.3 Leadership

An underlying principle within the paradigm of Excellence is the importance of catalytic leadership, one capable of unifying and motivating the impetus for innovation, creativity, or reform. Leadership qualities accounts for an important dimension in the creation of effective organizational structures and operational processes which encourage responsibility, creativity, employee involvement in innovative problem solving and other circumstances affecting working conditions. As a result of the need to study this important dimension an extensive literature has been developed around concepts of effective leadership, a literature rich in description of the dimensions of competence needed by effective managers (see for example, Bass and Avolio, 1994; Carnall, 1990; Ray and Rinzler, 1993).

Bass and Avolio (1994) note the recent changes taking place in leadership philosophy and orientation. They call some of the growing integrative practices of effective managers 'transformational leadership', arguing that such managers use particular techniques to generate optimum performance from individuals within their respective organizations. Transformational leadership occurs when leaders inspire their followers to work in flexible and creative ways by acting as role models, being intellectually stimulating, and assisting individuals to actualize their own needs and goals. Wisdom, maturity, and the acknowledgment of values, standards and the long term goals, both of the organization and of followers, assure that such followers develop some autonomy and individuality. Additionally, individual and group needs for development are established through the leader's effective delegation of tasks and responsibilities. Appreciating others' needs facilitates the team-building process (:204).

Bass and Avolio further argue that what a transformational leader does and when he/she does it, "depends on the context and contingencies being confronted by the organization" (:202), whether the priority is innovation, problem solving, cost-cutting, or otherwise. Continual communication of the organization's priorities ensures that mechanisms to promote them are continually reproduced and reinforced. Carnall (1990) explain the concept more simply: In the words of this

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writer, "effectiveness includes the ability to identify the right things to do" (:2) Effective leaders know which technologies, people, procedures, structures, etc., to use.

Bennis' study (1984, cited in Carnall, 1990) of ninety outstanding leaders recognized the importance of the leadership dimension to the overall effectiveness of organizational practices. Bennis argues that effective leaders are skilled at empowering their followers within an organization, making them feel significant, encouraging learning, and promoting cooperation and team building "where quality and excellence matter and are something to strive for" (:171). The four areas of competence identified by Bennis include:

- management of attention (ability to clearly communicate objectives/direction)
- management of meaning (achieving understanding/awareness)
- management of trust (consistency and dependability)
- management of self (knowing oneself, working with own strengths and weaknesses)

Transformational leadership is also an important quality within multi-functional teams. Such leaders have an effect on the organizational culture at multiple levels within the group (:206). They are keepers of the organization's vision, constantly communicating that vision across several structural channels, preventing distortions (:206), and having an indirect influence on non-followers (e.g., fellow workers in other departments, clients, etc.). Influence, according to Bennis "can be top-down, lateral, or bottom-up" (:207). Organizational design and structure are also important considerations as non-hierarchical, flatter structures may be more flexible and responsive to changes in the environment, providing more open channels of communication than rigid, hierarchical forms (:210).

Carnall (1990) citing the influential work of Peters, identifies characteristics of personal effectiveness that encourage Excellence in organizational cultures (:32-33). These include:

- accountability (of managers for individual and team performance)
- synergy (capacity to obtain co-operation and inter-disciplinary collaboration)
- cross-cultural skills (working with diverse backgrounds)

- managing interfaces (coordinating people, information, resources, technology; to carry out tasks)
- financial realism (taking financial issues into account when making decisions)

While a significant body of literature has developed around the issues of leadership and new-age management practices, Bass and Avolio are conditional in their claims regarding the consequences of transformational leadership. They caution that changes in management styles will require further study and a few more years of trials before a strong case can be made for transformational leadership's impact on reforming or improving performance in an organizational culture.

2.3.4   Social Responsibility

In Mastering Change: Winning Strategies for Effective City Planning, McLendon & Quay (1988) agree with Lindblom's thesis that "muddling through" is currently the most realistic description of the way urban planning practice takes place; incrementally and without a purposeful, long term vision. Planners, according to these authors, cannot re-construct society as some 'utopian' writers would have it. However, they don't claim that planners should drop traditional professional values like civil rights, health, conservation of resources, etc., but argue that to be accomplished problem solvers, planners must effectively represent such values within public organizations to ensure their visions become policy, and not remain mere dreams (:xix). Their argument is; to be effective, planners have to learn to develop *excellence* in practice, upholding their commitment to the high standards of the planning profession.

This position mirrors Drucker's (1973) conviction that the "modern organization exists to provide a specific service to society. It therefore has to be in society. It has to be in a community, has to be a neighbor, has to do its work in a social setting" (:326). Dealing with its own social impacts is one area where a responsible organization can begin to transform the way it operates. An urban planning agency, for example, can identify or anticipate the 'negative' impacts of municipal policies and practices, from housing and transportation, to re-zoning and sub-division development, to delivery of social services and the creation of green spaces. Resolving some of

the problems created by these impacts requires, according to Drucker, an innovative attitude that perceives such challenges as opportunities for social development (:338).

However, Drucker cautions that an organization's social responsibility is limited by its ability to accomplish its primary task. "Performance of its function is the institution's first social responsibility." (:343). This caution introduces the necessity for making a social trade-off between 'resolving' a problem at any cost and maintaining the long term effectiveness of the organization. Drucker asks: "at what point does one risk losing social performance -and thereby creating new and bigger problems- by overloading the existing institutions?" (:344). Responsibility needs to be tempered with realistic expectations for success.

2.3.5   The Attributes of Excellence

Osborne and Gaebler (1993) argue the case for improving the performance of government administration. Some improvements can be brought about in public sector organizations, they argue, by developing qualities associated with the characteristics of Excellence. They argue against the typically bureaucratic operations of conventional government agencies where political, behavioural, and organizational barriers to flexibility, creativity, and innovation in problem solving are too numerous to list. The authors indicate several key areas that require transformation regarding the role of government and the organizational practices applied to implement that role.

A reinvented government, they claim, exhibits entrepreneurial qualities that reward smallness, organizational flexibility and innovation. It relies less on rules and standard operating procedures, than on pursuing an overall 'vision' and multiple objectives in diverse ways. A "catalytic government" (Osborne and Gaebler, 1993 :25) empowers employees, allowing them to develop a team-work approach to accomplishing their principal assignments, and adopting a proactive, results-oriented focus, especially toward problem solving and ensuring the client, or citizen, receives quality services with minimal negative impacts. The authors also recognize the

essential role of leadership in obtaining the crucial buy-in from their administrative superiors and other community leaders. They note the importance of articulating a collective vision (goals, values, trust, and commitment) within governing institutions, those "healthy civic infrastructures" in which "citizens, community organizations, businesses and media outlets are committed to the public welfare" (:326).

Finally, an important factor supportive of fundamental change in government is the need for resources, some "outside help - from foundations, consultants, civic organizations, even other governments" (:327). These resources can help bring about change "whether through their expertise, their financial resources, or their political activism" (:327).

McLendon and Quay (1988) based their work on the general argument that the eight basic principles of Excellence form a usable model for performance improvements in urban planning agencies. They claim that various local governments in the U.S.A. have already embraced the doctrine of entrepreneurial government. Successful planning departments, according to the authors, are those that review their mission and mandate, develop new entrepreneurial skills and practices in response to changes around them and the evolving needs of their customers, subsequently abandoning obsolete programs, products or services. (:3). According to these planners, the important qualities of Excellence, relevant to the needs of urban planning agencies, are:

- Team building (empowering individuals through mutual trust, lateral communications, and shared responsibility in managing the organization)
- Strategic planning
- Political risk taking (selling results to elected officials)
- Community Development (listening, communicating, involving customers in planning, co-production)
- Encouraging champions (autonomous individuals overcoming bureaucracy)
- Effective leadership styles (vision, values, communication, group development)
- Decentralization (small is beautiful, close to the customer)

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In similar research conducted in Canada, published in a series of monographs for the Institute of Public Administration of Canada, the barriers and opportunities for improving public sector organizations are examined. These monographs include case studies of eight federal government agencies (Brodtrick, cited in McDavid and Marson, 1990). These agencies (Crown Corporations, Commissions, etc.) were considered by the authors to be 'well-performing'; that is, in the opinion of informed senior government officials (among others) these organizations were thought to be conducting their business in an effective way. Although highly subjective, peer consensus emerged regarding these eight agencies. The research attempted to discover what made these organizations 'well-performing'. According to Brodtrick's survey, 'well-performing' organizations exhibited five major attributes. These are:

- Mindset
- Participative Leadership
- Emphasis on People
- Innovative Work Styles
- Strong Client Orientation (:16)

Similarities between the Canadian and American literature are apparent in this brief synopsis. Workers in organizations possessing the above attributes assume firm beliefs and values (mindset) concerning the organization's mission. They also recognize the need to adjust operating procedures and methods to adapt to changing circumstances rather than compromising the values they hold.

Participative leadership includes such characteristics as a non-authoritarian or non-coercive style, and a collegial, participatory approach to planning, decision making, and problem solving. An 'easy' communications style is another characteristic of this attribute. Collaboration between groups is facilitated and staff feel at ease consulting with each other or with superiors, utilizing both formal and informal lines of communication. This attribute may significantly alter the organizational structure, making it 'flatter' and less hierarchical. Finally, creative leadership may

instill the vision of the 'ideal' organization, and foster a high degree of commitment to achieve the organization's goals.

Emphasis on people means more consideration for an organization's staff (and clients) than for the rules, regulations, and operating procedures. This includes the notion of empowerment, where "people are challenged, encouraged, and developed. They are given power to, act and to use their judgment" (:18). This attribute circumvents some behavioural barriers to quality performance (such as a preoccupation with failure), and allows employees and managers to take risks, try new approaches to problem solving, and to sometime override the rules when circumstances warrant it.

Learning from past experiences (successes *and* failures) is an important characteristic of 'well-performing' organizations. Staff are self-evaluating and are reflective of their performance, the external environment in which they operate, and the opportunities and constraints around them. This characteristic allows for the development and nurturing of innovative work styles through clear communications and "internal monitoring, feedback and control systems" (:19). This means that self evaluation, in relation to some ideal organizational goal, results in internal control by employees over their own performance rather than through the external control of authority, close supervision, and a strict adherence to rules, regulations, and standard operating procedures.

Providing quality customer service versus meeting procedural criteria has long been considered an indication of job satisfaction for employees imbued with the values of cooperation, helpfulness, and individual responsibility for the organization's success. Creating satisfied customers is, in itself, a personal objective of achievement of both staff and management in well-performing organizations and as such can act as motivation for higher performance. Another factor is the "alignment of values and purpose between well-performing organizations and their political and central agency masters, with a view to strong performance and achievement" (:19).

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2.4.0   Urban Planning and Excellence

It seems apparent, at least on the surface, that many of the attributes listed above, derived from both the public and private sector literature are relevant to urban planning practices in a local government context. The Excellence business management and transformative leadership strategies in private organizations, and the well-performing attributes of public agencies, have parallels to what Forester (1987) labeled interactive, communicative and socially constructive planning practices (:152). Much of what Forester claims are the planner's practical functions in a politically charged climate bears strong resemblance to the leadership attributes found in Bennis' study (in Carnall, 1990) of effective management practices (management of attention, meaning, trust, and self). Some of the concepts proposed by Forester involve working in integrative environments, coalition and team building, and forming ideas into visions that move beyond established practice and reconstruct reality on the basis of accumulated innovations. "Critical planning practice, technically skilled and politically sensitive, is simultaneously an organizing and a democratizing practice" (1987 :162).

Being practical, according to Forester, means behaving rationally and that means thinking and acting politically, understanding conflicting interests, anticipating relations of power and powerlessness, and assessing shifting political-economic structures with different constraints under different conditions. Preparing for these contingencies, or "planning differently under different conditions" is how planners are able to respond to real problems and needs in a sensible way (:7). His formula acknowledges the important role of "designing a deeply social, communicative process" (:9), one that includes critical listening and interpretation, relationship building and making sense together which:

> lies at the core of the social process of designing: giving meaningful form to a building, a park, a project, a program that is recognizable, coherent, significant, and realizable by a variety of interested parties (:9).

2.5.0 Conclusion

Drucker (at one time an economist and journalist, as well as a professor of politics, philosophy, management, and more commonly known as the author of several seminal books on economics, the nature of work, technology, and politics) argues that twentieth century society has been marked by the development of organizations and institutions of many kinds, performing "every major social task" and employing a "great majority of people in developed countries" (1973, :807). At the same time, modern society during this century has become a "knowledge society" with "people making their living putting knowledge to work" (:807). "Management", maintains Drucker, is "knowledge" (:807).

He means that this generation of managers are tasked with developing institutions and organizations that will "perform for society and economy; for the community and for the individual alike." (:807). The future development of society and the resolution of its problems depends on responsible managers moving beyond the "limits of Technocracy" to "making the work productive and the worker more achieving, and of providing for the quality of life" (:808) in the social, as well as economic dimension.

Given the claims that conventional (or technocratic) planning theories and approaches are unable to adequately address or resolve issues of bounded rationality, distorted or uneven power distribution, or conflict among plural public demands, the quest for a renewed inspiration for urban planning practice appears legitimate. As more is learned about motivating workers in a non-hierarchical environment, the leadership and management paradigm of Excellence is perhaps becoming more attractive to urban planners seeking to enhance their practice.

The new-age management paradigm seems also to suggest alternatives to 'muddling-through', or mere technocratic management of public institutions. Because core values and beliefs play a necessary role in many planner's activities and are central to effective performance, the

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fundamental principles of Excellence may provide the sought-after modus operandi of personal and organizational responsibility for delivering positive social results.

Furthermore, one can see in this paradigm similarities to community development principles and values. According to writers in the adult education literature, community development has since the turn of the century been used to mean "adult learning and social action aiming to educate citizens for collective cooperative enterprises in local control of local affairs" (Pyrch, 1982 :2). Pyrch's historical research findings contains several key community development concepts and attributes previously discussed in the Excellence and 'well-performing' literature. Some of these key concepts include:

- a process of participatory democracy
- local decision making
- decentralized control over organizations, facilities, processes, etc.
- education
- organization, and
- social action

Community oriented planners have long recognized strategic planning considerations such as setting clear goals and seeking appropriate strategies. While organizational barriers to getting the job done (without simultaneously creating unwanted side-effects) are not new, managers, administrators, and planners have long sought ways to structure organizational processes to overcome them. Occasionally, experienced and politically savvy planners have accomplished this by encouraging and being involved in organizational learning cycles that introduce fresh analyses of persistent problems; encouraging initiative, innovation, and risk; fashioning and using new, simple organizational and communicative structures, systems, and approaches; encouraging collaboration, coordination, and integration of various departmental functions; developing mechanisms and strategies for utilizing information; overcoming resistance; utilizing feedback mechanisms; and, monitoring performance.

Indeed, it might prove useful to examine how innovative community development and social planning practices are conceptually linked to business management practices. Since some community development needs must surely have their corollary within profit seeking business firms, it should not come as any surprise to see the emergence of management theories acknowledging this reality. If the adage "people are our greatest asset" (Peters & Waterman Jr., 1982 :xx) is more than a overused cliché, then it might be realistic to suggest that community development concepts are relevant and reproducible (consciously or unconsciously) by managers and administrators in the private sector.

Faced with the need to find integrative solutions to problems of production, and faced with the need to motivate or empower employees to be flexible and creative (thus ensuring that their social, emotional, psychological, and physical needs are met), a management approach that embodies community development or social ecology principles may be able overcome more obstacles than the technocratic or scientific management approaches that have been used in the past. Drucker (1973) articulates this possibility in a simple way. He claims it is the

> purpose of organization and, therefore, the grounds of management authority: *to make human strength productive.* Organization is the means through which man, as an individual and as a member of the community, finds both contribution and achievement. (:810).

However, while certain findings of Excellence in the private sector may depict successful resolutions of production, distribution, servicing, or marketing problems, the actual usefulness of such concepts and attributes to urban planning practice is nevertheless debatable. As Forester (1988) says in <u>Planning in the Face of Power</u> "compared to the job that public-sector planners have, the planner with private-sector clients has it easy" (:4).

3.0.0 CHAPTER THREE

3.1.0 The Origin of Municipal Social Planning in Vancouver

Social planning became an official municipal government function in the City of Vancouver in January, 1968 when the Department of Social Planning and Community Development (SP\CD) was inaugurated.* Until that time, municipal responsibility for dealing with urban social issues was primarily remedial in nature and rested with a variety of public and private departments and agencies. Responding to several pressing concerns at the time, Vancouver City Council acknowledged a growing "consensus to direct more public resources and energy to social problems" (CVA, 1977:6). The creation of a municipal social planning body in Vancouver was one of the earliest attempts in Canada to locate responsibility for the coordination and planning of social services and community development practices under the auspices of a single local government entity.

In October of the same year two planning committees, the Social Development Committee (SDC) and the Joint Technical Committee (JTC), were established to reinforce the importance of coordinated planning. The SDC was created to formulate social policy and deal directly with the concerns of Local Area Councils, while the JTC was formed to ensure bureaucratic support for coordinated planning across agencies and throughout the community, as well as to make recommendations regarding social issues and actions to be taken, respectively (CVA, 1977:6).

The establishment of these social planning bodies was an administrative reaction to a number of urgent local, national, and even global issues and events emerging during the mid-1960s which produced a steady period of political unrest in many western, industrialized countries. This unrest often led to public conflicts and occasionally even violence between organized citizen's groups

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* The department has undergone several name changes over the years. It was originally called the Department of Social Planning and Development. However, that same year, under the guidance of its first appointed director, the name was changed to include the term 'community'

and the state. In Vancouver, such conflicts were often historically, economically, or ecologically linked to larger, complex and multi-faceted issues and conditions converging throughout the western industrial world during that period.

Nationally, the post World-War-II era introduced both economic prosperity (jobs, material wealth, mobility, technical efficiency, etc.) as well as a social, economic, and technological developments that were not always so benign. Rapid suburban growth, the emergence of urban ghettoes, and industrial decline in the urban-industrial belt (and air pollution) followed the expansion of automobile-oriented transportation (Hardwick, 1974). Additionally, a growing regional disparity between the city and rural areas resulted from the rapid, uneven, and unplanned growth in the globalizing economy of western nations.

If city-planning, as some have argued, "originated as an effort to supplement or supersede the market when it failed to meet individual needs or solve the problems of externalities" (Rein, 1969 :235) then city planners during this period, did not succeed in ameliorating the social problems emerging in the "post-industrial city" of the early 1960s. Indeed, city planning continues to struggle to keep pace with the development of new political, social, economic, and ecological problems brought about by rapid urban growth, increasing demands from socially diverse groups, senior government downloading, and shrinking financial resources (Reins, 1969; Frieden, 1969).

Urban social planning, as a means of involving socially oriented public officials in redistributing public resources for the general good of the community, was not, during the 1950s and early 1960s, one of the dominant concerns of local government. Rather than "redressing inequities that arise through the operation of the private market" (Frieden, 1969 :312), city leaders instead pursued narrow development policies promoting the construction of freeways, more office buildings in the downtown core, re-zoning urban land for industry and urban renewal programs, and other, now outmoded, strategies of planned economic growth.

A physical or technocratic approach then dominated city planning. This approach was supposedly value-free and independent of political processes, yet was inadequately informed by substantive theory or critical analysis of the origins of urban social problems. It was primarily an engineering and geographic perspective with a:

> strong territorial bias; it usually start[ed] with specific areas (neighborhoods, project sites) and proceed[ed] to determine their best use. On the basis of locational factors, adjoining land uses, and space needs of various kinds, physical planners recommend[ed] how these areas should be developed, which service facilities they [would] need, where different activities should be located within the area, and what action should be taken to bring the area up to acceptable environmental standards (Frieden, 1969 :312) .

As a result of technocratic planning decisions, "based on general sets of standards, without reference to specific social groups" (Frieden, 1969) many urban groups, even established neighbourhoods, were left out of the planning and decision making processes that directly impacted their communities. A period of disillusionment and resentment with the 'establishment' naturally began to emerge.

The experiences of some communities with urban renewal and freeway construction programs, for example, were not always positive. In many North American cities, such programs gradually exacerbated, rather than relieved, existing urban poverty and other social dysfunctions. Entire communities were bull-dozed and large freeways cut through long-standing neighbourhoods. Migration to the suburbs was made easier for some while inner-city deterioration and stagnation was hastened for others. Not surprisingly, many inner-city residents affected by such policies and programs, especially in racially segregated American cities, strongly resisted the 'planned' destruction of their communities.

As urban problems increased, physical planning, both in practice and theory, failed to keep abreast of changing social and political conditions. Mounting criticism was directed at the legitimacy of typical city-planning approaches to resolve urban problems or address the

fundamental needs of powerless, marginalized groups for housing, health, education, and other social services. Local politics and its technocratic instrument, city planning, were viewed by some (both in academic circles and within radical community organizations) as promoting and protecting only the values and ambitions of the powerful elites.

As a result of such criticism, new, and more broadly legitimate planning functions were continually sought by socially conscientious planners and planning theorists. The 1960s was a period of transition in the planning profession. Suggested roles ranged from encouraging moderate amelioration of social problems by making physical planning more 'sensitive' to social issues, to extending the realm of city-planning beyond the merely physical to include social, economic, and environmental dimensions. More radical propositions urged planners to assume the more transformational role of stimulating institutional reforms, advocating on behalf of particular community interests, or organizing communities for social action. Simultaneously, new political interests and parties developed from some of the more radical demands for change, challenging the traditional elite values of urban politics.

Although individuals and citizens groups in Vancouver had long been involved (if only marginally) in urban policy decisions, and all City Commissions were "accustomed to delegations, sometimes on behalf of potential developers and sometimes on behalf of local ratepayers" (Rose, 1974 :216), by the mid 1960s, protest demonstrations had become a new style of public participation, demonstrating to city officials a frightening new reality. These same public administrators:

> expressed shock and disappointment at the way in which their position seemed to be demeaned by the behaviour of their constituents. The quality of citizen participation--if measured in terms of loudness, rudeness, boisterous behaviour, marches to City Hall, and the occasional demonstration and disruption--was in the form of behaviour for which both the appointed professionals and the elected representatives were unprepared (:217).

The result of public protests was often political paralysis where 'old world' decision makers failed to grasp the significance of rapid social change. They also failed to manage or plan reasonable solutions to the many mounting urban-social problems. On Vancouver's City Council, a long standing political party was rapidly swept away during this period and replaced (temporarily) by a fresh slate of faces. These younger, more liberal minded professionals reacted to the 'urban crisis' with a number of substantive and expressive policy reforms.

The unrest and demands for changes also impacted municipal technocrats. There appeared a threat that the increasing urban conflicts could grow, if disregarded, beyond the ability of city administrators to control. A City of Vancouver Commissioner (who also headed the City's Planning Department), came to realize that this public challenge to conventional urban planning approaches might lead to a breakdown in governance and planning institutions. New approaches were called for. One such attempt at reforming institutionalized urban planning practice was the creation, in Vancouver, of the Department of Social Planning and Community Development.

3.2.0   Origins of Social Planning: Adult Education and Community Development

The conventional role of urban planning to "manage urban development efficiently" (Frieden, 1969 :311), came under intense scrutiny during the 1960s. Community development practitioners and social workers seeking increased support from governments for new social programs and initiatives grew to believe that urban planning should also attempt to "redistribute resources to people disadvantaged by present urban arrangements" (:311).

Social planning gradually evolved from the realization by planners, social workers, and community development professionals, that the conventional (physical) city planning approach was limited in its ability to resolve what were essentially political and/or economic issues. While some practicing urban planners may have tolerated the perceived limits of their craft, and accepted their own personal powerlessness in face of political "wheeling and dealing" (Forester, 1987), or the growing complexity of inter-related economic, social, and ecological urban

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problems, some planners argued that remedial actions, if not outright solutions to urban problems were still possible. They searched for new scientific or technological developments that would guide fresh planning approaches. Not surprisingly, the traditional attitude within the urban planning profession that social improvements could be technocratically planned, and that social reforms could be offered as "rational, coherent, intellectual solutions to the problems that are being dealt with" (Rein, 1969 :238), was a persistent paradigm that continued to influence the search for alternative approaches.

During the historical period of social unrest described above, one possible solution made available to city administrators was the expansion of the scope of urban planning issues to include more than physical considerations. By examining the impacts of urban planning decisions in the social dimension (poverty, housing, health, diverse lifestyles, etc.), this variation of social planning broadened the scope of city planners' activities and responsibilities. Urban planners sought usable approaches to assist them to deal with the emerging influence of plural community interests, demands for citizen involvement, and unique planning issues arising from environmental or health related considerations. These broader approaches opened the door for increased participation by affected stakeholders in the planning and decision making processes, thus fostering innovation in the social planning profession and development of into new areas of local government responsibility hitherto limited to non-physical, development oriented social welfare programs.

Jack Rothman (in Cox, et al, 1970) developed a framework for identifying and understanding particularly different styles of professional community oriented work which use "conceptually distinct approaches" (**reference:**). This typology identified three models of community work: social planning, locality development, and social action. Rothman recognized that each of the three community work approaches operated under varying assumptions, or variables, regarding goals, community structure, strategies used, the role of practitioner, etc. His framework indicates

that "there is no one conception of *the* community, nor of *the* community interest, and neither is there one approach to community work" (**reference:**).

3.2.1   The Community Development Approach

What was missing from the earlier technocratic social planning approach was an understanding of the political nature of social problems and the potential role of community involvement in local decision making. The logic of strategic or 'rational' planning methods were not, by themselves, to blame for chronic failures by urban planners to resolve social or economic problems. A broader view which opened the technical and political aspects of city-planning to a greater range and diversity of affected stakeholders was needed.

This perspective was eventually provided by political communities themselves who, in organizing their neighbourhoods or citizen associations to democratically challenge the legitimacy of top-down city-planning, gained valuable insights into the political nature of the community planning process, and in so doing influenced the direction that urban-social planning was to take. In some cases affluent or privileged political communities have been primarily occupied with reactive opposition to urban development projects and programs that threatened their privilege. In many other cases, mutual aid and assistance, citizen involvement in decision making, and a capacity building function which empowered individuals and their communities, were fundamental planning roles of community development practices. Since the late 1960s, urban planners have learned to acknowledge the emerging role of particularly persistent or organized public interest groups. Some have even tried to accommodate such groups in city planning processes.

3.3.0   The Role of Municipal Social Planning in Vancouver

Different models of community development and organization, from which professional planners, social workers, community workers, and others could draw their experiences, have existed for several decades. During the early to mid 1960s social planning was considered by

professional social work practitioners (and disillusioned urban planners) to be a process by which technocratic planning practice could deliver

> systematic, planned approaches to the design and delivery of social services and cultural programs; a need for a clear understanding of the impact of physical planning on human behaviour and public attitudes, and; practical application of psychological and sociological knowledge and experience, along with those of architecture, engineering, and planning, to the resolution of urban problems. (CVA, 1977).

Three of the Department's functions in this regard were:

> 1) refining the present system of planning and delivering health, education, welfare and recreation services on a neighbourhood or local area basis
>
> 2) integrating the physical and social aspects of city planning, including urban renewal and public housing projects and
>
> 3) encouraging residents to assume personal responsibilities for improving the social and economic conditions of their community (CVA, 1977).

How the role of social planning was initially organized reflected the particular technocratic beliefs held at the time by important actors in the city's urban planning milieu, in particular the City Commissioner and head of the City Planning Department. These beliefs would determine the nature of the SP/CD's contribution to urban planning issues and approaches.

3.4.0   The Influence of Community Social Planning

During the 1960s, social workers, following from their experiences and frustrations in delivering government programs and services, were strongly advocating the concept of social planning as an organizational restructuring strategy. Previous to Vancouver's initiative in social planning, private charities and foundations, social planning agencies, and organizations such as the United Way had for years been attempting institutional reforms (inter-agency service coordination) across specific neighbourhoods throughout Vancouver. The related concepts of *coordination, integration, and decentralization* were introduced as planning functions for improving the quality and efficiency of government services. Orchestrating the planning and delivery of these

services was considered one feasible means for meeting public demands for better, more accountable government.

Non-governmental social planning in Vancouver began with an experimental program in coordinated service delivery. One hundred families with exceptional needs in a geographically targeted area were assisted by the Community Chest & Council (C.C. & C) through its Area Development Project (The C.C. & C. was eventually renamed The United Community Services (UCS) then again renamed The United Way). Financial support was provided by both local, provincial, and federal governments as well as the private Vancouver Foundation.

The initial plan was to "provide basic health and welfare services to 100 South Vancouver families with at least two problems" by coordinating existing social services "aimed at making socially handicapped families less susceptible to problem situations and to help lead them away from their absolute dependency on social services" (CVA, 1963 :3). In the following year (1964), USC expanded its Area Development Projects by conducting needs research and "mapping" the spatial extent of neighbourhood social problems according to demographic variables found in the 1961 census tract. This study of "social patterns" was followed up with local group organizing in specific needy areas (CVA, 1964 :3). This focus on priority areas led to the sub-division of the Vancouver city into 21 local areas where health, welfare, and recreation agencies would "re-pattern services through decentralization or by amalgamation so that local needs can be met at the local level".

Without more concerted resources and mandates, these local projects had limited impact on families in need. The important breakthrough for community organizations and individuals affected by rapid urbanization, unemployment, and other systemic problems came with the City Commissioner's understanding that the consequences of physical planning policies were linked to social and economic conditions.

A 1965 City Planning Department report entitled "Downtown Eastside" reinforced this linkage between physical planning and social impacts and suggested that urban renewal schemes be examined for social impacts and that such problems as could be identified be dealt with "by bringing together all service agencies in the area" (CVA, 1965 :25). Referring specifically to conditions in an area known as 'Skid Road', the report went on to comment that

> because of the underlying human factor however, it is impossible to recommend physical changes without a greater, and more important, concerted effort to tackle the fundamental social weakness. (:25)

The Planning Department, primarily a regulatory body, was seeking assistance from outside the physical planning milieu. Recognizing the complexity of social systems and 'messy problems' it recommended a more integrated approach to planning, a "single measure which can do much to change present circumstances" by bringing together "all agencies active in the area to combine their efforts to improve or control the social ills that permeate this part of Vancouver (CVA, 1965 :25).

From several such reports supporting a new approach to urban planning, including the above Planning Department study, as well as a United Community Services (UCS) report entitled "a Proposed Department of Social Planning and Development" (CVA, Sept. 1966 :1) and others, came a recommendation from the City Commissioner that the City establish a new department to plan for social issues in a preventative way by using existing community resources more efficiently. The Commissioner accepted the UCS's suggestion that social planning operate in the twenty one designated 'local areas' to identify local problems and needs, inventory existing facilities and resources, and recommend priorities for the coordination of the many government services that already existed throughout the city. In 1968, the Department of Social Planning became a reality.

4.0.0 CHAPTER FOUR

4.0.1 The Department of Social Planning and Community Development

Chapter four presents the principal research findings of this thesis. These findings are based on a number of extensive interviews conducted with the first director and several original members of Vancouver's department of Social Planning and Community Development (SP/CD). In addition to such interviews, some of the many City of Vancouver documents and reports (now housed in City of Vancouver Archives) concerning the history of the SP/CD were examined. These documents provided a detailed picture of the department's mandate, functions, structure, and planning approach. Other archival materials related the early history of the department, both the concepts that went into the creation of a municipal social planning function as well as information concerning its formative years.

4.1.0 Mandate:

Historical records concerning the SP/CD's planning role provide several versions of what may synonymously be called its 'mission', 'mandate', 'terms of reference', or even 'organizational objectives'. The first mandate of the SP/CD (1968), unchanged until 1990, was to:

> Strengthen individual and family life and to enrich neighbourhood and city living, by helping to:
>
> 1) plan, develop, coordinate and integrate health, education, welfare, recreational, and community renewal programs; and
>
> 2) foster citizen self-help and community betterment programs (CVA, Administrative History; Key Finder :23)

As was shown in Chapter three, the Director's own terms of reference included a task to:

> co-ordinate and unify the efforts of civic departments and outside agencies, to guide the integration of social and physical planning within the jurisdiction of the City; to achieve the concerted application of health, education, welfare, recreation and employment services, combined with public works of all description, including public housing and urban renewal (Egan, 1972 :1).

Egan acknowledged that this mandate and its related functions were "pretentious" (personal communication), yet it appeared at the same time to create an influential new department. The mandate, in fact, did not assign any new powers to the department. Besides the director, every department head clearly understood that social planning, by itself, was not going to "unify" or "integrate" the various municipal agencies. The underlying objective, obscured in the mandate, was simply to bring people together to seek their voluntary cooperation in resolving social issues. However, the lack of official authority did not prevent the director from attempting to adjust the institutionalized status of urban planning.

4.1.2 Functions

The SP/CD attempted to operationalize its mandate through implementation of seven functions over which the department was granted jurisdiction. In 1968, these functions included:

(i) to unify the direct service approaches of a variety of civic departments and outside agencies;

(ii) to integrate the physical and social aspects of city planning, including urban renewal and public housing projects;

(iii) to refine the present system of planning and delivering health, education, welfare and recreation services on a neighbourhood or local area basis;

(iv) to prevent and control conditions of poverty, child neglect and delinquency, and to mitigate financial and psychological dependence;

(v) to study and define Vancouver's social problems, evaluate the impact of community services on these problems, support effective services and recommend the discontinuance of ineffective services;

(vi) to encourage residents to assume personal responsibilities for improving the social and economic conditions of their community; and

(vii) to create and regularly update a master social development plan for Vancouver (Vancouver, 1990 :3).

The adult education and community development concepts of social learning, capacity building, enabling personal empowerment and self sufficiency in assisting individuals and families to

resolve their own problems are evident in the mission and functions of the SP/CD. In addition, the function for public intervention into the mechanism of land development through the integration of the social consequences of urban design choices and other physical aspects of city planning was a significant departure from the typical case-work approach to social welfare programming. Adoption of this approach suggests the beginnings of an innovative, flexible and more comprehensive urban planning philosophy.

It is interesting to note in passing that the function assigned to create a master social development plan seems never to have been implemented by the SP/CD. The reasons for avoiding this function hints at the planning philosophy of the SP/CD's director and its staff. Master plans have a way of becoming inflexible and entrenched and do not allow for the special contingencies that are continually arising. A master plan would have made it more difficult for the director to return to Council annually for new funding for special or impromptu projects and programs (Egan, personal communications). The department's energies would have been channeled into constant re-evaluations of the master plan to conform to ever-shifting social needs and issues, an activity not suited to a small, yet busy, staff.

4.1.3 SP/CD Policy

Very little documentary evidence was uncovered pointing to specific policies created within the department. City Council and its administrators determined much of the overall policy for city hall and its various departments. However, it appears that social planners enjoyed some degree of flexibility to choose their own strategies for implementing Council's overall directives.

The SP\CD director's staffing and operational policies were to eschew long-range planning, bureaucratic growth or "empire building". However, he did encourage creativity and innovation. Given the idealistic nature of some social planning goals (eg, strengthen family and community living) (CVA Administrative History; Key Finder :23), the department tried to implement strategies that might have a measurable, if only marginal, impact on goal achievement rather than

strive to fulfill more absolute utopian objectives. Thus the amelioration of poverty was a more realistic target than its complete elimination.

4.1.4 Planning Approach

The SP/CD listed the "critical factors for coping with social change in a civic administration" as:

  i) early identification of emerging social problems;
  ii) assessment of the problem;
  iii) cooperative working relationships necessary to involve public and private interests;
  iv) formal political and administrative links necessary to obtain authority to act and,
   v) adequate resources (CVA, Departmental Review, 1977 :8)

These factors guided social planners' work as practice shifted between social issues, new demands, new political actors, and the alternating availability and decline of financial resources.

The SP\CD emphasized a variety of strategies from pragmatism and opportunism, to social activism, and bargaining and political maneuvering. In its initial years, a period perhaps characterized best by the term "organized anarchy", the department utilized a variety of un-orthodox and creative strategies and interventions. Because the SP\CD had the smallest budget within all of the city's administrative departments, the director avoided involvement in direct service delivery (CVA, Nov. 1971). Instead, the department acted as project incubator, experimenting with new ideas and, if they seemed to work, passing on responsibility for project implementation to another appropriate public or private agency. The accepting agency often received credit for the success or failure these projects while the SP\CD remained in the background (Egan, personal communications).

4.1.5 Focus on People

Much of the impetus behind the innovative development of a social planning philosophy in Vancouver during the initial years of the SP/CD was the result of foresight, hard work, commitment, skills (political, managerial, and social), and the caring attitudes of individuals

working within or alongside the department (i.e., local area community workers). These individuals played a significant role in subtly and gradually shifting the direction and pace of change in the city's approach to urban planning.

The executive and administrative structure that operated at City Hall in 1968 had been operating there since the local government reform movement of 1936. This structure presupposed a relatively weak mayor and council who were firmly guided by influential senior administrators, called City Commissioners (for a history of local government reform in Canada see Tindal, 1984). The City Commissioners' Office was the communications gatekeeper to council, administering a hierarchical style of communications between Council and the various civic departments (Baker, Stuart, Kobylka, personal communications).

According to Hardwick (1974), City Commissioners foresaw the possible consequences of growing social and political activism and the implications of social change for their administration. They may have realized that some of the City's policies were "out of phase" with a substantial sub-section of the community (:181). Council, on the other hand, and some departmental administrators, were unaware of where citizen involvement and the many new demands of neighbourhood groups were heading. It made sense to link social planning with community service agencies and to coordinate the planning for efficient and effective services delivery at the local area level.

The SP\CD could then act as an "early warning system" gauging the public pulse in each of the city's neighbourhoods and feeding back the information up the chain of command from community workers through the SP/CD to the Commissioner's Office and up to Council. Thus alerted to potential conflict in each local area, other planning bureaucrats could more efficiently devise new policies, adapting their responses to public opinion and "keeping the restless natives quiet" (Hardwick, personal communications).

4.1.6 SP/CD Leadership

Many people interviewed for this thesis remember the first SP/CD director with fondness, respect, admiration, and sometimes awe. Indeed, much of the early written history of the department reads like a biography of the man. Based on the opinions, information and descriptions provided by the informants interviewed, an informative perspective on the director emerged. The philosophy of the department, its policies (or lack of them), its operational style, its achievements, and even some of its failures, it could be argued were greatly influenced by the director's management abilities and personal charisma. He was described as idealistic visionary, sincere, sensitive, consistent, committed, supportive, knowledgeable, experienced, and politically astute, (Kobylka, Baker, Fladell, Adams, personal communications).

Before taking up his post as head of the SP\CD, Egan had been trained and employed as a social worker in Ottawa. He went on to become director of a Youth Services Bureau and had, before coming to Vancouver, successfully campaigned for the position of city Alderman in that city (Egan, 1972 :3). This diverse experience in a civic bureaucracy allowed him to establish the Vancouver department along different organizational lines designed to be responsive to issues and "free to deal with new problems and plan new programs" (: 27).

His previous experience as Alderman allowed him to pursue objectives and means which he thought were right, recognizing that at the end of the day discussion must be brought to a close and that it is better to make a decision than to waffle (Egan, personal communications). For example, while the principle of citizen participation was gaining currency with social planners elsewhere, Egan fully recognized the erratic nature of 'special interests', unrepresentative community groups or leadership, and the reality of public manipulation by groups and organizations to obtain programs and services. The director's policy was to listen for a while and "get a sense of public opinion" and then to make a decision (personal communications).

Through use of 'friendly persuasion' and taking advantage of personal connections throughout all levels of government in Vancouver, Victoria, and Ottawa, Egan was able to amass significant political, administrative and community support for the department's activities. This support went a long way toward cutting off criticisms of the department's un-orthodox operating style and provided social planning staff with the leeway, and often with the 'political clout' to "participate or intervene" in the activities or processes of other civic departments whom social planners worked (and sometimes disagreed) with (Kobylka, personal communication).

Complementing the leadership styles of the SP/CD were several important community leaders who also contributed enormous energy and dedication to their work. The presence of such individuals made it possible for strong and effective neighbourhood organizations to develop within the city and challenge the hegemony of bureaucratic structures. At times these challenges were manifest as adversarial confrontations. At other times they took the form of civic/citizen partnerships.

The director's leadership style could be described as supportive, yet 'hands-off'. He orchestrated the eclectic talents of his staff and encouraged them to take risks, brainstorm ideas, try new approaches, set their own agenda, act as social or cultural advocates, liaise between community groups and bureaucrats, "stir the pot" at City Hall, or act as "devil's advocates" in the plans of other departments. He generally allowed them to do whatever they wanted (Egan, personal communications). Generally they were successful, or at least that was the perception of city council who became accustomed to assigning the director (he was sometimes considered synonymous with the department) a number a projects to accomplish on the strength of his reputation for "getting things done".

Although he had several critics and detractors (enemies seems too strong a term) he knew how to deal with these too. According to colleagues (Kobylka, personal communications) who witnessed his style of chairing meetings (where he could control the proceedings), Egan had the skill to

allow opponents to make themselves look foolish while he remained above reproach. He helped politicians and other officials to look good, allowing them to take credit for successful projects initiated by the SP/CD.

These stories point to the director's skill in accomplishing 'little miracles' without becoming bogged down in administrative procedures and bureaucratic resistance. But there were some targets even this director could not hit. Although he succeeded in introducing youth and cultural programs as initially intended, the department's attempt at coordinating and integrating the various social service agencies proved a failure. Some directors of community social services agencies, as well as heads of some civic departments, proved too resistant to the experimental and untested concept of organizational integration.

One other important area where the director of social planning was successfully involved, however, was on a new Management Advisory Committee formed in 1970 to consider the major issues and concerns regarding the City of Vancouver, and to make recommendations to council regarding their resolution. The Advisory Committee was made up of the heads of Finance, Engineering, Solicitor's, and City Planning Department, as well as the director of social planning. Egan (personal communication) recalls the significance of this position as the "new kid on the block", and how he eventually came to have some influence as a social advocate in the management of the city.

4.1.7   Social Planning Staff's Approach

According to Egan the SP/CD was initially staffed by a small number of bright, motivated, competitive, and socially conscious professionals from different academic backgrounds who were personally picked by the director because of their ability to "get things done" (personal communications). They avoided bureaucratic working styles, had no pre-set line duties, and worked across functional divisions, involving themselves in other department's affairs whenever they thought it appropriate.

Originally, in 1968, only three persons were hired to become local area coordinators and social planners. Their education and backgrounds varied from B.A.s in Social Work to a B.A. in Political Science and a LLB in Law, while another social planner held a B.A. in Sociology (criminology). One social planner had previously worked with the Vancouver Parks and Recreation Board for almost ten years, first as a programmer, then as a director for one of the City's community centres. A second staff member had been employed in the City's personnel department while another had previous experience in business and communications. The credentials of other staff, hired later, included an M.A. in Planning, a B.Sc. in Psychology and a degree in Architecture, with one planner holding a B.A. in Education and an M.A. in Social Work (CVA, Sept. 23, 1975).

The director has described his staff as "guerrillas inside City Hall" and admitted one social planner had used "Saul Alinsky tactics" (Egan, Baker, personal communication). Whether it was individual creative expression or energetic teamwork, the original social planners have been credited with involvement in a number of the department's initial "successes". For instance, the community of Strathcona's impressive resistance to urban renewal programs, which included the effective blocking of City plans to demolish neighbourhood housing to facilitate freeway construction, was encouraged by one of the SP/CD's social planners. Her community-organizing approach mobilized residents whose subsequent protests led to the canceling of the federal government's urban renewal program.

Another example of creative integration involved the development of the Britannia Centre. The innovative planning, designing, and management selection process for a project that lasted nearly ten years from conception to completion, was facilitated by a number of different social planners, as well as by the director himself. Among the second crop of social planners to be hired in the early 1970s was someone with a social planning degree from an American university. She used her knowledge to handle physical planners and engineers involved with Britannia and was able to facilitate the open community planning process through the bureaucratic maze of City Hall.

Planning of the Britannia Centre involved a large number and variety of government, private, and citizen organizations.

Within the department, staff members often formed natural alliances. For instance, those most concerned with community development work, or others committed to cultural programs, often joined forces. There was some coordination and networking between groups, but no formal structure (Baker, personal communication). Since social planners had no official line duties, they often involved themselves (often unwelcome) in the plans of other municipal agencies, especially those of the city-planning department, whose work often had direct social consequences at the neighbourhood level (Egan, personal communication).

This type of involvement meant there was no critical path to their work. Apart from city council's standard requirement that reports be submitted, SP/CD staff enjoyed remarkable discretion in their choice of activities to become involved in. Sometimes they used a direct intervention strategy, doing whatever they believed was needed. Other time they pursued a community development approach, seeking community input into their objectives. Performance evaluation of social planners was based on the individual measure of accomplishment, whether of projects, community planning processes, or other activity.

4.2.0   Social Planning Structure

4.2.1   The Social Development Committee

A Social Development Committee (SDC), as well as a separate Joint Technical Committee (JTC), was established in October of 1968 to provide guidance and direction to the SP\CD. The SDC was composed of an elected city councilor, acting as Chair, and included the elected representatives of the School and Parks Board as well as one Provincial MLA and the Chair of the Library Board. The director of the SP\CD was the link between the Committee and his department. The role of the SPD was to "recommend actions and expenditures to the three

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elected bodies" (CVA, Oct. 19, 1966 :2). Among these actions was an agreement to share existing facilities, approve capital projects to fill the gaps in facility needs, coordinate existing programs that each Board provided, and initiate new ones according to surveyed need.

4.2.2   The Joint Technical Committee

The function of the JTC, an advisory body (made up of appointed department heads from the SP\CD, Planning, Public Health, Police & Probation Services, Finances, Parks & Recreation, Social Services, as well as the Director of the UCS), was to act as liaison and coordinating body between the member departments, the elected officials and service agencies. Members considered and reported on technical matters, conducted some research, advised council and made recommendations to the SDC (CVA, Oct. 19, 1966 :3). Initiatives could arise from several sources: from the Conference of Local Area Councils, from the Regional Planning Committee, the JTC's constituent members, or, and as was predominantly the case, from the SP\CD.

The rationale for creating these committees was to ensure that all civic departments that had social issues as part of their operating concerns (and that was almost all of them) would become part of the team attempting to coordinate and eventually integrate their separate efforts.

During the initial years of social planning both committees attempted to mirror the community structure of Local Area Councils and Community Services Teams as parallel civic structures designed to create a communications network and maintain formal links between politicians, the City itself, and local area residents and agencies. The concept, apparently, was to pass on the service agencies' concerns regarding local problems from Area Councils, Neighbourhood Associations, and other organized private interest to City Council by way of several intervening layers of committees.

The goal of these committees was, in the judgment of the director of SP\CD, to further the collaboration between the different Board members, to coordinate their many and diverse social

programs, and, in the case of the JTC, to improve inter-departmental communication; in short, to integrate the structures and functions of diverse City departments and/or agencies in order to reduce the barriers that divided service deliverers from service consumers (CVA, 1970 :6)

4.2.3 Policy Outcomes of the SPD and JTC

The work of the SDC did result in changing attitudes regarding cooperative approaches to services and social programs such as approving the construction of the Fraserview Library and Community Services facility as well as to extending citizen participation in program and facilities planning. For example, the Britannia Planning Advisory Committee, the Strathcona Rehabilitation Working Group, and, the East-West Freeway Liaison Group. The SDC also initiated reviews of local problems (for instance the "West End Social Development Plan").

Understandably these structures did not last many years and eventually "withered away" (Clague, 1993 :3). The School and Parks Board, were both long established and freely elected bodies. According to Egan (personal communications), both were highly defensive of their jurisdictional prerogatives. They had their own electoral processes, budgets and policies, and had operated as independent civic boards in Vancouver for several decades. Neither board wished to relinquish their major responsibilities or capital funds.

In Egan's opinion, the JTC was not an effective body either. It met irregularly and allowed its initiatives to be guided by the Chair rather than through a consensus of its members (personal communications). The goal of integration, although favourably considered in principle, required a painstaking process of "gentle persuasion" to make it work. The SP/CD's director, at one time perhaps 'naively' hoping that some use might come from this committee, did not mourn its eventual passing away (Egan, personal communication).

4.3.1 SP/CD Departmental Structure

The initial structure of the SP/CD department was quite simple. With a small staff of three social planners, the primary task of each was to act as a local area coordinator. However, as staff numbers increased and as new responsibilities were assumed, the SP\CD was, by 1975, divided into three major sub-divisions, each with its own function. These sub-divisions were: Social Development, Information Services, and Social Services Planning.

Between 1968 and 1973 the organizational, reporting and operational structure within the civic administration, (i.e., between the SP/CD and City Commissioner's Office, city council etc.), was hierarchical, with the department reporting directly to the Board of Administration. After 1973 it shifted to a non-hierarchical or "collegial" structure with the director and staff often enjoying direct access to council. Additionally, the director, who presided "more at the centre of the department's operations than at its top" (CVA, Key Finder :8) encouraged a flexible working environment for his small staff. (Egan, 1981 :27). Later, when a new reform oriented civic party dominated city council, department heads began reporting directly to council. The director used this opportunity to meet frequently with council members, often informally. His relation with the new Mayor was such that support and cooperation was often forthcoming from that office.

4.4.0   Municipal Partnerships With Community Organizations

4.4.1   SP/CD Local Area Coordinators and Services Teams

The rationale for coordinating social services at the local area level included: the improvement of information and access to services for local consumers, the provision of more relevant services within each area, and a greater accountability to service consumers from service providers. Decentralized units could be more effectively evaluated based on the criteria of relevance of services delivered to match specific needs as well as for the efficiency in which services were delivered on a local area basis.

The rationale for encouraging a community development function in local area planning lay in its promise for building community confidence, self reliance, and effectiveness in planning for community identified needs rather than agency priorities. When community residents and organizations are given the necessary planning tools and information, along with greater access to service agencies and civic departments, they become capable of identifying the critical social, economic, and physical needs of their own communities, and thereby learn how to formulate policies, maintain a continuous planning process toward preventive measures, and reduce their dependency on outside assistance (CVA, 1968).

As was briefly outlined in the section concerning social planning themes in Chapter 3, a number of community social planning initiatives had been underway for several years when the SP/CD arrived on the scene. Perhaps the most active and prevalent organization was the United Community Services (UCS). The UCS collected and disbursed millions of dollars to member service organizations throughout the greater Vancouver region, as well as initiated the Local Area Development project in 1965 to test the assumptions of family services coordination. From this experiment came a more ambitious restructuring of the organization to create a number of decentralized citizens' groups throughout Vancouver.

4.4.2 Local Area Councils

During the mid-1960s, UCS had jointly explored the possibility of coordinating its social service delivery efforts with Vancouver City Hall administrators. The UCS's Local Development Projects initiated a private-public partnership in social service delivery that continues to operate, with varying degrees of success, to this day. Partially due to this effort the Department of Social Planning and Community Development was created. The model for integrating municipal and community social services used by the SP/CD, was based on the Local Area Planning approached developed by the UCS. This model is described below along with its relevance to the case study.

The UCS attempted to preventatively plan for changing urban social conditions by using the new approach of Local Area Planning and devolving further responsibilities to the affected communities themselves, and especially to the local leadership. Responsibility for handling local problems would fall onto newly formed Local Area Councils. By 1968, ten Local Area Councils had been formed in Vancouver composed of local area residents and citizens as well as agency professionals and a community development worker.

Each Council was autonomous of the others yet linked with the United Way through a coordinating Conference of Local Area Councils. Issues dealt with by these Councils included local service needs identification, locating employment opportunities, legal and community information and referrals, amongst other functions (CVA, 1968 :12). The Conference acted as a link between the Councils, and hence local area citizens, and the civic administration. It dealt with social issues that transcended local boundaries.

Although a preliminary evaluation of the Local Development Project (discussed above, page 58) stated that no improvements had been made to the participating families' conditions through intervention, it was claimed by the report's authors that the thinking of service professionals had been altered (CVA, 1968 :7). The concepts of cooperation, coordination, integration (especially of municipal, community, and provincial services, on a neighbourhood by neighbourhood basis), and the utilization of an adult education or community development philosophy and approach, became established practice for municipal social planning.

4.4.3 Neighbourhood Services Association

The Neighbourhood Services Association (NSA) program was jointly funded by the United Way, the Vancouver SP\CD, and the Federal Government through the Canada Assistance Plan. The NSA's role, through the efforts of its professional community development workers, was advisory, yet multi-faceted.

It is interesting to consider the contribution of community development workers to the identification and resolution of Vancouver's social problems. The community development worker's task was to assist Area Councils to form and organize themselves, generally by identifying and coordinating natural neighbourhood leadership and identifying local problems and solutions. The most common concern expressed by the Area Councils involved the need for planning and coordinating local community social services (Clague, personal communication). Other community development workers' tasks included advocacy work for individuals or groups, dealing with "systems grievances" (Clague, personal communications), aiding in the formation of tenants' associations to deal with rental disputes, organizing groups to lobby City Hall, and modeling strategies of community management and control of local services. The work further involved training grass roots leadership in political strategies along the social activity spectrum: from advocacy, to organizational support, and even to facilitating the learning of such basic skills as how to chair meetings.

4.4.4 The Downtown Eastside Residents' Association

The SP/CD's community development experience was not always appreciated by its politicians and administrators. In the Downtown East-Side (for decades known as "skid road"), community development workers were funded by the City at the SP\CD's recommendation. Dissatisfied with bureaucratic constraints, these workers eventually helped form the Downtown East-Side Resident's Association (DERA), a vocal, highly visible, and often impolite social action service and advocacy organization that sometime used its mandate and membership to criticize City Hall planning and development initiatives.

As politically astute organizers and social advocates DERA members often used sympathetic media coverage (usually to city council's embarrassment) to generate publicity as a tool to advance their neighbourhood ends (Davis, personal communications). It is likely that the controversial and establishment-challenging nature of DERA's activities eventually resulted in the City's rescinding of the SP/CD's community development activities (and gradual reduction of

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the City's rescinding of the SP/CD's community development activities (and gradual reduction of DERA's civic grants) in the mid 1970s. (For a historical account of social conditions on "skid road" and the political activities of DERA, see David Ley's manuscript, "The Downtown Eastside, One Hundred Years of Struggle" 1989, unpublished).

4.5.0   Local Area Planning

The basic mandate of the SP/CD, as described above, was to: 1) coordinate and integrate the planning of social services delivery and; 2) to do this at a local area level. Below are some of the programs and projects implemented between 1968-1976. Some were single-shot strategies, meant to deal with pressing necessities. Other programs attempted to address chronic social problems identified as worsening urban trends.

One approach to implementing this mandate was for SP\DC staff, but especially its director, to work with other city department's heads, as well as the directors of voluntary services agencies, to gradually build a consensus around the need to cooperate, coordinate, and finally to integrate the many diverse services under a single delegated authority in decentralized, local facilities. The second strategy used to achieve the mandate involved social planners operating as Local Area Coordinators. Their function included a team approach with service agencies' field staff as well as performing community development work in the various targeted neighbourhoods.

Initially, the SP/CD acted as intermediary between community and civic planning structures. A Local Area Coordinator worked in the field with the City's Area Services Team, the Local Area Council, a community development worker and citizen volunteers. The Coordinator encouraged both civic employees and citizens groups to innovate and take risks to achieve new programs (Kobylka, personal communication).

The SP\CD also recommended that the City provide some funds to the Neighbourhood Services Association (NSA), a voluntary service organization with experience in managing neighbourhood houses. A NSA community development worker was assigned to the Community Development Services Team and worked along side other services professionals to assist Area Councils identify local needs and problems and take action to resolve them (Clague, 1988 :6).

While the SP\CD's Local Area Coordinator worked with service professionals, part of the Community Development Worker's function was to coordinate citizen and Area Council involvement in different activities. Both positions were responsible for liaison between members and the Services Team through the circulation of information, minutes and agendas, keeping records and writing reports, and feeding back information to parent agencies or Area Councils. Some of this work took place in Community Information Centres established in selected neighbourhoods.

Community Information Centres were also the base for an information network linking local and City resources, services, facilities, etc. The City worked cooperatively with the local areas and produced a "Handbook to City Hall" to assist citizens locate civic departments or divisions, or even the specific person they wished to contact. The City's Board of Administration also staffed a "Hot Line", which provided more immediate citizen access to public officials. The Local Area Planning Centres experiment was short lived, however, as some centres became, according to Egan, partisan and politicized, conducting their information gathering and dissemination operations in a "non-professional manner". Egan recalls the difficulty of "measuring the results" of this program (personal communication). The City's intent, according to Egan, was to provide a community information service, not a political organizing function.

4.6.0   A Mini-case Study of Local Area Planning

The following section briefly describes an example of a Local Area Planning initiative, the Britannia Community Services Centre, undertaken by the SP\CD in conjunction with city

(physical) planners community development workers, Local Area Councils, private services organizations and individual citizens. The example demonstrates the principles of innovation and flexibility in used in community planning approaches. The impetus for developing the Britannia Community Services Facility, came from area residents and organizations.

4.6.1 The Britannia Centre

The Grandview-Woodland Area Council had, during the mid-1960s, been loudly demanding a new library and recreation services in the community. There was a belief that Vancouver's east-side communities were not receiving their fair share of municipal amenities and this resentment was eventually discerned by civic officials. The residents had developed a measure of political influence through past struggles with City Hall over urban renewal schemes. City Hall, therefore, was prepared to listen to their concerns. The Strathcona Property Owners and Tenants Association (SPOTA) and The Association to Tackle Adverse Conditions (ATTAC) were two local organizations with the major prority of stopping freeway construction through their communities. Their assistance and political experience (based on their success) were enlisted by the Local Area Council for the negotiation process to acquire a new library facility (Clague, 1988 :17).

The idea to create an integrated Community Services Centre had roots in the experience of U.S. urban communities. The idea was developed to fruition in Grandview-Woodland by Dr. Selwyn Miller (a Vancouver School Board official) after several USC reports had introduced the concept to the Local Area Council. The idea found a receptive audience both with the Area Council and within the civic administration, especially the Board of Administration, which passed it on to the new director as the SP/CD's first project (Egan, personal communication) With the cooperation of most civic departments, the Grandview-Woodlands Area Council, and the Provincial and Federal governments, the concept was transformed into a reality after eleven years of hard work, intrigue, and innovation. (see Clague, 1988 for a comprehensive history of Britannia's origins, planning process, and management style).

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4.7.0 Recurring Themes in Local Area Planning

There are several reasons why the Britannia Centre planning process, from conceptualizing through to completion, can be considered a success. These reasons will be briefly explored in the following section and their relevance to Local Area and social planning analyzed. Since Britannia was one of the first projects assigned to the new SP/CD, it should be instructive to examine both the department's role and planning approach, as well as to examine the socio-political context within which the project developed.

Analysis of the department's changing planning role identifies a number of themes recurring throughout the Britannia Community Centre planning process. These themes are useful in helping us understand the possible barriers and opportunities that may have influenced the eventual shift of the SP/CD from Local Area Planning to a city-wide, project oriented approach to social issues. These themes are: community power and initiative; a citizen-municipal social planning partnership; broad political acceptability of the project; the prevailing social preference for tangible results, and; institutional resistance to change.

4.7.1 People Power

Clague identifies what he considers to be a recurrent theme in the Britannia planning process, "that of citizens setting precedents with City Hall for the provision of community services" (Clague, 1988 :iii). He links this theme to concepts of "community in the territorial sense" with its consequent "identity based on culture, history and the struggle for survival" (:7). Clague further credits the work of Local Area Councils in nurturing this sense of place into an articulate mechanism for addressing and resolving community concerns.

This theme has important implications in that it addresses the means by which the two communities, tGrandview-Woodlands and Strathcona, through their citizen organizations utilized their influence to establish a cooperative, consensus based approach to dealing with

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several civic bodies. Equally important is the way in which this influence was used to circumvent the institutional barriers and resistance to the innovative planning process introduced by the community.

4.7.2 Planning Partnerships Between Local Government and Neighbourhoods

Another important theme concerns the planning approach used by the SP/CD in "nursing the proposal through the bureaucratic maze" (Clague, 1988 :17). Clague refers to this mechanism as a "special partnership" that emerged between social planners, as advocates of particular socio-economic interests and policies, and the locality-based citizens struggling for improved social and economic conditions. This mechanism "presumes a collaborative stance between a community motivated by self-help and members of the power structure" (:17).

When problems were encountered along the way to completing the Centre, problems that revolved around a number of issues such as, forming a Planning Advisory Committee, acquisition of the building site and subsequent resident re-location, the facility's design and management structure, as well as other difficulties, the "strategy that evolved among citizen and agency members of the [Planning Advisory] Committee was for the citizens to lobby the politicians and the staff to argue the case among their senior colleagues and, where appropriate with elected officials" (:39).

Egan takes credit for introducing changes to the reporting procedures between staff and senior management and city council. Before he arrived, staff never spoke to city council. All communications were routed through the City Commissioner (Board of Administrator's Office). The new director used his previous political and bureaucratic experience, as well as his many "connections" to gain the ear of sympathetic (or otherwise) council members and enlist their support (personal communications). Egan's prior involvement in social work had already convinced him of the necessity for greater cooperation and integration between different civic departments as well as between citizens and City Hall. Thus he viewed the community

organizations as "equal stakeholders" rather than as interlopers in an essentially expert planning system (personal communications).

The SP/CD's role in steering the Britannia Centre's community management plan through the City's bureaucracy required a number of tactics The principal tactic used can be characterized as advocacy of particular interests. The first social planner in the area identified very closely with the neighbourhoods in which she worked and in fact was instrumental in "getting citizens worked up to oppose the City's plans" regarding freeway construction, using Saul Alinsky tactics of social action and acting like "guerrillas inside City Hall" (Egan, personal communication).

An essential feature of this "partnership between equals" was the requirement that the Britannia Planning committee members reach a consensus on the issues before them. This was an important aspect during the initial planning phase. Although City Hall had approved the development of a new community services facility, a large number of issues had yet to be resolved. Consultation and coordination between the area community development worker and the social planner and their respective organizations was continuous so that "local opinions could be accurately reflected in the [Area] Council and that strong support could be given to local issues" by social planners and other civic agencies. (Clague, 1988 :22).

4.7.3 Social Planning Projects as Political Theatre

Politically safe social programs and projects, in particular facilities and/or infrastructure that improve a government's chances for re-election (or at least do not diminish them) may be more easily approved for implementation by Council than risky or controversial projects (where political costs outweigh benefits). The significance of politically acceptable projects to the success of Britannia Centre's community management plan may also have assured the early success of the SP/CD and the popularity of its Director.

The concept of a community service centre was not radical nor threatening to municipal leaders. Its development could, therefore, be easily supported by the city's senior administrators and politicians. Vancouver already had 'neighbourhood houses' and 'crisis centres' whose work was partly funded by the City. The idea for an decentralized, multiple services facility was fast becoming popular within the social work profession (Clague, 1988 :15). Selwyn Miller, a School Board planner, recognized the social benefits of the project. His support for the project was aided by the UCS who advocated the idea locally to neighbourhood associations and lobbied the city's Board of Administration. Momentum increased as one of the Board of Administration's two City Commissioners, Gerald Sutton-Brown, recognized the need for "doing something in the east end" (Clague, 1988 :16). The new SP/CD needed a fresh project to help launch it into its new Local Area Planning role, and Britannia would provide the opportunity. To city council and the elected School and Parks Boards, Britannia appeared the ideal project to demonstrate to these communities that their elected representatives were indeed doing something for the neighbourhoods. With the support of Sutton-Brown, other civic departments came onside.

4.7.4 Monuments to Posterity

Another theme in social planning during this early period was what Persky (1980) called the "Edifice Complex", and what Egan more generously described as a civic attitude that regarded visible, and tangible structures and programs as "assets" that are sometimes "more popular than services to people" (Egan, personal communication). The Britannia Centre, for example featured: a child care centre with latch-key and child-minding programs; elementary school; secondary school (already existing); teen centre; retired citizens centre; arts and crafts, meeting and family activity rooms; four gymnasia plus racquetball courts; swimming pool with sauna; public and school library; skating rink; community information and social service centre; informal fireplace lounges; playing field and running track; tennis courts; outside park, and; parking (Clague, 1988 :8) The facility, according to Nancy Cooley, City Social Planner assigned to Britannia became known as " 'the place' to put everything that anyone thought the neighbourhood needed or wanted" (Clague, 1988 :21).

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City managers' and politicians' preferences for tangible results would become the department's rationale for gradually shifting away from community development processes toward concrete projects where results could be more easily assessed as evidence that the department was "getting something done" (Egan, personal communications). While the Britannia Centre was conceived of as a Local Area initiative, it seems the facility proved to be an attractive showcase for advertising the City's commitment to caring.

4.7.5 Resistance to Change

Finally, Clague discusses some of the factors involved in institutional change. He identifies some of the problems responsible for the incremental pace of institutional change. Resistance to new ideas, or to new projects, played a significant and recurring theme in the Britannia planning process, illustrating the common problem of jurisdictional jealousy by political or administrative leaders. The open and inclusive participatory planning approach increased the perceptions of various actors that the security of their positions, as well as their prerogatives to consider or decide public policy issues, was threatened.

The Parks Board, for instance, 'felt' threatened by the suggested planning process that would oversee the design, development, and management of the Centre. One reason for this insecurity was the presence of the SP/CD. Parks had originally entered the process with design guidelines but these had been rejected by the community, at the social planner's instigation, in favour of a more citizen-involved design process (Clague, 1988:23). The Parks Board faced further erosion of authority in that the Planning Advisory Committee envisioned a citizen majority rather than the usual Parks Board domination. Parks resistance to the proposed project would re-surface several times throughout the nine years the Centre required for its completion.

The strategy used for dealing with this resistance was a concerted effort by all those involved with a high stake in seeing the process succeed. Networking, trust building, appreciation of other participants' difficult positions, vigorous lobbying by citizens and social planners, the careful

recording of the various councilors' positions on a number of related issues, and the establishment of a general consensus among participants, were all fundamental tactics assisting the planning process to maintain its momentum against inertia and resistance.

The actual incidences outlined in the above themes may have influenced significant changes in the way municipal social planning operated in Vancouver. The events and attitudes described may also have been partly responsible for the gradual extinguishing of innovation and flexibility in the SP/CD's operations. The following sections examine the gradual shift away from Local Area Planning and community development approaches toward more tangible and politically safe social planning initiatives.

4.8.0 Shifting Planning Approaches

By 1970, "after reviewing its efforts with respect to coordination" of social services, the SP/CD Director "concluded that little, if any, progress had been achieved" (CVA, 1971). Clague (in Wharf, 1979 :9) noted the irony in this failed attempt at coordination, recognizing that it is in the nature of people to profess ideals but resist acting on them. He found that "while everyone claimed to be in favour of coordination, nobody really wanted to be coordinated". Planning staff and elected policy makers each had different priorities.

It is interesting to note how long the political acceptability of the Local Area Planning approach lasted. The Britannia Centre community management concept, initiated as a Local Area Plan, survived several changes to both provincial and municipal governments as new political parties, with significantly different ideologies and policies, came into office. This was likely due to the fact that the neighbourhoods involved were highly organized, motivated, and had invested significant time and energy into the project. Once underway, it may have proved difficult to derail the process. However, attempted Local Area Planning initiatives in less influential neighbourhoods were not so fortunate.

When dealing with Downtown East-Side community issues for example (only a few years after the SP/CD came into being), a new municipal political party responded in entirely different ways to their predecessors. By 1976 the Non-Partisan Association (NPA) were avoiding the continuation of social planning precedents and Local Area Planning activities earlier established in Strathcona and Grandview-Woodlands. The NPA's lack of support for the community development work of DERA, another outcome of neighbourhood and SP/CD partnerships, was probably in response to the 'political' nature of DERA's social organizing and activism.

Part of DERA's advocacy activities had resulted in the revival of local identity and a sense of neighbourhood pride, as well as the improved health and safety of the area. However, the SP/CD's locality development work that had been so successful in revitalizing community involvement in neighbourhood and other civic issues in the late 1960s was gradually and subtly transformed into a city-wide urban planning exercise by the mid to late 1970s.

The department began to acquire new responsibilities, some of these assigned by city council directly as a result of its perception of the city's social issues, or through recommendations made by other civic departments. The political and citizen support that accounted for the success of the Britannia Centre was also an important factor in this shift. Egan suggests that this type of project was more acceptable and popular than services because of its greater "visibility" (personal communication).

Assisted by resources from Ottawa through the Canada Assistance Plan and Neighbourhood Improvement Program funding, the SP/CD continued to be involved in the development and administration of large facilities and events such as the Carnegie Centre, the Children's Festival, the Vancouver Folk Music Festival, Granville Island (in partnership with the Federal Government), and the Vancouver Music Conservatory. To help existing staff manage these new responsibilities the SP/CD expanded its professional social planning staff from four in 1968 to nine in 1973 (plus an additional support service staff of four). This number increased to eleven

social planners in 1980 (with four additional support staff) (CVA, Key Finder :7). Some of the new city-wide projects that were taken on by additional staff are briefly described below.

4.8.1 City-Wide Project Planning (1970 - 1974)

Relinquishing its designated role of coordinating local services, the SP/CD gradually shifted toward notable projects that had a good chance of success (i.e., projects which included a component of research, planning, public participation, buildings, facilities or structures, and programs). A new "strategy of selective intervention", from a geographic basis to "clearly defined subject areas" became more commonplace (CVA, Key Finder :50). The major functions of the department were shifted from coordination, to planning, of social services with the addition of Social Environment and Cultural Program Planning.

The process of transformation from local area planning to a city-wide approach appears to have been unintentional, or at least not deliberately planned at the municipal level. One external influence in 1974, for example, was a Provincial Government initiative to set up the Vancouver Resources Board (VRB) and Community Resources Boards (CRB) in neighbourhoods around the city which, according to Clague, 1993 :4) adopted the original Local Area approach used by the SP/CD. The "VRB/CRB organization was legislatively responsible for the planning and provision of statutory and non-statutory social services". Establishing these organizations eliminated the need for the SP/CD to duplicate the effort.

Other factors included frustration by the Director to obtain the collaboration of community organizations, and the high cost of "staffing and supporting a city-wide infrastructure of community development workers, social planners and community information centres" (:3). The shift in the social planning direction to city-wide projects appears to have occurred incrementally over a period of four to six years with various prior decisions, evaluations, and external events dictating the trend.

4.8.2 Transient Youth Policy

The intent of the Transient Youth Policy was to accommodate the thousands of young people passing through the region during the early 1970s. The focus was on a "risk population regardless of its geographic location in the city" (CVA, Dec. 1970). Some City services were linked for improved coordination and delivery, for instance hostels, private home placements, cash assistance programs, youth job placement programs, referral agencies, and summer work programs.

4.8.3 Cultural Programming

The Cultural Program was responsible for: the founding of the original Vancouver Children's Festivals and the Vancouver Folk Festival, as well as the creation of a Music School, the allocation of hundreds of thousands of dollars in Cultural Grants to a variety of cultural organizations and individual artists for public art projects, the rehabilitation of the heritage Carnegie Library into a community centre and services facility for Downtown East-Side residents, and the conversion of the old firehall building into a civic theatre.

4.8.4 Housing Policy

Although the SP/CD was originally given a very limited housing mandate from city council in the early 1970s, the department did develop some criteria for including recreational facilities and programs in new housing developments. Eventually, the department received the mandate to develop a major non-market housing program, proposing rent supplements to allow for low income units to be built throughout the city in private developments (CVA, Dec. 1970 :11).

4.8.5 Development Permit Board

A new social planning function that was established for the SP/CD director allowed for his participation on the City's Development Permit Board. Egan's involvement on this influential board may have resulted in a legacy of positive urban design and infrastructure in the City of Vancouver during the twelve years of his tenure as social planning director. This three-member

body, composed of the directors from City Planning, Social Planning, and Engineering, was charged with the final approval of special development permits, a task previously left to planners. Development permits approved by this Board were those with potential for significant social, economic and environmental impact in the city. Heritage designations, major changes to existing land uses, large projects, etc., were to be channeled through an separate development permit review process that included social planning staff as well as an urban design panel, a heritage panel and other interested departments in the City.

The legacy of this Board was the introduction of many new social issues and concerns into a traditional regulatory city planning framework. Also, by opening up the development review process to public input, potential conflicts could be resolved at an earlier stage of the planning process so as to avoid much unnecessary tension and reduce social and private costs.

Another important contribution of the SP/CD in integrating social concerns with physical planning was the introduction of "bonussing" provisions in development plans. In return for providing specified social amenities (day care, recreation facilities, theatres or public art, green and/or opens spaces, etc.) developers would be awarded a development bonus, whether additional floorspace, increased building height, reduced set-back provisions, or other benefits to offset their costs for providing such amenities.

4.8.6 Miscellaneous Projects and Activities

Besides the major projects listed above, the SP/CD was also engaged in the following activities.

> Disbursing civic grants to voluntary organizations; single persons hostel, allocation of capital funds for community services centre, liaison with B.C. Housing management Commission regarding tenant's problems, information centres in various neighbourhoods, summer enrichment programs, surveys and services for traveling and transient youth, social data collection, police-youth liaison and communication, allocation of certain public recreation program funds, resolving inter-agency and departmental conflicts, skid road surveys and social plan, youth problems in specific neighbourhoods, study of new

formula for financing and administering multi-purpose community services centres, social research, immigrant services, survey of high school drop-outs, Secretary of State's committee on youth, community music school (CVA, Dec. 1970 :8).

4.9.0 Summary of the Case Study: Indications of Excellence in the SP/CD

At least ten years before Peters and Waterman Jr. coined the term Excellence to denote outstanding management and organizational practices of effective performance, some of the members of Vancouver's original SP/CD staff already exhibited these attributes in their daily practices (Peters points out that his attributes of Excellence are not new ones but have for a long time and have only recently been 're-discovered').

4.9.1 Leadership

The SP/CD director was often described in terms akin to those used in the transformational leadership literature. Egan was both a hands-on and hands-off type of manager, at times directly involving himself in the operations of the department, maintaining a visible presence in the community (rather than in his office), yet also delegating much of the department's work to his social planners. He allowed his staff the leeway to select their own projects to work on, trusting them to find appropriate methods to achieve the social aims of the department. More importantly, he supported them within the larger government bureaucracy, even if that meant challenging standard operating procedures within those other departments.

As chair of several community and civic committees, Egan demonstrated his leadership abilities, allowing consensus to develop without yielding to the ever-present potential for chaos that could often accompany attempts at consensus decision making when various 'special interest' groups are involved. He concentrated on the department's strengths which included the staff's capabilities to perform their duties well, and the department's smallness and flexibility. He claimed to prefer realism to idealism, seeking tangible outcomes. This philosophy accounted for the department's disregard for implementing a social development master plan. Flexibility,

adaptability to changing circumstances, and a pragmatic view of the political nature of the department's mandate, kept the department's energies focused on suitable targets.

The author's impression of Egan's personal qualities of leadership, charisma, and effectiveness was confirmed by information volunteered by the other key informants. Egan's personal qualities reveal a commanding figure, able to both persuade, prod, inspire, and lead. He had the skills to instill a vision of social change in his staff and others around him. They thought him sincere, sensitive, consistent, committed, supportive, knowledgeable, and fearless. He used both 'friendly persuasion' and civic/citizen partnerships at different times to challenge resistance.

Egan's previous experiences as a bureaucrat gave him insight on alternate ways to structure his department. He designed it to be responsive to changing issues and flexible enough to manage new problems and design new social programs. He made good use of the diverse backgrounds of his inter-disciplinary staff and encouraged risk taking behaviour. Generally, the early staff felt empowered to act and were not intimidated by the senior authority of other, more established civic departments. It could be said that Egan encouraged 'productivity through people'.

4.9.2 Planning Approach

At the time of its creation, the SP/CD was a unique creature in Canadian public sector organizations, receiving much publicity as a result. Although provided with an ambiguous and limited mandate, its director and staff transformed initial 'successes' into ever increasing responsibility. And as long as they produced 'results', the department was given considerable autonomy, a privilege which allowed them freedom to innovate.

This department's flexible planning approach, which avoided a technocratic working style, also encouraged risk-taking. The inter-disciplinary nature of social planners allowed the formation of teams who often worked across functional divisions. The brainstorming of programs by such teams often produced innovative project designs which were 'incubated' by the SP/CD, but

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passed on to other appropriate departments and/or agencies for them to implement. This was a novel alternative to the 'empire building' that can occur in many organizations. The SP/CD thus avoided for a time the administration of social services programs, and their planning and delivery. As a result, social planners were not held back by rigid operating standards and regulations found more often in other civic departments.

A primary feature of the department's productive flexibility and innovation was its 'bias to action'. While social planners conducted some strategic planning toward fulfilling their long term mandate, the SP/CD's director stressed prompt, practical intervention to urgent problems. This allowed staff to select different planning strategies and options. The SP/CD social planners' tools ranged from pragmatism and opportunism, to social activism, advocacy, and political bargaining. The long list of programs and projects incubated or implemented by the SP/CD is testimony to the department's innovation and productivity. And while today many similar programs are taken for granted in many municipalities, it must be remembered that they were novel at the time.

However, if pragmatism allowed social planners a degree of leeway and flexibility to pursue projects and programs of their own personal agendas, it also affected the department's longer term direction, especially after the initial planners were replaced by newcomers. For instance, although the department's mandate included the function of local area coordination, not every social planners hired after the original three were as equally committed, nor experientially equipped for the task (Kobylka, personal communication).

As the SP/CD grew and changed, the common base or philosophy for community development, and the team-work approach to establishing directions and evaluating accomplishments gradually diminished. The local area planning approach, for example, was inconsistently implemented between areas and neighbourhoods, and by different social planners.

4.9.3 Organizational Structure

Because of the department's small budget and its lack of involvement in direct service delivery, the initial structure remained simple at first. The style was 'collegial' and collaborative. Communications channels within the department were more open than in other civic departments and could take place outside of typical hierarchical structures. Considering the newness of the department and its initial struggle to gain legitimacy within a long established institution steeped in hierarchical physical planning traditions, Vancouver's social planners enjoyed a remarkable degree of access to City Council, as well as to other department heads and staff. Communications between the department and community groups were encouraged to develop in a collegial, non-hierarchical, non-paternalistic manner, allowing community development workers to operate in a cooperative environment in the many local areas throughout the city.

However, the overall local government structure into which the SP/CD fitted was more hierarchical, ponderous, and inflexible than the internal structure of the social planning agency. While social planners could effectively work together or with community groups receptive to new planning and decision making processes which included them, the same did not hold true when inter-departmental collaboration was required. The Parks and Recreation Board, for example, which had long been an autonomous organization in the City, having its own separate electoral and revenue collecting/expending processes, was seen by some as continually resisted collaborating in social planning initiatives whenever a clash of interests was perceived. This may have been due to a "turf war" mentality or because the plans for collaboration and integration were too conceptual and unproven to the satisfaction of established organizations.

4.9.4 Organizational Mission

The SP/CD can be said to have had a 'vision' and process of social improvement to which both its director and social planners were committed. The vision was the improve the quality of life, or well-being of families and individuals, including the cultural dimension of city living. The process included: valuing local participation in the planning, designing and delivery of necessary

social services to city residents, and the organization and empowerment of social groups to learn to participate in local democratic processes (as envisioned in the concept of community development).

While the outcome of the community development process generally related to the efficient delivery of City services, the overall community well-being product the SP/CD was mandated to deliver was a quality urban environment to ensure quality community and family living. This included cultural and social programs for all residents, appropriate built forms conducive to safety, recreation, and health, open access to government, and involvement in local urban planning initiatives.

The organizational culture of the SP/CD reflected its mission in approach and strategies used. For instance, the social mobilization approach used by some social planners inspired both the development of the Britannia Community Centre and the resistance of the Strathcona community to urban renewal. The lessons learned by community groups from the development of the Britannia Community Centre illustrate the organizational commitment of social planners to 'people power', or as Clague (1988) put it, a "partnership between equals". However, while the department pursued its organizational vision, the same cannot be said of the larger city structure or its mission. City structures and procedures proved continually resistant, but not impervious, to changes in the way it conducted its business.

5.0.0   CHAPTER FIVE

5.0.1   Municipal Social Planning: An Epilogue

Chapters three and four dealt primarily with the history of municipal social planning practices administered by the department Social Planning and Community Development in the City of Vancouver between 1967 and 1976. The general focus of both chapters was to examine the origin, mandate, functions, roles, structures, and programs of the department.

Chapter five identifies some of the important changes that later took place within the SP/CD several years after the thesis' primary period of study. Chapter five also compares both periods regarding issues of organizational effectiveness, innovation, flexibility, and leadership and suggests explanations for the SP/CD's gradual loss of focus, flexibility and innovative planning practices which have been identified as significant findings throughout the case study.

5.1.1   1980: The End of an Era

The first SP/CD director resigned from the SP/CD in 1980 after twelve years at the helm of a municipal institutional created as an organizational experiment to expand the scope of activities and attitudes of the existing urban planning department. Several other social planners left the department as well around 1980. A new director was appointed by Council. He was not a social planner and was hired from outside of the SP/CD, thus initiating a new phase in the department's evolution. The new director proceeded to influence the SP/CD's direction with his own particular style and planning approach.

As a result of disappointment in some social planning staff that one of their members had not been chosen to succeed Egan, problems developed within the department and spilled over into other agencies. The department's internal troubles surfaced in the local media in 1979. Political leaders at the time publicly denied that resignations by a senior planner and the director of the City Planning Department were politically motivated (Courier, June 25, 1979). However,

comments to the media by some department staff, combined with the apparent need to establish a task force to conduct a departmental review of the SP/CD pointed to a shift in government priorities and practices in regards to social planning activities and responsibilities.

Within this new climate of caution, management's direction over the department grew increasingly technocratic. Social planners became frustrated and unfocussed to the point where the department lost some of its original credibility as an effective agency. According to Warren (personal communications), during the 1980s the SP/CD "was easily ignored by other departments". Adding to their difficulties, some staff felt that the new director did not support them unconditionally, especially if their activities involved challenges to the jurisdictions of other municipal departments.

This situation grew exceedingly difficult for the following nine years until four social planners approached the City Manager's office requesting a review of the department's mandate and direction. This 'palace revolt' led to the appointment of a restructuring committee. In 1989 the activities of the SP/CD (renamed the Social Planning Department) came under intensive review (CVA, June, 1990). With this review of the department's mandate (and its utility to the city) came an identification of the department's current problems. While not assigning blame, it seemed to point to a number of dysfunctions that were tacitly understood by departmental staff. These problems were identified as:

- Loss of focus (too many issues, projects, and areas of administrative responsibility)
- Lack of assessment of department's priorities reflective of most pressing social and cultural needs of the community
- No priority given to expenditures of resources needed to do a credible job
- Lost much of its entrepreneurial capacity because of a huge increase in administrative, operational responsibility.
- Leadership and direction have been weak (no strong or committed leadership).
- The department has become overly politicized (projects and methods have sometimes been put forward on the basis of political palatability rather than community need).
- The community-base of the department has been eroded (staff spend too much time in the office).
- Too many people don't know what the department is doing (poor communications).

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- Staff are stretched too thin (overburdened staff leads to low morale, feelings of guilt and lack of accomplishment, and less outreach to the community). (City Manager's Report to City Council, June 16, 1989 :11).

Seven major changes to the department's operations were suggested (including eighteen separate recommendations to City Council). These suggested changes are summarized below:

1) Establish a manageable set of priorities (reflective of community issues).
2) Divest itself of some, if not all, operational, administrative responsibilities.
3) Develop more effective partnerships with other departments, community groups and institutions (more staff presence in the community).
4) Identify specific functions and methods of operation which will be most effective to fulfill its mandate and role.
5) Change its structure and re-allocate resources in view of the priorities and functions established.
6) Develop effective and accountable management and leadership which will in large part, determine and support future endeavours (must be supported by Council).
7) Receive a strong mandate to proceed. (City Manager's Report to City Council, June 16, 1989 :12)

The department's restructuring has been viewed as an important impetus for the subsequent 'turnaround' that took place within the department (Warren, personal communications). The restructuring committee made eighteen recommendations to city council for structural and functional changes in their departmental review. This was followed with a major reaffirmation by City Council to the work done by the department.

5.1.2 Restructuring in the 1990s

As a result of the 1989 restructuring initiative and the subsequent downsizing of the department, a new social planning director was appointed. Having inherited the above changes, the new director set about to focus the department's work into a few key areas, in particular community services and cultural activities. While this new director maintained her position on the Development Permit Board, she was able to rid the SP/CD of a number of unnecessary

administrative functions, thus freeing personnel resources for what social planners considered more important activities (Warren, personal communication).

5.2.0   Reviving Social Planning: Reinventing Government in the 1990s

One important area where the newly-restructured social planning department made an impact involved the recently proposed Integrated Service Delivery initiative. Owing to a refreshing attitude within the SP/CD of "staff empowerment and self-worth as part of the bureaucracy" (Warren, personal communications), social planners in the 1990s have embarked on a creative new project (instigated by council through the City Manager's Office) to explore issues concerning social development and aging (Vancouver, Sept. 20, 1994). Social planners are working on the development of an entirely new and participatory process that challenges traditional, technocratic planning mechanisms and aims at simultaneously improving inter-departmental collaboration and further advancing partnerships between the municipality and its community.

The Ready or Not process on aging issues envisioned the design of neighbourhood based, joint-decision making teams (departmental staff and local citizens) mandated to seek common social goals transcending traditional departmental jurisdictions (Vancouver, Sept. 20, 1994). The anticipated success of the process was based on the increase in the "internal consciousness and community legacy" in the form of ongoing Ready or Not neighbourhood groups. Many of these neighbourhood groups later became major participants in the City Planning Department's comprehensive public involvement scheme, called CITY PLAN (Warren, personal communication). Additionally, the Ready or Not initiative facilitated subsequent networking forays into the community by social planners. The credibility earned through these initiatives helped the department build stronger community relations.

The public consultation process used in the Ready or Not project is perceived to be gradually altering the thinking of municipal governors, and the planning processes and structures used to

deal with changing social issues. In a recent initiative to reform municipal administration, City staff have formed what are known as Corporate Management Teams. In the administrative report from the City Manager's office to city council (Vancouver, Sept. 20, 1994 :2), the city manager "recommends that Council approve the Integrated Service Delivery Model for City operations" with the overall goal of improving the efficiency and responsiveness of City programs, services and facilities.

Recognizing changing social conditions in the community, these recommendations were intended to maintain the quality of existing services and improve City staff's sense of corporate identity. The goal for implementing this concept of integrated services delivery teams was to "ensure an open City government and an effective, efficient community-based service delivery" (:2) based upon the following objectives:

- to provide user friendly (responsive, efficient, visible, understood and accessible) City services;
- improve access to information for culturally diverse communities that make up Vancouver;
- to coordinate inter-departmental responses through line staff at the neighbourhood level, on the basis of issues;
- to improve public process and community participation in issue identification and problem solving; and
- to promote more creative, collaborative problem solving (:2).

City managers recognized that more could be done with existing staff currently "operating in the field" in the multitude of municipal facilities spread out in twenty four districts or "local areas". Networking, e-mail communications, and other training and support would be made available to teams to assist them in their role as local planners and problem solvers. A typical service team "might contain members from Police, Fire, Library, Health, Park Board, Engineering, Planning, Permits and Licenses, Social Planning, and Housing and Properties" (:5). The teams' responsibilities would include "communicating its presence to the community, coordinating local services, and providing access to civic information". Developing a proactive response to local

community issues and encouraging community based solutions are two additional responsibilities of the management teams (:5).

The implications for staff and structural re-organizing of municipal departments will likely be significant. New skills may be required by urban planners and/or employees working for the Parks and Recreation Board, for example. New skills and practices may include competence in team work and team building, including working across divisional and functional lines, communicating and consensus building, improved customer relations and commitment to quality service delivery, and inter-departmental cooperation and coordination (:8).

Yet these changes are expected without increasing funding to the programs involved. This condition may result in resistance from some employees who may feel their job descriptions significantly altered without their consent. Other employees may resist because of lack of interest or motivation for improving their own personal performances or the performance of their agencies. Some may feel their territory is being trespassed upon as non-hierarchical teams supplant the more traditional organizational hierarchies. Organizational barriers, in the form of operating rules and procedures may interfere with the efficiency of the team approach. Such regulations may need to be modified to allow innovation to proceed.

6.0.0 CHAPTER SIX

> What I tried hardest to do was ensure that every officer and man on the ship not only knew what we were about, not only why we were doing each tactical evolution, however onerous, but also managed to understand enough about how it all fitted together that he could begin to experience some of the fun and challenge that those of us in the top slots were having. Our techniques were not unusual. We made frequent announcements over the loudspeaker about the specific events that were going on. At the beginning and the end of the day, I discussed with the officers who, in turn, discussed with their men what was about to happen and what had just happened, what the competition was doing and what we should do to meet it. We published written notes in the plan of the day that would give the crew some of the color or human interest of what the ship was doing. I had bull sessions in the chief petty officers' quarters, where I often stopped for a cup of coffee. More important than any of these details, of course, was the basic effort to communicate a sense of excitement, fun and zest in all that we were doing. (Bud Zumwalt, ex-Chief of Naval Operations, U.S. Navy. cited in Peters and Waterman Jr., 1982 :235)

As stated in Chapter One, the purpose of this thesis is to examine the concept of Excellence in the context of effective management, leadership, and planning strategies in a municipal government urban planning agency, and to identify the potential for sustaining an effective, innovative, and learning organization over the long term.

The literature review in Chapter two identified the hypothesis (made by some urban planners) that the current state of governance and planning practice is characterized by inefficiency, ineffectiveness, waste, political maneuvering, and incremental change. It was found in chapter two that some writers were promoting the qualities and attributes of Excellence in government while a few writers on urban planning believed that such qualities, if encouraged in planning agencies, could help resolve some of the many social problems facing urban regions. However, what was not clear in the same literature was how the qualities of Excellence could be sustained in the long term in government institutions such as urban planning agencies given that some of barriers and obstacles faced by these organizations were different than those in profit seeking business firms.

Chapters three, four and five identified important case study findings suggesting that while qualities like those characterized by the concept of Excellence may have been present in one municipal urban social planning agency in particular, other factors may also have been operating which may explain the agency's apparent initial effectiveness. Additionally, case study findings suggested that specific barriers to organizational effectiveness persisted within the municipal organization in general and that these barriers may have accounted for the gradual decline in the SP/CD's effectiveness over a period of less than eight years.

Based on these findings chapter six summarizes the major case study findings and generalizes about the opportunities and barriers implicated in effective urban planning practices. These opportunities and barriers are explored in the context of leadership and management styles, innovative and flexible organizational structures and strategies in urban planning functions and practices.

6.1.0   Social Planning and Effective Local Government: A Summary of Findings

Urban planners, and social planners in particular, are generally concerned with understanding and utilizing effective strategies for achieving their objectives, whether these are organizational or substantive. Planners constantly seek the means to "gettting the job done". When the objective, or "job" involves intentional interventions in social welfare, planners need to be aware of, and find ways to deal with, the many complex and inter-related variables and dimension influencing effective outcomes. The attributes that inform the concepts of Excellence and Learning Organizations are two such dimensions of effectiveness that require systematic analysis by planners.

As was demonstrated in previous chapters, Excellence is a concept that describes observed behaviours, values, attitudes of successful business firms. This thesis also argued that such observed behaviours and attitudes have their parallels in various community development

practices and beliefs. Planners can use thios knowledge to understand the opportunities and limitations to effective practice.

The major findings of the case study concerning the Department of Social Planning and Community Development in the city of Vancouver are: 1) social planners and the department's first director demonstrated some attributes similar to features identified in the literature as qualities of Excellence and transformational leadership; 2) these attributes may have existed with sufficient intensity to temporarily overcome various organizational, political, and behavioural barriers to effective urban planning and problem solving, resulting in innovative approaches to resolving minor social problems; 3) these attributes were not necessarily supported nor encouraged in the other municipal departments which the SP/CD was mandated to cooperate and collaborate with; 4) over time, the attributes of Excellence faded from the SP/CD as the early excitement and energy of social planners was eroded by organizational, political, and behavioural barriers, and as new social planner replaced the original team.

Additionally, case study findings suggest that factors other than the attributes of social planners may have been responsible for the SP/CD's innovative planning approaches. These findings are briefly reviewed here.

The attributes of Excellence found in innovative organizations such as the SP/CD included: a strong commitment to the organization's mission and shared social planning values; a simple, collegial, and flexible organizational structure and operating style; a balance between contrasting needs for individual autonomy and initiative while maintaining team approaches to planning and problem solving; experimentation and innovation; a "bias to action"; and "productivity through people".

Maurice Egan, it is argued here, also exhibited some of the qualities identified in the literature as attributes of transformational leadership. The attributes included a management style that was

both "hands-on", allowing the director to stay in touch with important department business, and decentralized, encouraging autonomy and confidence that social planners could manage the day to day operations of the department. Other attributes of Egan's included: strong motivator and inspiration; intellectually stimulating; effective communicator; and able to "identify the right things to do".

The case study suggests that these attributes may have been partly responsible for making the department unique and initially successful. With a small team of creative, talented, and energetic social planners led by an experienced and politically astute motivator, the first few years of the SP/CD were characterized by innovation, non-conformity and, perhaps radical urban planning strategies and tactics.

However, other case study findings suggest additional explanations for the SP/CD's initial success. Volumes have been written concerning the rapid changes in attitudes and values that took place in many countries during the 1960s. Many of those interviewed referred to the historical influence of events during the 1960s over a number of social, political, and economic conditions. The normally incremental process of social change happened, for a variety of reasons, to accelerate during this period, resulting in an outburst of new and different attitudes and approaches to organizing, community development, urban planning and governance.

Social planners arrived on the scene while these changes were occurring (and perhaps as a result of these changes) and may have simply taken advantage of the turmoil and new opportunities to think and behave in innovative ways. Being a small team with an inconsequential budget, social planners may have acquired their autonomy for a variety of reasons.

One, the department was too small to be considered a threat to the more established departments, commissions, and boards. Two, the SP/CD's mandate appeared ambiguous enough that it did not represent a challenge to the resources of other groups. Three, the new director quickly ingratiated

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himself with his political superiors, and developed strategic alliances within the community (especially with the media) thereby gradually acquiring a degree of influence and autonomy for his department to get the job done. Four, being a new agency, social planners began their efforts with a fresh mandate and no previous experience with rigid operating procedures, regulations, codes, stifling bureaucratic processes, turf-wars, and other "normal" conditions of government institutions that eventually lead to resignation or burn-out.

Finally, chance and abundant financial resources may have played a role in delivering success into the hands of the SP/CD. The department's initial projects happened to succeed during a period when more senior levels of government were distributing massive amounts of financial assistance to a variety of experimental social programs and projects. Perhaps the timing of some project successes was simply coincidental. With enough government money thrown at a issue, some positive results were bound to surface.

Because the SP/CD's history shows that the attributes of Excellence and transformational leadership were not as apparent in the department twenty years after its formation, several possibilities are suggested for the apparent decline in the SP/CD's effectiveness and innovative achievements. Some case study findings suggest that certain persistent political, organizational, and behavioural barriers obstructed the SP/CD's activities.

These barriers may have acted like friction and sapped the energy and commitment of social planners, leading eventually to fatigue, loss of excitement, commitment, and creativity. Over time, as social planners left the department and were replaced by new staff, previously high levels of performance, creativity, and risk taking were discouraged by the new leadership. Sources of innovation evaporated and organizational reforms diminished.

The SP/CD became more like other municipal departments. Getting the job done was often hindered by organizational 'red-tape' while department operations grew less responsive to

changing circumstances and increasingly ponderous in the way planners dealt with social issues. Social planning staff gradually came to feel out of touch with their clients' needs. The SP/CD came to lose its ability and legitimacy to influence reforms within other departments in the city. Without a leader willing to take, and encourage risk, innovation could not be sustained. The political struggle by social planners to overcome or transform the multifaceted barriers within City Hall gradually lost its momentum. At some point the SD/CD reached a state of inertia as the barriers to organizational change hampered the department's effectiveness.

However, other findings indicate that over the long term, the SP/CD did have some significant impact on the overall government operations of the City of Vancouver. While the SP/CD became more administrative and less innovative some findings indicate that another city department was gradually learning to use the public participation strategies developed earlier by social planners. During the last fifteen years or so, the city planning department has initiated a number of interesting and innovative social programs and projects.

The recent multi-year public participation initiative called CITY PLAN, an initiative involving most municipal departments in a large scale planning dialogue (which includes massive citizen participation in the planning and designing of the city's physical, ecological, and social development), is an innovative experiment in organizational integration. However, upon closer inspection of the CITY PLAN process differences appear between the City Planning Department's and the SP/CD's approach to community development through citizen participation.

City Planning's approach, it may be argued, is to construct a massive public relations campaign to encourage city residents to join a dialogue with urban planners and decision makers, thereby legitimizing decisions that have been previously made by planning technocrats. Social planning's approach, at least conceptually, was to empower neighbourhoods to take control over their own destinies (this is theoretical since no hard evidence exists to show that neighbourhoods were actually "empowered").

Some credit should go to the SP/CD for introducing new ideas, programs, projects, and approaches for broadening the scope of municipal planning to include social, cultural, and community development issues. However, while these are interesting, research for this thesis has not uncovered any definitive explanation for the changes that took place within the SP/CD itself over time. The SP/CD gradually mirrored the inflexibility of more traditional government bureaucracies when it evolved its own standard procedures for operating the department. In other words, the SP/CD both influenced, and was influenced by, the general institutional conditions that pervaded the municipal government. Research findings suggest that while the SP/CD may have been progressively influencing the way in which the City operated in general, a reverse process of transformation was also taking place. The following sections examine the general implications of these case study findings in regards to what can be learned about the opportunities and constraints involved in developing and/or nurturing attributes of leadership and Excellence within a local government urban planning organization.

6.2.0   Generalizations About Excellence: From the Private to the Public Sector

Are the attributes of Excellence relevant to the effective functioning of municipal urban planning agencies? Are private sector organizations similar enough to public institutions that generalizations concerning Excellence can be easily made? What are the limits to which such generalizations can be made about barriers and opportunities for sustaining Excellence in an urban planning agency? These are perhaps the most pertinent questions arising from this thesis. The remainder of this chapter addresses these issues.

Although social planners in Vancouver probably never used the terminology of Excellence to describe their working styles (at least this was not discovered in the documents), some similarities are suggested between the actual practices used in the SP/CD and the literature concerning this genre.

Concepts of transformational leadership and inter-disciplinary team work are found in many professional activities, from business partnerships to collaborations in scientific research and discoveries. They seem also to exist in the field of urban planning. However, the literature concerning the opportunities and barriers to sustaining effective leadership and organizational innovation over the long term is deficient when it comes to the public sector. Lessons regarding what might take place in an innovative local government planning agency over time are not well documented in the literature here reviewed. Much of that literature focuses primarily on profit-seeking firms demonstrating considerably different approaches to managing and motivating its employees.

The literature concerning Canadian public sector organizations is meager while the American literature provides only very recent case studies of 'entrepreneurial government' initiatives. This literature is neither systematic in its research approach nor does it study the problem for sufficient duration to inform us regarding the a long term implications for organizational change in a local government planning agency that exhibited transformational leadership, individual qualities of innovation, flexibility, empowered staff, and the other attributes of Excellence.

However, one surprising finding to come out of the literature review regarding new-age business management practices is the similarity between the business literature's acknowledgment of managers' social responsibility, workforce needs for recognition, belonging, and autonomy, and other similar tenets of adult learning. Rothmann's (1970) models of community organizing practices (locality development, social action, and social planning) identify similar processes like social learning, decentralized control of planning and decision making processes, empowered team-work approaches to task fulfillment, and people's need for self-actualization.

We saw in Reinventing Government (Osborne & Gaebler, 1993) that effectiveness in government might be achieved through sustained commitment to an *ideal* of quality and high performance. Regardless that the language in the literature on Excellence has been couched in

terms concerned with profit-seeking and business management, the *commitment* to Excellence in organizations may simply be a familiar community development attribute that has been re-packaged in a new guise. One does not have to search very far in the conventional community development or adult education literature to discover similar values of transformational leadership, participation in local problem solving processes, social learning, empowerment of individuals, teamwork, creative flexibility, etc.

It seems that what 'new-age' management consultants like Peters have 're-discovered' from examining effective business firms are characteristics of individuals aspiring toward greater degrees of autonomy, fulfillment, and self-actualization, yet in the shared, cooperative context of a firm, agency, institution, neighbourhood, or any other term that has come to be called 'community'. It should not seem surprising. therefore, that the case study findings indicate the existence of such attributes in a local government planning department, at least within the context of a "collegial" work environment. What would be surprising is if such personal pursuits of individual growth and achievements could be directly translated into comprehensive social transformation.

Excellence, it was found, may assist individuals and work-teams to overcome some organizational, political, or behavioural barriers to effectiveness because of the flexibility, creativity, and independent initiative that is released through encouragement by transformational leaders. However, Excellence alone will not resolve the substantial social problems that exist which are rooted in larger socio-economic, political or ecological systems and processes. Organizations that model Excellence, and parallel values of community development, collective effort, and individual growth and development, may gradually make a positive contribution to further institutional reforms. Excellence, like other professional codes of ethics, may eventually become institutionalized within planning schools and planning agencies alike.

One very important difference exists between private and public sector organizations: the underlying reason for their existence. All private sector businesses exist to maximize their own profitability and to distribute the dividends to their shareholders. Public sector organizations, like the communities they serve, plan for, protect, and develop, are not nearly so homogeneous as capital accumulating firms. A widely divergent range of values, philosophies, attitudes, and behaviours exist within a community, a city, and the institutions that govern both.

Governance of communities is a political act, completely unlike the economics of profitability. Politics cannot maximize all needs, wants, demands, privileges, and special interests simultaneously. Politics is about choices, trade-offs, and compromises, and about competition by different groups for the power to make those choices. As a result of this competitive process, some stakeholders will benefit while others will bear greater costs for the governance choices that are made. Neither social planning nor community development, no matter how "excellent", or innovative, or flexible, can ever change this reality.

Excellence, it seems, cannot "empower" communities or cities to "take control" over their own destinies. The concept is useful, perhaps, only its its value to encourage individuals to strive and develop their own potential as sentient, self-conscious, and social animals living within the present constraints of capitalist democratic systems. Concepts like Excellence may also hold the capacity to inspire some individuals to strive more energetically against these constraints and to gradually push against current limits to freedom for themselves and others.

While Peters and Waterman Jr.'s finding regarding the attributes of 'Excellence' are not new, they are relevant to our understanding of what might constitute effective personal practices in the public sector. The literature regarding Excellence and well performing organizations did not really demonstrate how certain occupational and organizational practices, when combined under the inspiration of transformational leadership, could overcome or circumvent many of the traditional institutional barriers to planned social change.

6.3.0 Conclusion

The information volunteered by the informants revealed that while qualities of Excellence existed in the SP/CD, both in the department's leadership, its original staff, and in its operating and planning style, significant political, behavioural, and institutional barriers combined to gradually reduce the department's effectiveness within just a few short years. This interpretation was bolstered by the documentary evidence, including journalistic reports on the SP/CD.

The findings of this thesis, based on an examination of municipal social planning history in Vancouver, suggest that a cyclical process of organizational reform may be taking place. Because the process of organizational reform is gradual, complex, and prone to backsliding into former operational patterns, the analysis of such occurrences is problematical. Changes within organizations, just as with individuals, involves continuous learning. It is difficult, if not impossible to predict all of the possible outcomes of even modest changes in thought, values, or behaviour. Some individuals will embrace a proposed or established reform to operating procedures while others may reject it. Either decision will carry implications for the long term development and success or failure of the organizational reforms sought.

The City of Vancouver has had thirty years of practice at integrating the work of different departments, trying to develop an inter-departmental team approach to planning and delivering the City services and programs. After these decades of trial and error, some success and many failures, the learning curve for individuals trying to implement this 'new' approach is possibly not as steep now as it was in 1968 when integration was first attempted. Additionally, an entire generation of planners, social workers, and public administrators, have been educated and trained to acknowledge the reality of community development, citizen participation, and the notion that functional integration of multiple departments within a larger organization may create efficiencies through cooperation, coordination, and a reduction in duplication of programs and activities.

Attributes of Excellence can easily be dismissed an impossible ideals. So are most religious, philosophical, or moral guides to human behaviour. However, society seems to require such guides to ethical behaviour, professional standards, and strategies for building community and working cooperatively. Human society requires ideals to strive for, to make living meaningful, to give value to its efforts.

Attributes of Excellence, as far as they go, are not necessarily unrealistically or unattainable. Many individuals around us seem constantly to be striving for Excellence, in sports, art, business or relationships with others. They are people whom we look up to as heroes and long to emulate. They are the people around us who stimulate and inspire us to perform our best, who encourage us to be positive and to make a real effort in the world. Attributes of Excellence are merely qualities of people who recognize that to improve the world we need to begin by improving our selves. Truly creative and committed people recognize that community development itself is an important social and individual goal. Excellence practices, while not new, need to be more generally promoted and accepted as a part of the organizational agenda of local governments and their urban planning agencies which are mandated to seek inclusive, fair, and democratic means for improving the urban quality of life for all residents.

Planners and planning students may find some interest in the concept of Excellence and Learning Organizations if it assists them to operationalize particular values, ethics, and attitudes of community development and individual growth and development into effective organizational practices. A systematic approach to understanding the opportunities, and especially the limitations, of Excellence, may produce usable models and strategies for effective social planning.

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