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Date April 11, 2000
Abstract

This study explored the nature of barriers to the implementation of sustainable development planning on Vancouver Island as perceived by land use planners. The study provides insights into strategies that planners see as useful when faced with barriers to planning for sustainable development. Recent planning literature suggested the three categories of planning employed throughout the study: political, institutional and public.

Qualitative methods were used because of their strengths for producing insights into planners' decision-making in the context of their everyday work situations. The methods were also suggested by a review of planning literature and other relevant descriptive studies recently completed in the study region. The principal method used in this exploratory and inductive study was in-depth, personal interviews in which open-ended questions were asked of twenty practicing regional and city public planners from five regional districts on Vancouver Island.

Respondents noted 133 challenges. These were analyzed and synthesized into 20 categories. These categories of challenges ranged from planners lacking professional credibility with elected officials and the public to institutionalized conflicts within and between municipal and provincial government departments. Respondents noted 73 planning strategies that were found to be comprised by 16 categories. The categories of strategies ranged from increasing public trust in planning through using multiple, optimal means of public consultation, to fostering interagency coordination, and educating elected officials. Possible explanations are discussed as to why respondents identified relatively few challenges and strategies explicitly related to sustainable development planning.

Concluding implications are offered for professionals and agencies involved with public planning.
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List of Acronyms

BCRTEE – British Columbia Round Table on the Environment and Economy
BCTFEE – British Columbia Task Force on the Environment and the Economy
CORE – Commission on Resources and Environment
DFAIT – Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade
MMA – Ministry of Municipal Affairs
NRTEE – National Round Table on the Environment and Economy
RD – regional district(s)
SISCN – South Island Sustainable Communities Network
WCED – World Commission on Environment and Development
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Chapter 1: Introduction

"The search for the best path to sustainable development should logically begin with a critical examination of current planning" (Richardson, 1989).

1.1 The Research Focus

The purpose of this study is to explore the nature of barriers to the implementation of sustainable development planning on Vancouver Island as perceived by land use planners. The aim is also to obtain insights into strategies that planners see as useful when faced with barriers to planning for sustainable development.

This study is premised upon the beliefs: (1) that public land use planners are interested in planning for sustainable development, (2) that most planners face significant difficulties in attempting to practice sustainable development planning; and (3) that it is worthwhile to consider the ways that planners try to overcome barriers to planning for sustainable development. Two other premises are: that Vancouver Island provides a region where natural capital is at risk of degradation, and that recent provincial legislation enables and politically legitimates striving to make local land use planning more consistent with sustainable development practices.

1.2 Background on Sustainable Development and Planning

The concept of sustainable development has been emerging in different forms for decades.\(^1\) It has been used variously to refer to resource conservation; living within ecological limits, advancing social development and investing in natural capital, and reducing global inequity. One of the earlier references to the concept of sustainable development was made in 1915, by Canada's Commission on Conservation. The Commission stated, "Each generation is entitled to the interest on the natural capital, but the principal should be handed on unimpaired" (cited in Keating, 1989, p.24). The same basic concept was popularized in 1973 by E.F. Schumacher's, *Small is Beautiful: Economics as if People Mattered*. Schumacher argued on the second page of his book that humanity exhibits a "failure to distinguish between income and capital where this distinction matters most" (Schumacher, 1973). He stated that humans must come to sustain their material needs based on the annual production or “interest” of nature or what is now called “natural income” in ecological economics. Since 1973 there has been powerful growth in this field of ideas; a field that has become known as sustainable development.

In 1987, the United Nations' World Commission on Environment and Development report, *Our Common Future*, widely publicized the concept of sustainable development. The report stated, "[S]ustainable development meets the needs of the present without

compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs" (World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED), 1987, p.43). This opening definition was sufficiently vague to be acceptable to a wide spectrum of political interests (Heiman, 1997, p.1). It was construed to have broad implications for progressive societal change (e.g. wealth redistribution and environmental protection) in favour of social development and environmental interests. However it was also interpreted, to the benefit of private sector and elite interests, as encouraging continued (even if "redefined") economic and technological growth (Rees, 1988a, Keating, 1989). One might say that sustainable development was for some a "comforting incantation...a blessed condition in which growth can continue indefinitely, ecologically, and profitably" (Athansiou, 1998, p.290). Discussions on the meaning and implications of sustainable development for many fields of human endeavour have continued to evolve in the twelve years since the Brundtland Commission's report was released (Hediger, 1997; Heiman, 1997; Rees, 1988b). These discussions are examined later in the literature review included as an Appendix to this document. In particular, the concept of sustainable development has stimulated widespread discussions of social, economic and environmental decision making in the field of public planning.

Public land-use planning provides significant potential for sustainable development analysis and action if one assumes that practicing sustainable development involves integrated analysis (of planning processes and outcomes) through multiple lenses of economic viability, social well-being and ecological impacts. Canada stated in its fifth submission to the United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development that it believes, "[S]ocieties need to find innovative ways to integrate environmental, economic and social concerns, build partnerships, and improve governance in support of sustainability" (DFAIT, 1997, p.15). The pursuit of sustainable development is of course highly relevant to the field of planning. Breheny states that presently, "[T]he sustainable development imperative dominates planning" (Breheny, 1998 p.479).

Recently Beatley and Manning have proposed a series of tenets for sustainable development and the creation of "sustainable places" in a manner that is highly relevant to public planning. They state that "sustainable places" exhibit the following qualities:

- Acknowledge Fundamental Ecological Limits
- Are Restorative and Regenerative (of the natural and built environments)
- Strive for a High Quality of Life
- Nurture a sense of place by understanding and respecting its bioregional context
- Are Integrative and Holistic
- Implies a New Ethical Posture...with the interests of the future in mind
- Strive to be Equitable and Just
- Stress the Importance of Community

See the three foundations of sustainability: economic, social and environmental noted in CORE, 1994b, p.13 and the same framework in BCRTEE, 1993a, p. 28. Also see Hodge, 1998. p.433.
In terms of planning scale, Cartwright argues, "[M]any sustainability issues are best addressed at the local level, and delivery of sustainable development at this level must be the primary responsibility of local authorities" (1997, p.337). In relation to the results of the 1992 U.N. Conference on Environment and Development, Cartwright says, "[t]he "global environment and development action plan for the 21st century (Agenda 21) called upon local authorities to work towards sustainable development by initiating a 'Local Agenda 21' process" (1997, p.337). Similarly it has been stated that, "[C]ities provide enormous, untapped opportunities to solve environmental challenges, local governments can pioneer approaches to sustainable development;..." (Roseland, 1992a, p.18). One example of the potential positive contribution local public planning can make towards sustainable development is evident in the area of climate change. Canadian municipalities "directly or indirectly control or influence almost half of Canada's greenhouse gas emissions." ("Climate Control," 1999, p.26) Examples such as this one demonstrate the important potential role of land use planning in helping realize sustainable development.

The advent of new land use planning powers results in public planners in British Columbia holding increasingly crucial roles in our municipal and regional governments for implementing principles of sustainable development at the community and watershed levels. Many planners are keenly aware of and interested in the interactive social, economic and ecological spheres of their work. In the realm of planning education, surveys of planning schools' curriculum and student theses have shown significant consideration of sustainable development.

The high level of public concern about the environment in the late 1980's and early 1990's helped create "...a fundamental shift in the thinking of city planners: away from the view of low-density zoning as a priority, in favour of more compact and efficient land use (i.e. higher densities)" (ORTEE, 1992, p.41). The Canadian Institute of Planners' Statement of Values incorporates the concept of sustainable development. Furthermore, Maclaren points that sustainable development is considered as a guiding principle or goal in many recent municipal plans in Canada (1994, p.2).

Theoretically, planners can implement these sustainable development principles in how they: gather and analyze information, involve and educate the public, present informed decision-making opportunities to elected officials and monitor outcomes. Beatley and Manning state, "[P]lanners clearly..."
have a critical role to play in promoting the dialogue about sustainability and in conceiving public policy solutions that promote community sustainability" (1997, p.229). According to Rees, these opportunities result in planners being "...uniquely positioned to play a leadership role...[in achieving] the first intentional paradigm shift in the entire history of our species [towards sustainability]" (1995a, p.355).

1.3 Challenges to Planning

In these implementation roles planners encounter a wide number of challenges and experience significant job frustration (Filion, 1997, p.11). "[Planners] often feel overwhelmed by the exercise of private economic power or by politics, or by both" (Forester, 1982, p.67). Recent doctorate research at the University of British Columbia has found that planners often find themselves being "agents of order more than being agents of change." Similarly, Qadeer argues, “The bulk of planning practice has turned into bureaucratic routines. It consists of processing development applications, negotiating approvals and enforcing regulations. The practice has been characterized as “negative” planning” in the sense that it primarily reacts to proposals and ideas formulated by others (1991, p.16). These comments are consistent with views that planners are presently, "acting as little more than developmental traffic cops" (Rees, 1995a, p.357), and that “planning seems to act more as a branch of the real estate industry than as a visionary profession of community designers” (Grant, 1991).

Perhaps as a consequence of challenges to planning, let alone challenges specific to sustainable development planning, a number of theorists question the effectiveness of planners' efforts. This questioning of traditional planning effectiveness partly arises from theorists who argue that frustration is increasing amongst planners who try to identify, protect and develop the public good (Knight, 1991, p.1). Public planning also lost significant public support during the 1980's because of its association with local government as an institutional environment subject to claims of "inefficiency, pejorative notions of bureaucracy, and a lack of accountability" (Campbell & Marshall, 1998, p.2). It has also been argued in the United Kingdom that the town planning profession is no longer needed because of significant criticisms such as those noted here.

Evans raises a concern that professionalization of planning has hidden the political public discourse that needs to occur by misrepresenting political questions as technical ones. Moreover Evans argues, "The social and political institution of the town planning

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8 See David Witty's doctorate thesis, School of Community and Regional Planning at U.B.C. (defended on August 19, 1998).
10 Knight refers to studies by Fagence 1977, Lim 1986 and Howe 1980. Also see Punter, 1990, p.9. Punter argues privatization in the UK combined with decreased local planning power and increased influence of international capital has resulted in decline in the quality of public spaces now notable for their "design mediocrity, deadness and public squalor."
profession serves as a hindrance to the development of effective policy and political approaches to our current environmental problems, and that it is restricting our capacity to respond to the environmental agenda for the next decade" (Evans, 1993, p.10). He believes the professionalization of town planning is part of a "corporatist intermediation," or bargaining process, where "the state grants...professions, a high level of influence on policy...in exchange [for] achieving policy goals which fit within predetermined parameters and limits. Crucially, this means delivering the compliance of organisation or profession members in the implementation of policy [and thus] stifle[s] debate and obstruct[s] ideas which challenge contemporary society" (1993, p.16). Although planning has survived these fundamental attacks "on the very foundations and institutions associated with planning," it can be argued that it has not survived them without responsive adaptation and redefinition of planning success and effectiveness (Campbell & Marshall, 1996, p.2).

1.4 Challenges to Sustainable Development Planning

The role of environmental planning seems to have increased in response to the call for sustainable development despite continuing overarching questions about the jurisdiction, political legitimacy and effectiveness of public planning in general. Even though environmental planning sounds innovative and appealing, one Canadian planning textbook author sees is as the 'weak link' in land-use planning (Hodge, 1998, p. 433). It should be noted there are only two formal environmental planner positions on Vancouver Island (the study area) at present. There are many municipal staff involved in "environmental services" branches such as waste and water management, though these departments are mainly orientated to delivering engineering-related services related to stable delivery of resources (i.e. potable water) and waste assimilation (i.e. sewer systems). This situation is consistent with Rees' comment on using "end of pipe environmental [planning] reforms" of the 1970's and 80's to address core ecological problems (1995a, p.355).

The institutionalized nature of planning and conventional approaches to environmental management also create challenges for environmental planning according to Roseland. He states that "...most local governments experience...frustrating institutional constraints on the development and implementation of local environmental policies" (Roseland, 1992a, p.18). Perhaps even more fundamentally, "some academics...question the expertise and remit of the planning profession to incorporate environmental claims and present itself as a green profession" (Wong, 1998, p.221). This questioning of claims to environmental legitimacy arise from the paradoxical roles planners face and the multiple authorities to whom they are accountable. It is quite logical that "local planners often have complex and contradictory duties" (Forester, 1989, p.82). Land use planners are responsible for developing basically economic and resource development plans and accountable to governments who are mostly embedded within the technological expansionist paradigm (Rees, 1995a, p.347). Yet they are simultaneously, and

11 Hodge is referring to Jennings, 1989.
increasingly cognizant of an ecological worldview and given new responsibilities for spearheading planning consistent with sustainable development (Cartwright, 1997, p.338). Roseland notes that the numbers of planners involved in environmental or sustainable development planning should not immediately equate with thinking that such planning has recently taken full successful flight. In Toward Sustainable Communities: Resources for Citizens and their Governments, Roseland writes that the "recent mushrooming of municipal and local government environmental departments, coordinators, task forces, staff committees, and citizen boards" is less encouraging when placed in historical context than it first appears. He cites a study of "nearly 3000 North American local governments in 1973 [that] found . . . 40 percent had designated environmental coordinators, and 24 percent had citizen environmental boards" (Roseland, 1998, p.210). In planners' paradoxical contexts of ecological preservation and economic development and multiple areas of accountability (public, political, short and long term), Roseland's underlying point about the constraints on real effectiveness rings even louder. Thus, there are a number of potential obstacles facing sustainable development planning efforts.

Questions can also be raised about the public's view of the effectiveness of sustainable development planning. British Columbia has experienced "many bitter conflicts about the way our land and resources are managed...[and these conflicts] have increased in number and severity over the last couple of decades" (CORE, 1994, p.12). More importantly, even a provincial government land use planning entity was willing to admit that these conflicts reflect a deeper failure to practice successful sustainable development land use planning -- "the broader problem [causing land use conflicts] is the lack of sustainable jobs, environment and quality of life" (CORE, 1994, p.5). These perceptions about the mixed success of recent sustainable development land use planning, and the conflicts facing planners beg for further understanding of what barriers might cause them, how barriers might function, and how planners respond to them.

It might be argued that, at this point in time, planning for sustainable development is not yet inherently distinct from the substantive and procedural rationality and activities of modern, non-Euclidean, pluralistic and incrementalist planning. In this vein Wong says, "It is difficult to argue that current environmental planning practice has managed to develop its own distinctive methods and techniques, or succeeded in rectifying the pitfalls and difficulties encountered in the past" (1998, p.221). Recent planning literature contains similar calls for increasing the quality and openness of current planning approaches and methods. "We do not need a new environmental [planning] profession, or a revamped old one in new clothes. Instead we need organizations and bodies which will encourage and develop our knowledge and understanding..." (Evans, 1993, p.10). These comments cause one to think that despite the recent excited focus on sustainable development planning, challenges to its successful implementation might closely resemble challenges to modern, non-Euclidean, public planning effectiveness.

12 I am using the term 'economic development' as characterized by the exchange of services and material throughput and as defined by neo-classical expansionist paradigm. For a definition of the expansionist paradigm see Rees, May 1995a. p.345-6.
1.5 Realities of Planning Implementation: Researching Contextual Understandings

The preceding analysis supports the belief that it is important to examine barriers that obstruct implementation of sustainable development practices in local land use planning. This belief is consistent with recent planning literature that suggests a "critical appraisal of [regional planning], ...probing the causes of its failures and considerable successes [that is] both conceptual and highly applied...would be highly rewarding" (Gertler, 1998, p.38-39). Less recently, but during the era of public policy contemplation on how to respond to WCED's *Our Common Future* report, the Canadian government commissioned Nigel Richardson to write "Land Use Planning and Sustainable Development." This document contained recommendations for improved institutional planning structures and improved decision-making. It argued that "The search for the best path to sustainable development should logically begin with a critical examination of current planning" (Richardson, N., 1989). This study is an attempt to continue this critical examination of current planning.

Just as the literature regarding sustainable development has burgeoned during the past decade, one might logically predict continued expansion and refinement of ideas regarding implementation obstacles and techniques in different contexts (Pezzoli, 1997, p.549). Indeed one recent analyst of local sustainable development planning barriers stated, "The concepts associated with creating sustainable communities are not difficult; it is the process of bringing them to fruition that is challenging" (Moore, 1997, p.176). Similarly, Roseland states sophisticated cataloguing of sustainable development planning tools is less critical than understanding "those situations and circumstances in which it is appropriate to employ particular [policy and planning] instruments" (Roseland, 1998, p.35). Wong, citing Batey and Breheny (1978) agrees that, "the importance of the theoretical content of planning methods is as much concerned with the political and social context of such methods as with their more specific substantive content" (Wong, 1998, p.228). Talen also argues that better understandings of contextualized planning practices can increase the value of planning evaluation. Talen states, "[T]his call to develop and refine methods to evaluate implementation success of plans coincides with the call by many theorists to develop better theories of planning based on a keener understanding of the realities of planning practice" (1996, p.248). These authors all emphasize the role of contextualized knowledge in the search for advancing effective implementation of sustainable development planning.

Friedmann has referred to the importance of contextualized knowledge through recognizing the legitimacy and value of social learning and social practice in the planning field. Pezzoli argues that "researchers...can act as mediator-advocates of the critically needed social learning and social change necessary for sustainable development." He continues, "...To engender social practice that leads to sustainable development, research must join theory and practice" (Pezzoli, 1997, p.577).13 The research at hand flows from this desire to contrast knowledge from the field and from the literature to develop insights

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13 Pezzoli in making this point references Parson and Clark, 1993; Fairlough, 1994; Gaventa, 1995; and Gunderson et al., 1995
regarding the jungle of interactions around the implementation of sustainable development.

1.6 Reasons for Focusing on Vancouver Island

Two second-order premises for this study relate to the ecological and legislative contexts for planning in communities on Vancouver Island in British Columbia. Vancouver Island seems an excellent test-region for this study with its current ecological assets and their potential for degradation and liquidation. British Columbia as a province is “recognized as the nation’s most ecologically diverse region” (BCTFEE, 1989). More specifically, Vancouver Island's "coastal temperature climate, relative abundance of water, and extremes in elevation and landforms create an extremely rich and complex variety of ecosystems" (CORE, 1994c, p.39). Some people in the environmental policy sector go so far as to say, if we can not practice sustainable development in this region given its natural amenities; then it probably cannot be achieved anywhere (Durning, 1996, p.19 and 1994, p.20). Yet Vancouver Island is an area of B.C. that is experiencing planning pressures due to population growth, economic decline in traditional resource extraction and harvesting activities, and due to economic dependency on foreign markets.

Vancouver Island has a land base of 3.2 million hectares of land (CORE, 1994) divided among six regional districts. These districts contain six cities, thirteen district municipalities, seven towns, seven villages and more than forty unincorporated areas. While Vancouver Island represented 3.5% of B.C.'s total land base, in 1996, it contained over 689,000 people or 16.6% of BC's total population and has continued to grow rapidly. The Vancouver Island population grew by 21% between 1989 and 1997 (Communities Institute, 1998, p.1).

Despite population growth and proximity to Vancouver, Vancouver Island communities have relatively low levels of regional economic diversification. Vancouver Island communities are more economically diversified than the Cariboo-Fort George region; but less diversified than every other provincial region from the Peace River area through the Kootenays, the Okanagan and Lilloet-Thompson regions (Treasury Board Secretariat, 1993). In some ways this is not surprising given that 81% of the Island's land base is dedicated to forestry according to CORE's (1994) Vancouver Island Land Use plan. Recent experience has shown that economic specialization tied to dependence on foreign markets increases regional vulnerability to economic instability.14

Additional problems for planning on Vancouver Island result from consumption patterns. Assuming Vancouver Island's 689,000 residents have similar biophysical consumption patterns (of food, material, energy) of seven hectares per capita as other Canadians, Ecological Footprint Analysis would show they require approximately 4,823,000 hectares

14 Weak export prices have depressed recent economic activity on Vancouver Island. The number of houses sold on Vancouver Island dropped between 1997 to 1998 by 17%, and the average house price in Port Alberni dropped from $158,943 to $91,125. See Gidney, "On the Street," Times-Colonist Jan. 9, 1999 p.E1.
of biologically productive land and ocean to sustain the consumption and assimilate the wastes of the 1997 population.\textsuperscript{15} Thus, present levels of consumption and waste are not locally sustainable given that the land base of the island (some of which is not very biologically productive) is smaller than the footprint of materials throughput. One reflection of unsustainability is that 80,000 hectares of Island shoreline are closed to shellfish harvesting due to pollution (Communities Institute, 1998, p.13).

The non-locally sustainable level of consumption means that ecological carrying capacity is being appropriated from elsewhere. Moreover this appropriation is done in a global context where Canadians' ecological footprint already means that Canadians consume three to four times their fair earthshare.\textsuperscript{16} A public policy perspective might well argue that despite the increasingly explicit evidence of unsustainable and inequitable consumption patterns, modifying them remains a challenging task. Despite widespread use of sustainability rhetoric by government, business and non-governmental organizations, Myers and Macnaghten argue, "There is no evidence of a broad shift of behaviour in response to it" (1996, p.506). Together, these facts regarding Vancouver Islands' ecological qualities, increasing population pressures, levels of economic specialization and rates of ecological consumption create a valuable setting for analyzing land use planners' efforts to implement sustainable development planning.

Recent advances in the legislative context for land use planning on Vancouver Island, and in British Columbia in general, constitute reason for this study. In the past, the valuable natural capital of Vancouver Island and the role of public planning in conserving it has been recognized federally and provincially by the significant land base allocated to federal and provincial parks. Within the past decade, the province has pursued and enacted a wide variety of legislation and created agencies that move beyond parks and preservation towards sustainable use. These actions have been oriented to sustaining the social, economic and ecological capital on Vancouver Island and across British Columbia. Fundamentally, these initiatives have been predicated on the provincial government's recognition in 1994, that "current land use on the Island is not stable or sustainable" (CORE, 1994c, p.30).

The 1994 \textit{Vancouver Island Land Use Plan}, created by the provincial government's Commission on Resources and Environment (CORE) is one important example of these legislative actions even though it failed to reach consensual land use planning recommendations. CORE's other reports included: \textit{Planning for Sustainability: Improving the Planning Delivery System for British Columbia} (November 1994) and \textit{A Sustainability Act for B.C.} (November 1994), \textit{Public Participation} (February 1995),


\textsuperscript{16} Canadian Broadcasting Corporation's Ideas radio series on April 19th, 1999, "From Naked Ape to Super Species" in episode two, William Rees, stated the average Canadian's ecological footprint is three to four times larger than their fair earthshare (total global biologically productive land and ocean divided by the global population) which is equivalent to two hectares per capita.
Dispute Resolution (February 1995). These reports present valuable framework types of contributions to public planners' efforts towards sustainable development.

CORE's reports were supported by the prior work of the BC Round Table on the Environment and the Economy (BCRTEE) in the early 1990's. The BCRTEE was an indirect outcome of Our Common Future and part of its public policy legacy. The BCRTEE was established as a permanent advisory body to government by an order-in-council on January 16, 1990. The creation of the BCRTEE was recommended by The Strangway Commission that was itself established in 1988. The Strangway Commission was composed of members of the B.C. Task Force on Environment and Economy to review Our Common Future and the federal policy response document created by the National Task Force on Environment and Economy (BCRTEE, 1993b, p.27-28). The documents later produced by the ensuing BCRTEE that were valuable for providing direction to public planners include: An Economic Framework for Sustainability in BC (May 1993) and Towards Community Sustainability (June 1993). The provincial government's 1992 Georgia Basin Initiative, initially coordinated by the BCRTEE, was another step in this direction "to promote a sustainable future for the Georgia Basin through partnership, consultation and innovation and to establish the foundation for a long-range, cross-government strategic plan built on integrated policies and a common vision" (MMA, September 1994, also see BCRTEE 1993c). In many ways these documents formed the backdrop for more applied legislation in the resource management sector including CORE's land use planning, and local resource management plans, and Forestry Renewal B.C. and Fisheries Renewal B.C. New legislation with principles more consistent with sustainable development planning was also advanced in relation to land use planning for settled areas. Most importantly, regional planning returned to B.C. in June 1995 (after its "demise" in 1983) with the passing of B.C.'s Growth Strategies Act (Allen, 1995, p.14). This act laid out fourteen key principles concordant with sustainable development that regional and municipal governments must take notice of in their planning actions (MMA, 1995).17 These principles included: "avoiding urban sprawl...settlement patterns that minimize the use of automobiles...protecting environmentally sensitive areas...reducing and preventing air, land and water pollution...[providing] adequate, affordable and appropriate housing...preserving, creating and linking urban and rural open space including parks and recreation areas" (MMA, 1995). The Stewardship Series of documents produced jointly by the federal and provincial governments, in particular "Stream Stewardship: A Guide for Planners and Developers" also advanced principles of sustainable development planning.18 These reports and other government initiatives have provided an important foundation as policy tools and moreover a political legitimization of public planning efforts for sustainable development.

17 This document refers to section 942.11(2) of the Growth Strategies Act.
18 The B.C. Ministry of Environment Lands and Parks and the Department of Fisheries and Oceans recently produced the Stream Stewardship series of valuable reports for B.C. planners with titles such as Community Greenways and Stream Stewardship: A Guide for Planners and Developers, 1994, British Columbia: Ministry of Environment, Lands and Parks and Ministry of Municipal Affairs.
It should be noted that this provincial policy foundation is not perfect for several reasons:

- the BCRTEE was terminated despite its status as a permanent advisory body and possibly prior to making its full potential public policy contribution,
- CORE's major land use plans had mixed results and created much public controversy, and CORE's proposed provincial "Sustainability Act" remained just a discussion piece,
- provincial funding for the Georgia Basin Initiative was discontinued (although federally, Environment Canada has rebirthed a Georgia Basin Ecosystem Initiative)
- and substantial criticisms are made of some forestry legislation for example that the Forestry Practices Code does not apply to privately-held land in the Forest Land Reserve (and is not enforced in much of the province).
- Perhaps most importantly from a settled areas planning perspective, only two regional districts in the province have pursued developing regional growth strategies under the 1995 Growth Strategies Act. Nanaimo is the only regional district on Vancouver Island that has developed a regional growth strategy. The Capital and Cowichan Valley Regional Districts are currently attempting to undertake work in this area (Communities Institute, 1998).

Regardless of the recent mixed successes of provincial legislation, the efforts themselves show that sustainable development land use planning is verifiably a part of current provincial rhetoric.

In conclusion, the rationale for this study is that public land use planners have a vital institutionalized role to play in the implementation of sustainable development (Hodge, 1998, p.444), and the need to identify the gaps that exist between ideal intentions and the real outcomes of planning for sustainable development. Two secondary premises situate Vancouver Island, British Columbia as an appropriate study region: the ecological, demographic and economic characteristics; and recent provincial legislation concerning sustainable development planning.

Fundamentally, the purpose is of this study is to explore disjunctures between the real and ideal planning worlds. Where gaps exist, they will be identified and strategies to address them will be investigated. Where minimal distance between ideal and real planning practices exists, reasons for this will also be explored. A hope about the outcome of this research is that if these gaps and strategies exist, then sharing knowledge of them more widely amongst planners may eventually lead to better planning outcomes in the quest for sustainable communities and regions. Another way of framing this research is to ask, What are the barriers to implementing public planning for sustainable development on Vancouver Island, British Columbia? And what strategies are being used to advance the

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19 Hodge emphasizes "Canadian planning's pervasive bureaucratic orientation" and the significant operational and negotiation powers given to Canadian public planners through use of both development controls (originating from the U.K.) and zoning (used widely in the U.S.) mechanisms.
20 This assumption is based on the writings of John Forester, and his appreciation of Jurgen Habermas theory of communicative-based knowledge. see Campbell and Fainstein, 1996 p.478.
implementation of public planning for sustainable development on Vancouver Island, British Columbia?
Chapter 2: Research Methods

2.1 Research Questions and the Decision to Use a Qualitative Approach

This study uses qualitative research methods to explore systematically the challenges that planners see themselves facing in relation to planning for sustainable development, and the deliberate strategies they use to respond to such challenges. For reasons stated in the previous chapter, Vancouver Island, British Columbia, was the geographic area selected for the study. Succinctly stated, the questions guiding this research were these:

- What strategies do public planners on Vancouver Island currently use in their efforts to practice sustainable development planning? How do these strategies enable their actions?

- What challenges do public planners on Vancouver Island currently face in their efforts to practice sustainable development planning? How do these challenges or barriers constrain their actions?

I made a decision to use certain qualitative methods based on their strengths for producing insights into planners' decision-making in the context of their everyday work situations. The methods I chose was also suggested by my review of planning literature, and my understanding of relevant descriptive studies recently completed on Vancouver Island.

The principal data collection method used in this study was in-depth, personal interviews in which open-ended questions were asked of respondents (the interview guide is presented below). The study can therefore be seen as both exploratory and inductive. I was concerned to elicit, from planners themselves, information useful for understanding factors affecting sustainable development planning. I wanted to understand why planning for sustainable development is difficult and to identify obstacles that must be overcome. I also wanted to identify strategies and outlooks for dealing with obstacles.

John Forrester has written about the value of learning about planning through stories of planning practice. He has said, "The rationality of problem solving and the rationality of decision making more generally depend on the prior practical rationality of attending to what the problem really is -- the prior practical rationality of resisting the 'rush to interpretation', ...of carefully listening to, or telling, the practice stories that give us the details that matter, the facts and values, the political and practical material with which we have to work" (Forrester, 1996, p.521). Indeed, my study proceeded with the assumption that "personalized stories reveal values, interests, relevance, moral commitments, basic assumptions, and possible solutions" (Campbell & Fainstein, 1996, p.478).

The use of qualitative methods in this study also draws support from Wong's view that meaningful improvements in the planning field "can only come if we share the experience
of our predecessors and consolidate past lessons, the right and the wrong, to develop new ideas and methods from that basis" (Wong, 1998, p.237). Wong's study of the history of planning philosophy over the last three decades and how it is searching for means to deal with environmentalism leads her to conclude that there is a need for active reflection on planners', and moreover planning's, strengths and weaknesses in different contexts. Having analyzed planning methods and challenges, she states, "We should, therefore, engage practitioners, academics and more importantly, our students to take part in this process to provide a more promising way forward for the profession" (Wong, 1998, p.237).

Additional support for the approach taken in this study derives from Campbell and Marshall's view that increasing the meaningfulness of planning theory requires recognizing that, "the very real insight provided by theoretical understandings will remain limited until it is more fully informed by daily practice" (Campbell and Marshall, 1998, p.118).

Friedmann has argued that unprecedented problems facing humanity demand that non-Euclidean planning, which connects forms of knowledge to forms of action, be practiced. Furthermore, he defines the time and space of non-Euclidean planning to be based on "face to face interaction in real time [and that]...privileges regional and local over national and transnational space." Finally, he states that this new mode of planning has five defining characteristics: normative, innovative, political, transactive and based on social learning (Friedmann, 1993, p.485). My qualitative research methods, using interaction to explore and reflect on political realities and the social context of planning, could be considered deeply grounded in a non-Euclidean approach to planning.

Qualitative methods, consistent with a phenomenological epistemology, were seen as suitable to this study's research goals and its assumption that individuals play an active role in the social construction and interpretation of knowledge. In discussions of the relative merits of qualitative versus quantitative research methods, social scientists emphasize the need to select methods that are best suited to the aims of the research (e.g., Palys, 1992, Patton, 1987). Experiments are seen as most useful where explanation of cause and effect is sought, and where the number of variables involved in the study is more limited. Less rigorous quantitative methods are useful where the goal is to demonstrate correlations or to provide a generalized description of certain phenomena. Qualitative methods are most likely to be used in an exploratory study where the goal is "...to gain more familiarity with a phenomenon or to achieve new insights into it" (Palys, 1992, p.80).

Occasionally, studies reported in the peer-reviewed planning literature recognize the merit in phenomenological, qualitative and inductive approaches to research. For example, a recent study in Planning Practice and Literature explicitly chose "...to retreat from the convention of grandiose theory-building preceding empirical investigation ..." (Campbell and Marshall, 1998, p. 118). This research began instead with focus groups of
practitioners helping to identify "dimensions of the dilemmas they confront." Taking this approach, Campbell and Marshall studied planners in everyday situations. The decision to use qualitative methods can also be seen as reasonable when one considers other very recently completed studies dealing with sustainable development on Vancouver Island. These studies used more quantitative methods; but questions remain unanswered about planning processes and reasons for degrees of success and failure of local sustainable development land use planning.

A 1998 study by the South Island Sustainable Communities Network, *A Capital Idea: Alternative Approaches to Growth Management for the Capital Regional District*, analyzed planning practices and suggested alternative actions more consistent with sustainable development concepts. Sections studied included managing growth, transportation, economic development, green/blue spaces, water, agriculture, sewage, housing, and governance. This analysis of existing and alternative concrete planning practices involved examining:

- innovative tax reform
- full-cost accounting
- promoting economic development that keeps money circulating locally
- development cost charges
- urban growth boundaries
- alternative sewage treatment
- precautionary approaches to waste management
- density bonusing
- traffic calming
- alternative transit infrastructure
- clustered housing
- housing diversity
- comprehensive water management planning
- innovative design standards
- stream protection techniques
- more accountable and cooperative governance structures and decision-making practices

This study provided an analysis of present planning practices and recommends many alternative, more sustainable practices amassed from an analysis of sustainable development practices elsewhere in Canada and the United States. However, the study did not (nor did it intend to) examine reasons for success or failure of local sustainable development land use planning.

Another report of significance for my study's qualitative approach is *Environmental Stewardship and Complete Communities: A Report on Municipal Environmental Initiatives in British Columbia 1998*. It was published in April of 1999 and is significantly a further iteration of the study mentioned just above, *A Capital Idea*. The
purpose of this large report was to "begin to describe the wide-ranging local government urban sustainability initiatives underway across the province [of British Columbia]." It provides details on planning practices such as the following examples taken from its analysis of a few Vancouver Island municipalities.

- "The District of Highlands has successfully used the amenity-bonus provision of the Municipal Act to acquire almost 1000 hectares of parkland and over 100 hectares of private land protected by conservation covenants." p.23

- "The City of Nanaimo allows a clustered housing form of subdivision outside the UGB [Urban Growth Boundary] where existing zoning provides for large-lot residential development, provided such development results in no greater density, better addresses topographical difficulties, protects environmentally significant features, protects agricultural and forestry activities, and preserves open space and rural character. Nanaimo also allows clustering on parcels proposed for subdivision in exchange for park land dedication in excess of 5% where park acquisition is desirable." p.23

- "Within its UCB [Urban Containment Boundary], the District of Saanich is largely built out and deals mostly with infill applications. The municipality has adopted a hierarchy of plans which form the OCP [Official Community Plan]...All plans undergo a public process. Actions Plans are being used to address concerns in specific watersheds...The community initiated...actions plans because of concern about pollution in the waterways and the use of fish-bearing streams as stormwater conduits. Action plans for built out residential neighbourhoods with little environmental significant land include strategies to link micro habitats, and identify trails and bicycle routes." p.14


From the details noted above, one can see that Environmental Stewardship and Complete Communities provides a valuable and current categorization and comparison of local government environmental practices in British Columbia. However, like the Capital Idea study, it does not document political, institutional, nor public-realm barriers to implementing these sustainable development planning practices. This contributes once more to the rationale for my study's approach.

2.2 Methods of Inquiry

The research methods used in this study consisted of a review of relevant literature, face-to-face interviews with planners, and observations made during the course of the interviews. First, a literature review of relevant academic, governmental, and
professional planning documents was carried out to gain an understanding of the research area. Many peer-reviewed journals from the year 1989 to the present were reviewed to provide background and framework material for the interview schedules and analysis of the study findings. Results of the literature review are presented in the appendix. The journals that were reviewed included those in this list:

- Journal of Planning
- Planning, Practice & Research
- Planning Review
- Environment and Planning A
- Environment and Planning B: Planning & Design
- Environment and Planning C: Government and Policy
- Environment and Planning D: Society & Space
- Environmental Policy & Law
- Environmental Politics
- Political Science Quarterly
- Political Studies
- Policy Review
- Policy Sciences
- Policy Studies Journal
- Public Administration
- Public Interest
- Public Management
- Environmental Ethics
- Environmental Action
- Plan Canada
- Journal of the American Planning Association
- Planning Institute of British Columbia's Newsletter

The major empirical inquiry method used in this study involved conducting interviews with key informants. Professional regional and municipal planners on Vancouver Island were interviewed using the interview schedule shown at the conclusion of this chapter. Vancouver Island has been divided into six regional districts. These districts share many characteristics including a history of dependence on natural resources such as forestry and fishery, current planning challenges of rapidly increasing human populations (with attendant levels of material consumption and waste), and significant declines in traditional natural resource-employment, and stocks of natural resources. My sampling plan was to interview two planners from each regional districts plus two planners at the municipal or town level in each district. In the course of the study, I conducted twenty interviews with planners from all but the most northern region. Ten of the interviewees were regional planners and ten were city or town planners.

Planners were identified and contacted directly based on their current employment and location with regional and municipal governments. Initial contact was made with directors of the six planning departments. The directors were informed of the study and
asked for their participation. They were also asked to recommend another regional
district planner and two planners at the municipal or sub-regional level for possible
participation in the study. Using a snowballing technique, each respondent, in turn, was
asked to suggest other planners for potential interviewing. Lists were compiled to help
give priority to potential respondents according to the number of times they were
suggested by others. Thus the sample was a purposive one. The search for and selection
of respondents was guided by an attempt to get information-rich, in-depth responses; not
by an attempt to get a representative sampling. By being concerned with obtaining
variation by region and planning level, I hoped to increase the likelihood of achieving
results that Patton identifies for "maximum variation sampling." Such results include
high quality, detailed descriptions that can document uniqueness and important shared

Potential response bias exists since the study involved only willing and interested
participants who were able to make enough free time to meet with the researcher. In
addition, I interviewed only full-time public planners currently or recently employed by
regional and local governments. In future studies it might be valuable to involve part-
time and planning consultants in the private sector, and provincial-level planners. In
future research it might also prove worthwhile to interview former public planners and
examine what caused them to leave planning. This may be important if one considers
that these planners may have encountered problems for which they were unable to
develop workplace or personal strategies.

Future studies might also increase the sample size if they seek to provide description or
analysis of possible relationships between characteristics of planners and their planning
concerns and activities. I sought only limited personal background information because
my interest was more in line with a structural analysis of the working conditions and
socio-political capacities of planners to implement desired actions toward sustainable
development. This approach is consistent with the views of Filion (1997, p.11-15).

In person (face-to-face) interviews involving open-ended questions were chosen because
they allowed for in-depth responses and the use of probes for purposes of clarification and
obtaining additional detail. Using open-ended questions is suggested by a study by Baum
that reviewed many other studies of planners. Baum's analysis recommended that future
research strategize to "talk with planners, to reflect with them at greater length on what
they think and feel while they act...to search in depth with some planners who are willing
to reflect on what they do" (Baum, 1986). I asked the same open-ended questions of each
respondent. Thus I used a standardized interview guide in order consistently to obtain
information on the same core issues (planning challenges and strategies). I complied with
the ethical requirements established by the University of British Columbia's Office of
Research Services and Administration and received approval for the use of the following
interview guide.
2.3 Interview Guide

Introduction
I wish to ask you about your public planning efforts in relation to sustainable
development. The purpose of this study is to find out about gaps between real and ideal
planning for sustainable development and I also hope to gather information about ways
that planners deal with gaps between real and ideal planning. The following questions
inquire about planning dynamics and principles beneath the actual details. However, I
would really encourage you to provide case examples or real planning anecdotes or
stories to enrich your responses and my understanding.
I would like to tell you the general sections of my questionnaire before we begin: general
background questions, question about your planning perspectives, questions on
challenges to planning, sustainable development planning and questions on strategies you
might use to deal with these challenges. The total interview will likely take about 45
minutes of time. May I begin?
(Signing of consent / ethics form)

Section A ~ Background Questions
How long have you been in your present job?
1. a) What is your position?
b) (Note level of government)
How many years overall have you been doing planning work?
Did you study planning at university? Graduate school?
Can I ask what is your age?
(Note sex of respondent)

Section B — Self-definition of Their Public Planning Approach/Role
1. How would you characterize your approach to public land-use planning? (Prompt if
necessary using Hodge's framework of planning roles: [a] planning-agency leader or
[b] technical advisor [c] political innovator or [d] citizen educator role.21)

2. What would you see as the most important difference or differences between why you
went into planning and the reality of how you presently perceive/practice public
planning? If no, why? If yes, why?

Section C — Planning and Sustainable Development Planning Challenges
Interviewer to state, "For the following questions please consider sustainable
development to be defined as advancing environmental protection and increasing social
equity and well-being."22

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21 Hodge defines "planning-agency leader" as concerned about building organization credibility, power and
"relations of trust, cooperation, encouragement [and respect] with...elected and appointed officials and the
public." The "technical advisor" role concerned about professionalism and process organization. The
"political innovator" role is oriented to strategic, pragmatic, interest-based actions to get a plan accepted.
And the "citizen educator" role is self-explanatory. See Hodge 1998.
1. What do you see as challenges to doing effective planning for sustainable development? Use the following prompts if necessary:
   - Are there challenges related to internal or structural planning issues — other government departments, agencies?
   - Are there challenges related to political authorities and processes?
   - Are there challenges related to the public, to interest groups (business, citizens, environmentalists, others)?
   - Are there challenges related to the general nature of land use planning?

2. Of all the problems/challenges that you have mentioned, which do you see as the most difficult?

Section D -- Planning and Sustainable Development Planning Strategies
1. Can you describe any strategies that you have found useful for dealing with the challenges and problems that we've been talking about? Use the following prompts if necessary:
   - What have you found useful for dealing with other government departments and agencies?
   - What have you found useful for dealing with other political authorities?
   - What have you found useful for dealing with the public and citizen or interest groups?
   - What have you found useful for dealing with the general nature of land use planning?

2. Of all the strategies that you have mentioned, which do you see as the most useful?

Section E -- Anything Overlooked & Suggestions of Other Respondents
1. Is there anything you would like to add in reference to the above questions or any general thoughts you might have about planning, sustainable development, your approach, this particular area, challenges or strategies?

2. Are there other land-use planners that you recommend I should speak with to gain greater understandings about these topics? Can you tell me how I can reach them? Do you mind if I mention to them that I got their name from you?

Conclusion
Thanks for your time and thoughts. The results of the study will be publicly available through the UBC library, but I also hope to send the people I interview a letter summarizing my main findings. If you have any question or think of something else you would like to mention, you can reach me at (250) 390-1241 or at cnelson@island.net.

22 See Hodge's definition of sustainable development as "environmental protection (natural and built); and social justice and equity." Hodge, 1998, p.433.
Chapter 3: Research Findings

This chapter presents the results of in-person interviews conducted on Vancouver Island between November, 1998 and February, 1999. In this qualitative study, planners were asked questions that could provide insights into barriers to planning for sustainable development. The questions also dealt with strategies planners use when faced with obstacles.

This chapter is divided into four main sections. The first section is a brief one providing basic information about the planners who participated in this study. The second and third sections of this chapter deal with planners' responses concerning planning barriers and strategies. These sections are both divided into subsections covering political, institutional and public issues. The final section of this chapter specifically addresses findings relating to sustainable development.

3.1 Background Information on Respondents

The following information describes the background characteristics of the public planners who were interviewed individually. Ten respondents work at the regional district level, while ten work at sub-region levels. To break this down further, four of the interviewees are senior planners at the regional-district level, six were respondents who reported to senior regional-district planners. At the sub-regional level of cities and towns, five of the interviewees were senior planners, and five reported to senior city planners. (See Table 1). The distinction between senior and junior planners was based on whether a given planner managed planning staff or was supervised by another planner within the office.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 1. Respondents' Occupational Positions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Regional Planners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senior</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The average age of the planners interviewed was forty-one years. Thirteen of the twenty planners were men, seven were women. On average the years of total planning experience was thirteen with an average of four and a half years experience in their current position. Seventeen planners had graduate degrees, but two of these graduate degrees were not in planning. Two respondents had baccalaureate degrees, and only one respondent had no post-secondary education. (See Table 2).

3.2 Challenges

3.2.1 Political Processes and Elected officials-related Challenges
Study respondents identified numerous challenges to successful planning and planning for sustainable development that arise in the political realm. The perceptions ranged from the need to educate elected officials, to a lack of political leadership, to politicians lacking
respect for planning, to a fundamental conflict between forces for political utility and planning comprehensiveness. The respondents indicated the greatest planning challenges regarding the political process are the need to educate elected officials and a lack of thoughtful leadership. These seem to suggest in the words of one planner, a need to "raise and widen elected officials understandings and perspectives."

Table 3 presents a picture of planners' identification of political challenges. For this table and those that follow, interviews were transcribed and similar responses were grouped into the categories appearing in the tables. The categories were created based upon an examination of the responses. Each comment was tracked to see if it fit within the existing categories, required a new category to be created, or required revising the existing set of response categories. No category contains two responses from a single respondent; either the respondent reported a comment fitting into the category or they did not.

Table 3. Planners Identifying Challenges: Political Environment (section 3.2.1)

<p>| Q: &quot;What do you see as Challenges to Doing Effective Planning for Sustainable Development?&quot; |
|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Respondent (n=20)</th>
<th>Regional Staff (n=10)</th>
<th>Sub-regional Staff (n=10)</th>
<th>Senior Staff (n=9)</th>
<th>Non-senior Staff (n=11)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Need to Educate and Illuminate Elected Officials (Section 3.2.1.1)</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Lack of Thoughtful Leadership and Decision-Making (s. 3.2.1.2)</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Lack of Planners and Planning's Credibility with Elected Officials (s. 3.2.1.3)</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Negative Political Consequences of Provincial Downloading (s. 3.2.1.4)</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Pressures of Political Incredibility (s. 3.2.1.5)</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inappropriate Political Influence (s. 3.2.1.6)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Totals</strong></td>
<td><strong>42</strong></td>
<td><strong>20</strong></td>
<td><strong>22</strong></td>
<td><strong>9</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.2.1.1. The Need to Educate and Illuminate Elected Officials

Planners (55% of respondents) clearly stated a significant challenge to advancing effective planning for sustainable development in the political realm of their work is the education and "illumination" of elected officials. Informing elected officials of the context and consequences of their decision-making was an equally strong concern of regional and sub-regional planners, whether senior or junior planners. Respondents argued that too many officials do not sufficiently understand the interconnectedness of the impacts of their decisions. One respondent said, "They do not see the relationships between land use and fish protection." Several mentioned raising and widening officials' understandings, particularly to see beyond the traditional mindsets of how development works and the boom-bust cycle of growth. Respondents expressed frustration at the lack of logical decision making and at the occasional level of ignorance. One respondent went
so far as to say, "Some elected officials have views that may not be mainstream or hold views that are inconsistent with the rest of the civilized world."

Several respondents noted that a likely reason for the need to educate and inform officials is because of the dynamics of the election process. One planner said it this way, "The type of people who run for politics, and the reasons why, relate to seeing things in black and white and focusing on single issues." Another planner echoed, "They are elected on issues and specific items, usually they are ticked off about something." One planner somewhat ironically pointed out that there are positive aspects of the fact that officials rarely know the particularities of issues they are deciding on. But he did not wish to elaborate on this point.

3.2.1.2. The Lack of Thoughtful Leadership and Decision-Making

The second pressing planning challenge (identified by 55% of respondents) was a perceived lack of political willingness to make logical decisions on behalf of communities as a whole, largely due to the power of interest groups. Citizen associations, parks and recreation user groups, business and development interests, and anti-growth interests all constitute powerful interest groups amongst many communities. One said that because a particular city council was labeled "business unfriendly" last year, now it is afraid to do anything that might harm business interests. Another commented, "Special interest groups have the ear of council and may advocate for something like a recreational service that is not the most desired service by the community as a whole." Furthermore, "Some politicians don’t want to hear much. They feel they were elected by a certain group of people, often pro or anti-growth, and always have to vote in line with that group. So they have already made up their mind[s] before learning about the issue." In one locality, council was seen as being at the mercy of a local citizens interest group that had more perceived lobbying power with the provincial government.

The above points reflect a lack of leadership and difficulty for elected officials to articulate their visions and platforms. One respondent sympathized with officials stating "It is politically difficult to be out in front." However the planner felt frustration a "strong push for consultation, poll-taking these days. So much use of consensus results in getting a mass middle opinion which kind of results in mediocrity." This hypothetical mediocrity might hinder planners' ability to practice iterative experiments. This would be unfortunate if one views experimentation and risk-taking as being at the heart of effective planning for sustainable development. By not taking political leadership, officials may impede the ability of planners' to take bureaucratic leadership. This is reflected by a few respondents who stated that elected officials, through a process of "situational ethics and disjointed incrementalism," often prefer making decisions about individual, small issues and in fact "hate" policy making. One could theorize that by avoiding policy decisions officials are avoiding creating frameworks and design principles to prevent devolution of further powers to planners.
A lack of political leadership also acts as a restraint on planners' efforts to advance effective sustainable development planning by restricting their powers to negotiate with developers. This negotiation is more financially important for incorporated areas than unincorporated areas in regional districts because of the provincial funding structure. Regional Districts, unlike cities, do not gain any increase in their (provincially-funded) budget through expansion of the local tax base of development. Thus it was interesting that more regional than city planners commented with disappointment on the failure of city councils to allow and/or encourage city planners to negotiate with development interests for public amenities.

3.2.1.3. The Lack of Planners' and Planning's Credibility with Elected Officials

Many planners (45% of respondents) perceived there is a lack of trust in planners, and a lack of respect for planning by elected officials. This lack of credibility impairs planners' efforts to advance effective planning for sustainable development. This challenge was succinctly put by a city planner, "We need credibility so the officials trust the planner, so they can give me some distance and yet (they) still trust that the planning outcomes will still feel owned by them."

One respondent commented again that the system dynamic of who runs for council with what attendant (limited) perspectives often means that, "Politicians may not have a deep understanding of the role of planning and local governance." An understanding of the value of planning would seem a logical prerequisite to respecting the credibility of planners. Other respondents commented that they perceive officials "lacking faith in the public and public process" and see planning as "wishy-washy" activity. One wonders with relatively short election terms if time is a challenge, because of the time required to build credibility or develop the trust of officials in planners.

3.2.1.4. The Negative Consequences of Provincial Downloading

A number of challenges to effective planning arise from the provincial downloading of government responsibilities without requisite resources according to 20% of respondents. Downloading was seen as further straining the amount of time officials can provide in their official planning oversight and decision duties because they are now forced to participate on library boards, regional health boards and other similar activities. Provincial downloading is also forcing local governments to use volunteers for greater number of functions without the local knowledge on how this can best be done. A comment was also made that the downloading of responsibilities was resulting in "more blaming and failure to seize new opportunities."

3.2.1.5. The Pressures of Political Immediacy

One-fourth of the respondents commented on a dynamic of “political immediacy versus technical exhaustiveness.” Political forces make immediate demands, whereas contextualizing decisions, comprehensively analyzing problems and forecasting impacts
can take a fair amount of time. As one planner emphatically stated, "If a planner can’t say it to a politician in one page or less then forget it! How can we communicate background and substance in one page?!" Another planner stated, "I take out every second sentence practically of my planning reports in order to get them read." A second challenge to effective planning raised by political time pressures relates to having enough time for communication with the public and receiving feedback. For example, "Politicians want things quickly. I'm incapable of going that fast without losing the plan...going too fast leaves too many unresolved issues in the minds of the public and other agencies."

A couple final points on political immediacy should be made. One wonders if the need for taking immediate and politically advantageous actions is increasing with respect to increasingly downloaded responsibilities to local government. The second point is that the pressures of political immediacy have significant impacts specifically for the advancement of sustainable development. This matter is discussed later in this chapter under the section on sustainable development.

3.2.1.6. Inappropriate Political Influence
Ten percent of respondents stated that inappropriate political influence by elected officials on planning processes was challenging their ability to practice effective planning for sustainable development. This influence conflicted with planning principles of fairness and consultation. One regional planner said, "Some [elected regional] directors play a strong role in determining members of local advisory planning committees and the issues set before them." Two regional planners stated they had significant concerns about this dynamic but were not willing to comment further.
3.2.2. Institutional and Structural Challenges

Many respondents identified numerous institutional-type challenges to advancing effective planning for sustainable development. These challenges were seen to originate from: The Municipal Act, a weak history of planning for sustainable development within the bureaucracy, and from the structure of often competitive relations within and between provincial, regional and municipal government.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Q: &quot;What do you see as Challenges to Doing Effective Planning for Sustainable Development?&quot;</th>
<th>Respondents (n=20)</th>
<th>Regional Staff (n=10)</th>
<th>Sub-regional Staff (n=10)</th>
<th>Senior Staff (n=9)</th>
<th>Non-senior Staff (n=11)</th>
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<td>Provincial and Sub-Provincial Government Conflict Arising from Differing Legislative Arrangements and Institutional Perspectives (s. 3.2.2.1)</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Internally-Competing Provincial Agencies (s. 3.2.2.2)</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internally-Competing Interests at Sub-Provincial Levels (s. 3.2.2.3)</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>History of Not Planning for Sustainable Development (s. 3.2.2.4)</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Negative Impacts of Provincial Downloading (s. 3.2.2.5)</td>
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<td>Chaotic Provincial Funding Necessitates Adaptive Planning</td>
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<td>Challenging Aspects of Increased Regulatory Powers</td>
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<td>Lack of and Conflict over Enforcement</td>
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3.2.2.1. Provincial and Sub-Provincial Government Conflict Arising from Differing Legislative Arrangements and Institutional Perspectives:

Legislative Arrangements

British Columbia's regional governments system was legislated in 1967. A few regional planners argued that parts of The Municipal Act are very "antiquated and lack clarity, for example some gray areas exist between city and regional district powers that spur costly legal challenges." Regional planners also noted that some of the provincial legislation confines them in negative ways by harming their ability to think regionally and forcing too-frequent public hearings.

The current legislated provincial structure was also blamed for creating "weak, voluntary, non-hierarchical relations whereby the city and region are semi-equivalent in powers." Several planners said weak regional legislation has resulted in a lack of regulatory powers or "hammers we can use" either for direct local use or backstopping the use of related powers at the local level. An example of what respondents wanted was given by one respondent noting the value of the provincial goal to reduce waste production by 50%.
This provincial goal encourages local planners to advance effective planning action towards sustainable development.

A final challenge arising from provincially-legislated planning structure is the fact that individual proponents must search directly for approval with various provincial agencies but are not required to coordinate this approval-process through the regional district. This has resulted in frustrating conflicts between regional district policies and development approvals or rejections given by provincial agencies. It also enables a negative dynamic of "answer-shopping" (shopping around for a positive answer and then showing this approval to other agencies) by proponents.

It is important to note that the Ministry of Municipal Affairs is concluding a five year process of Municipal Act Reform in the year 2000 in an attempt to update the Act and respond to public concerns. Significant legislative revisions to the (proposed renamed) "Local Government Act" relate to regional district planning powers, and provincial regulations. This includes eliminating unnecessary provincial approvals and streamlining other approval processes. However, it could be argued that the changes likely to take place in the land use planning sections (Part 26) are likely to be minor, in terms of their impact on the inclusion of sustainable development elements in OCP's and zoning bylaws.

Differing Institutional Perspectives

Another aspect of conflict between the provincial and lower levels of government stems from differing structural perceptions and roles in public planning. A number of mainly regional-level respondents spoke of provincial paternalism. One person gave an example regarding the requirement that a Ministry of Municipal Affairs staff person must approve all official community plans developed by regional district planners; though they lack the regional district's detailed local knowledge about the tradeoffs made and constraints in a particular area. Many regional planners stated that regional district planning is "sandwiched" between provincial agencies' intentions and local values. Several felt that the provincial orientation to planning is to apply legislation, whereas "the local planning role is community involvement and ownership of the plan." This results in situations where planners feel "the community won't accept the level of environmental regulation that MELP [Ministry of Environment Lands and Parks] wants to see here." Further, the regional district has to refer the OCP for approval to MELP in order to get its final approval by the Ministry of Municipal Affairs. Yet the community also has 'political' approval or rather an authority role in how they choose to participate in the planning and who they vote into political office.

Several regional planners were quite passionate about this conflicting accountability dynamic. "For some provincial agencies there is this little hole in front of them and that is all they look through — a profound tunnel vision. Senior levels of government are removed from the public. They will throw letters (of approval and refusal) from afar and not care about the community impact, and they find it really easy to be obstinate." Conversely, provincial agencies not only fail to respect local values and issues through
forcing regulatory adherence, they also sometimes allow uses that contravene local policies. "They will grant permits to activities that contravene local zoning without checking with local government. For example, the Waste Management branch of MELP will approve sewage ocean outfalls in areas that are not zoned appropriately."

Related to the conflict between community values and local policies versus provincial regulatory authority, a number of respondents felt that many provincial agencies' guidelines are outdated. These antiquated guidelines conflict with goals of sustainable development and reflect a lack of accountability to modern progressive thinking. The "MoTH (Ministry of Transportation and Highways) insists on roads that look like 747 landing strips, when for sustainable development reasons we want narrower, windier roads and grassy swale ditches not scooped out ditches that are insensitive to fish values." Regional-level respondents further said that, "The provincial agencies work with a set of rules developed in the 1950's; act in isolation, and exemplify very rigid thinking. We (at the regional-district level) are more creative, innovative and forced by public pressure to be so."

Two respondents stated that provincial institutions want to avoid being innovative because "they think that if they were innovative they or we (at the regional-level) could make a mistake...It is hard to break many years of inertia...years of planning mainly for urban sprawl." Ways to remove provincial-level fears of innovation and create incentives for advancing new thinking (to the benefit of community and sustainability interests) seems worthy of further investigation. Perhaps this can be advanced by making provincial agencies more "influenced by modern knowledge" and more "accountable to real people in community" as these respondents argued.

3.2.2.2. Internally-Competing Provincial Agencies
Thirty-five percent of respondents noted that conflicting interests among provincial and federal institutions impairs their ability to advance effective planning. The tunnel-vision, spoken of previously, hinders getting joint planning approvals because each agency "champions their own narrow interests." This dynamic was succinctly encapsulated by one respondent's comments that "because provincial agencies are very focussed on their own interests, often the local level ends up arbitrating among them." This local unofficial, but vital, mediation among conflicting interests of provincial ministries consumes significant resources according to regional and sub-regional-level respondents.

3.2.2.3. Internally-Competing Interests At Sub-Provincial Levels
Eight of the ten city and town-level respondents (comprising 40% of all respondents) strongly stated that internal conflict within local government bureaucracies between departments (such as planning, public works, engineering, parks and recreation and others) provides a significant challenge to advancing effective, integrated planning. "We
don't have a set of corporate principles at the city that provide for unified direction to our actions" said one respondent. Integrally related to not having a unified direction, or even "opposition between departments", is a lack of understanding, trust and high quality communication between departments. "Problems of communication internally and externally blow up in our face all the time. Internally there is a lack of knowledge about what other people are doing and why. And when the communications fail, people are quick to lay blame on others. The respondent stated the communication problems are partly due to the fact that "people are very busy."

One respondent gave an example of departmental conflict regarding trail development. Building a proposed trail with an impervious surface would benefit public use and reduce maintenance costs; however, it would have greater negative environmental consequences than a trail with a permeable surface. The conflict over the trail surface reflected competing policies and objectives between two local government departments. In response, a respondent stated that, "staff are responsible for fighting out these conflicting priorities but perhaps more often we should take these dilemmas to council and force them to make hard choices."

Department conflict was also noted to reflect traditional professional conflicts between engineers and planners. "There were horrendous battles between planners and engineers here in the past." "The engineers still put up girly-pictures (despite the fact that most of the planners who are females sit nearby) but we can handle it." The stereotype of the anti-environmental engineering perspective was reflected by several respondents. "There is always a conflict with engineering...The engineering standards get bigger and bigger every year...they really drive the road widths here." Only one respondent noted a conflict between the city and region "often over planning jurisdictions."

3.2.2.4. History of Not Planning for Sustainable Development

One regional and four sub-regional (comprising 25% of all) respondents stated that the lack of institutional history of effective planning for sustainable development impairs their ability to advance it. It should be noted that this study identified only two local government positions dedicated explicitly to environmental planning on Vancouver Island. One of these positions was created less than five years ago. Respondents commented that there is a lot of "mindset inertia" on how to plan. Similarly a respondent stated that in his experience, "local governments are slow to move beyond the historic delivery of hard services...Capital expenditures are relatively easy to deal with and show accomplishments." This comment begs the question, how can progress on planning for sustainable development be measured in ways that it is institutionally recognized?
3.2.2.5. Provincial Downloading

Chaotic Provincial Funding Necessitates Adaptive Planning
One regional and two sub-regional (comprising 15% of all) respondents noted that a
decline in overall local government funding from the province is coupled with changing
paths to access the remaining funds. To access the shuffled funding one has to apply for
grants with different provincial bodies. One respondent commented that presently there
is no provincial money available in the form of planning grants; but there is "lots of
money available for fisheries initiatives. So we end up trying to do community planning
under the auspice of stream protection." Succinctly put, the "province is trying to
introduce good ideas but there is no substance or no fit with existing local structure and
function." There also appears a disjunction between rapidly changing provincial funding
avenues and more predictable and clear local planning needs.

Challenging Aspects of Increased Regulatory Powers:
Two regional and three sub-regional planners (comprising 25% of all respondents) stated
that although increased local planning powers might sound helpful for advancing
planning in principle, there are other challenging consequences of these powers. First,
many of the new legislative powers in the revised Municipal Act are enabling or
voluntary but not forced on municipalities to implement. One such power is the ability to
regulate the quantity of impervious surface areas in new developments. The voluntary
nature of these powers combined with "a lack of provincial funding at the city-level, plus
fear of negative public reactions to new regulations prevent us from enacting some of our
new potential powers." A second challenge arises from a "phenomenal amount of new
regulations and amendments." Many of these new regulations are oriented to appeasing
new special public interest groups, e.g., heritage planning, aquatic planning, and others.
Thus they "make it easier to get sidetracked by special interest groups." Third,
respondents noted that some agencies, including the federal Department of Fisheries and
Oceans, are trying to let go of tight controls over local activity. Yet even though these
agencies "say just follow their guidelines, the guidelines are still very prescriptive." Thus,
the guidelines are not viewed as design principles that leave operational decisions at the
local level.

Lack of and Conflict over Enforcement
Two regional and four sub-regional (equating to 30% of all) respondents at all levels felt
that new regulations were resulting in an increased lack of enforcement and increased
conflict over enforcement. "Federal and Provincial legislation is increasing while their
capability to enforce it is decreasing," said several respondents. The regional district and
lower-levels of government "end up enforcing provincial and federal laws for free."
Several respondents commented that provincial agencies are under-resourced compared
to their workloads. "Referrals with MELP used to be at an okay pace; but now they are
slow on the turnaround time." Respondents noted that MoTH and MELP are both
downloading regulatory responsibilities. "More local responsibility means more local
contracting out of work if one has the money locally; if not, then some things get missed
in smaller communities," said a planner in a low-population area.
Downloading of historical responsibilities from the provincial government to sub-regional levels can also result in political logjams over responsibilities for enforcement. In one situation MELP told a regional planner and community steering committee "you don’t cover stormwater drainage in your proposed OCP, but you need to." The planner told MELP that this particular Regional District does not accept the new regional responsibility. This created much difficulty gaining provincial approval of the proposed OCP. Thus new local responsibilities can create intergovernmental conflict.

3.2.3. Public Process and Citizen-related Challenges

Respondents from all levels of planning identified numerous challenges related to public involvement that impede effective planning for sustainable development. These challenges were seen to originate from: a perhaps paradoxically irate and apathetic citizenry, powerful interest groups, legislation regarding public planning processes, planners lacking credibility with the public, and public attitudes opposing sustainable development planning.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Table 5. Planners Identifying Challenges: Public Environment (s.3.2.3)</th>
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| Q: "What do you see as Challenges to Doing Effective Planning for Sustainable Development?"

Types of Challenges:

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<th>Types of Challenges</th>
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<th>Regional Staff (n=10)</th>
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<th>Senior Staff (n=9)</th>
<th>Non-senior Staff (n=11)</th>
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<td>Highly Influential Interest Groups (s. 3.2.3.2)</td>
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<td>Sustainable development is perceived as an attack on public lifestyles (s. 3.2.3.5.a)</td>
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<td>&quot;Public Fear of the Comprehensively Known&quot; (s. 3.2.3.5.b)</td>
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</table>

**Totals** | 48 | 29 | 19 | 23 | 25 |

3.2.3.1. Facilitating Accurate and Appropriate Representation of the Public Will

There was widespread (50% of respondents equally split between regional and sub-regional planners) discussion of the difficulties faced in attempting to identify broad public consensus and viewpoints that are representative of communities as whole entities. "The public that is organized gets heard. This has certain merit but the problem is [that] the people not coming out are more the majority." Some planners expressed mixed
thoughts about this situation that perhaps 'the silent majority' dynamic is content to be subsumed underneath the lobbying power of the interest groups. At the same time planners recognized that it is difficult for citizens to find time, energy and resources to participate in planning processes that do not immediately affect their personal interests. Although respondents were generally proud of their multi-pronged efforts to reach out and involve the public, many still expressed the viewpoint that "...we still don't know how to do it right. We currently have great big discussions at work on how to do proper consultation and public participation and how important it is to get a truly representative sample of the population's views."

Amidst this recognition, several respondents noted difficulties with using Advisory Planning Commissions (APCs) to involve public representatives. "In larger communities, the Advisory Planning Commissions are more likely composed of different token experts and thus may not represent community wishes very well. [In addition] APCs in Regional Districts [electoral areas] are more influenced by the local director since they are appointed by the director." A couple respondents at the city-level noted that APCs can also assume they have significant power. "The council had us rewrite the bylaw about APCs locally because a few had gone awry here. In one case, the members of the APC were virtually the same members who made up the residents' association and expressed a narrow focus of interest, and thus were not representing the public well." Using stakeholder committees for similar purposes to APCs can also prove challenging because "in order to be fully representative [of the community] they become unwieldy. Furthermore sometimes they can "become very political" and begin to think that they have much "more power than they [officially] do and make [political] quotes to the paper."

Respondents also noted public process challenges in terms of gaining participation, overcoming ignorance, building understandings, and identifying shared values. Before addressing these challenges, one has to realize, according to a regional respondent, that "one is working with pre-existing politics in the community [including animosities]." Then one respondent said in frustration that one has to realize that some members of the public are "just [mentally] out to lunch" in terms of their high level of ignorance. Conversely, another regional planner noted that "we need processes that contribute to peoples' ability to understand issues and become more self-governing." One can see a conflict between the time needed to build public understandings and public support with the need for political immediacy described in the political process challenges section of this document.

Five (comprising 25% of all) respondents noted that the public also suffers from "participation exhaustion," while other members of the public "constantly claim to have not received consultation documents" put in all residents' mailboxes by the planning department. However in terms of the challenge of getting public participation one city respondent said that "one almost feels that unless one is putting on a circus show, the public won't show up! How do we make an in-fill development workshop sexy [for public attendance]?" A couple respondents noted, "The constant need to create events
[with attractive atmospheres] is arduous." The challenge for many members of the public to participate was also recognized in terms of the value of creating a very welcoming atmosphere. "It's got to be the most intimidating thing in the world to stand up in public at a meeting and speak." This respondent also noted the challenge of "how to deal with cultural, ethnic and youth-involvement issues; for example when sitting around a table is just not a part of some people's culture." These comments represent the hurdles identified by planners in attempting to involve the public and identify the general public will.

3.2.3.2. Highly Influential Interest Groups

Many respondents from all government levels (50% of respondents equally split between regional and sub-regional planners) stated the power of interest groups to unduly influence planning processes and outcomes proves a significant challenge in the realm of public consultation. One example of the negative impacts of powerful interest groups was offered by a sub-regional planner. "We often plan for the minority to the disadvantage of the majority -- because these minority special interest groups are well organized. They make frequent delegations and have the ears of political decision makers." This planner carried out research to identify real planning and service needs and found radically different ones than those promoted by a few large public recreation interest groups. "The community when surveyed with representative sampling really wanted significantly different services, not what's printed in the newspapers."

In terms of interest group participation in planning processes, eight (or 40% of all) planners noted that some of them are "very well organized and extremely challenging" and "some interest groups attend every single input event for different neighborhoods in a community." One example demonstrated the power of these groups to advance their own group's interests; perhaps at the cost of the greater community. A respondent stated, "Some people in the public made and distributed a mock-Regional District pamphlet a few days before a public hearing, using our logo and letterhead, that distorted the possible impacts of a plan on private properties. Hundreds of people then came to a public hearing to oppose the plan. It was quite a theatre of many of them asking inflammatory questions, containing ludicrous assumptions, to us [planners] at the hearing, even though they know The Municipal Act prohibits us from answering them [in that setting]." Another respondent said that an important plan died because it was "damned by faint praise" early in its development by environmental interest groups, who later acted vociferously against it. This respondent stated that public opinion in these politicized contexts acts like an "ice cube" on a hot stove by turning liquid quickly and then evaporating. Significantly, one respondent noted that, in planning contexts extensively politicized by powerful interest groups, "We're not planners anymore, we are psychologists [regarding public opinion and interest-group behaviour]."
Six planners (comprising 30% of all respondents) voiced a frustration with the structure of public hearings as legislated in The Municipal Act. A city planner stated that, "The Municipal Act defines public consultation processes and thus is to blame in some ways for the failures of our present public consultation." A concrete example of the public involvement challenge created by provincial legislation was provided by a regional planner: "By the time you get to a public hearing it is too late to alter the plan, because provincial legislation requires that any changes in use and density will force the need for another public hearing." In fact one respondent half-joked that, "It's best to have no one show up at a public hearing -- then a planner knows that they have done a good job because no one is upset." This comment is based on the widely held belief that it is far easier to gain negative public involvement rather than to build positive public involvement. Another respondent frankly stated that "public hearings are not public involvement -- they are a chance for people to throw darts at something." This reflects the difficulty of building constructively critical and supportive public involvement earlier on in the planning process. One cannot help but wonder whether the recurrent surfacing of negative aspects of public involvement causes planners to devalue civic engagement (consciously or not).

This sentiment of planners' frustration with the provincial legislation on public involvement was acknowledged by Gary Paget, from the Ministry of Municipal Affairs at a planning luncheon of the Planning Institute of British Columbia on November 19th, 1998, in Nanaimo. Paget is the manager of the ongoing process to revise The Municipal Act and said that the government recognized the need for change and that the section outlining public hearings would be substantially revised in 1999. Since then relevant legislative revisions to the Municipal Act have been recommended.

Another challenge arises from the legislative aspect of public involvement. Some respondents argued that legal technicalities can have undue power in the planning process. "There is a frequent threat of legal action by interests opposed to the plan. One person who did not like a plan and had private subdivision interests that would be adversely affected by the proposed plan took the local government to court because the time of viewing of the plan documents was not mentioned in the public notice -- and he won in court." The respondent went on to say that a plan that took two years' work was eliminated, and then an election came that adversely affected passing the same plan because more pro-development people were elected.

3.2.3.4. A. Anti-Planning Public Attitudes

Four (or 20% of all) respondents, particularly regional planners, identified planning challenges arising from polarized community values and strong anti-planning attitudes. One regional respondent stated, "There is a real polarization and intensity to current planning and land-use debates. I used to be able to go out for a beer with the most vocal plan opponent after a public meeting. I don't think this could happen now." Several respondents at the city and regional levels spoke of peoples' attachment to private
property. For example, a senior planner stated, "My biggest worry is the fairly strong property rights movement here." One planner stated that some property rights and individual freedom advocates have declared themselves as outright "saboteurs of the planning process" even while they participate as representatives on an important public input committee. Planners seem to find it "harder to fight for the middle ground" when communities are highly polarized, politicized and strident in their views. In a number of the interviews, it seemed that planners are already carrying out strategic analysis of potential group behaviour and tools they have to limit its strength before they put energy into figuring out the planning issues. A couple senior planners identified a need for a "longer-term perspective among the general public and a wider-spread of sentiment for the care of others" instead of the "populist negativism" that exists.

3.2.3.4.B. Developing and/or Restoring Public Credibility in Planning

Six (or 30% of all) planners at all levels remarked that, not only do planners have poor credibility with elected officials, but the public lacks trust in planners. One said, "The public used to hold us up as protectors of the public good but not anymore." One regional planner said this might be related to a poor public understanding of the historic role and value of planning. However many respondents identified a different cause for this lack of planning legitimacy in the public's eyes. They felt, as one city planner stated, "We [planners] are always making compromises [i.e. between public goals and private interests] which results in the perception by the public that we have given too much away." A regional planner stated in frustration that he thought their district had "set the record for spawning new residents' associations" in its attempt to create an official community plan. "People were scared to hell they would go to bed and wake up the next day with 5000 people living beside them. Getting our message across to the public failed. We now have our bruises and scars as planners, but [we] are not without hope." In one particular region, perceived public credibility issues have resulted in the planning department being politically forced to contract out substantially more community planning work than in the past. One respondent mentioned that more use of "consultants with little knowledge of or attachment to this area" was given higher priority in order to give neutral, fresh public perceptions of planning activity.

The impacts of this lack of public credibility have professional and personal impacts on planners according to (five or 20% of all) respondents. Planners in representing change and advocating for it at times and looking for balancing interests can receive harsh treatment from the public. As one regional planner stated, "This is going to sound hokey, but it [this planning work] is damaging to one's mental health. I've been called 'cockroach, lackey of the provincial party in government,' and worse, and personally physically threatened." A senior planner stated that the result of "always being knocked by negativism...is that many planners burn out and do not spend a full career here." One wonders if this comment is related to the relatively short time on average that respondents had spent in their present positions. On average the respondents were only in their current positions for four and a half years. Further, with an average age of forty-one, the average years of total planning experience was only eleven years, thus suggesting
alternate work before or interspersed with their planning work. Only one senior respondent was willing to voice reflectively that some of the "successive constructive criticism [of public planning] that has turned into prejudice and negativism may be well founded." This last point begs further investigation and was not directly addressed by suggested strategies as can be seen later in this document.

3.2.3.5.A. Sustainable development is perceived as an attack on private lifestyles

With respect to advancing sustainable development planning, ten or (50% of all and divided equally between regional and sub-regional) respondents noted significant challenges in the public realm regarding intransigent lifestyle values and behaviours. A number of respondents see public involvement as "a double-edged sword" -- essential to good outcomes yet potentially explosive and unconstructive. The negative aspect of public consultation arises for several reasons in relation to sustainable development:

- getting the public to "think at a regional scale is not easy,"
- the public has "trouble understanding the idea of the greater good,"
- and generally people "do not accept personal responsibility" for the consequences of their actions and similarly to change their lifestyles.

These factors culminate in significant "drawbridge, no-growth thinking" amidst the public, said a few regional planners. The "no-growth'ers" see nefarious planners in bed with development trying to foist higher and higher densities into perceived rural areas. "Clustered development was a word you could not say around here for a while," said one regional planner. This again results in problems of public credibility, as seen in comments made by one respondent that "we have lost almost all trust the public had in the planning department." Something that catalyzes the general public sentiments above are the "public fearmongers...[who find it]...easier to convince people to be scared [of change] than to be courageous."

A point was made by a couple respondents that a number of powerful environmental interest groups consist of middle and upper class people who are attached to unsustainable personal amenities such as large lot sizes, cars, and living on the edge of unmanaged greenspace. It was felt that these groups, by opposing higher density sustainable development, are precluding a well-reasoned rate of growth and will cause housing costs to rise; until they lose political power and then the pendulum will swing "twice as hard the other direction." This presents an interesting conceptual continuum from no growth for any reason (largely because of professed environmental imperatives and social desires) to pro-growth for any reason (largely because of professed economic benefits and improved distributional benefits of environmental, social, and economic amenities to future potential residents). In any case, it appears that planners face serious challenges in finding middle and shared ground on these issues. A final significant point respondents made was that public and interest groups' fears of the unknown combine with "not enough successful local development examples of clustered development" to cause sustainable development to be seen as an attack on peoples' lifestyles.
3.2.3.5.B. "Public Fear of the Comprehensively Known"

Comprehensive development is another prime challenge of sustainable development planning that is challenged by a dynamic in the public realm according to two (or 10% of the) respondents. Most succinctly, because "Community plans are more comprehensive now...it results in more targets and vulnerability to [public] criticism." In a more detailed fashion, sustainable development planning requires comprehensive and integrated thinking. Options to exercise this type of thinking for sustainable development therefore arise in large-scale proposals. One respondent discussing a particular large-scale proposal said, "[X area] was a planners dream -- the chance to comprehensively plan an entire community down to the details of the buses...and two-thirds of the site was to be left in its natural state." However, in order win public support of existing neighboring people, the built amenities had to be delivered in the early development stages. In order to build these amenities, the developer would economically need to have guaranteed rights to build more profitable successive stages of the development. This required comprehensively presenting the entire proposal to the public and gaining approval by the local government. Then when the entire project was publicized, "the public was stunned by the total volume of change and the calming effect of gradually, phased-in development was ignored...the plan died." This dynamic example illustrates an interesting, tri-partite conflict between sustainable development planning, comprehensive planning, and public reactions to large-scale proposals. The respondent who provided this information called it the "public fear of the (comprehensively) known."
3.3 Strategies

3.3.1 Political Process and Elected Officials-related Strategies

Most of the strategies used in the political realm, as identified by planners in regards to advancing sustainable development planning, focused on communication processes. These processes included: caucusing with officials, finding planning champions, building trust through administrative communications, using a variety of communication methods to educate officials, and demonstrating wisdom and strategy in one's interactions with elected officials. These strategies largely addressed the three groups of challenges most-identified by planners. These challenges were: needing to educate elected officials, needing to increase thoughtful decision making by officials, and building planning and planners' credibility in the eyes of officials. The political challenges not substantially addressed by the following strategies were: the difficulties of provincial downloading of responsibilities, the pressure of political immediacy, and the challenge presented by unwanted political influence. With respect to precluding unwanted influence, one respondent noted the importance of having an administrator willing to protect staff from political interference, and having a code of policies with clear administrative boundaries that prevent direct contact between politicians and staff planners. But no strategies on how to achieve these particular conditions were suggested by any respondents.

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<th>Table 6. Planners Identifying Strategies: Political Environment (s.3.3.1)</th>
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<td>Types of Strategies:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Making Strong Efforts to Educate Elected Officials (s. 3.3.1.3)</td>
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<td>Politically Sophisticated and Strategic Communications with Elected Officials (s. 3.3.1.4)</td>
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<td>Totals</td>
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3.3.1.1 Caucusing with Elected Officials and Identifying Champions

Three city and one regional planner (comprising 20% of all respondents) noted two related strategies they find effective in advancing sustainable development planning. First, caucusing individually with elected officials creates an important, mutually beneficial, two-way flow of information. Planners and officials "can learn where each other is at," said one planner; and a steady information flow is provided to the official about planning issues. One city planner said that it is effective to meet with a smaller committee of council members to deal with particular planning issues in advance of meeting with the entire council. This planner said, "Meeting with them before going to council allows a lot of back and forth; faster responses to make changes and their frankness in the small group helps to put forth a realistic proposal to the whole council."
A few city planners stated that meeting individually with officials is very useful for increasing communication and enhancing understandings. At first sight, these individual meetings between a planner and a council member might appear to be inconsistent with planners' concerns about unwanted political influence. However, the respondents who noted the value of individual caucusing were senior planners and the meetings were inferred to be infrequent, issue-based, and initiated by the planners. One planner stated, "Going on a one on one basis with councilors is useful for advancing planning ideas." Another planner stated it was useful to do this upon beginning a new position in a senior role.

Clearly, identifying elected officials to champion ideas is related to, if not mainly achieved through caucusing. One city planner echoed the thoughts of a few others when this person said, "Finding a champion on council is essential." A regional planner also stated that this process of championing as it relates to assessing and "building political buy-in is important." What respondents left unsaid was that through the process of identifying champions, they are also likely to identify opponents and then look at other strategies of how to persuade them.

3.3.1.2 Developing Elected Officials' Trust and Respect for Planners

Three city and two regional planners (representing 25% of all respondents) stated the importance of achieving a sense of credible reliability from officials towards planners. One city planner emphatically stated, "Don't back politicians into corners, give them a number of options, allow them to save face." These points on the practice of administrative diplomacy were reflected in more explicit comments about ways that planners' administrative actions can directly affect officials' political approval levels. One such comment by a regional planner was, "I try to help minimize the distance between political leadership and public opinion through frequent consultation with the public." This reflects a challenge noted earlier that there is a critical distance whereby politicians can only be so far "out in front" of public opinion.

Two regional planners stated the importance of providing timely strategic information to elected officials not just for the sake of the planning process, nor just for the sake of building trust with elected officials, but for their own occupational survival. One respondent gave detailed thoughts on this issue. This planner stated the importance of addressing the local area's elected director early on in the process so that the director is not surprised by members of the public. If the official is not kept informed, the respondent stated, and "If the director is surprised, then he might walk in through my door with a full head of steam." The respondent added, that it is important to keep giving officials the "heads up" on issues because, "The rule is no surprises...It raises their confidence in planners...and making them aware of something before it becomes an issue allows them to armour themselves."
Providing valuable information to an elected official and insulating the official from surprises ideally results in reciprocal actions to benefit the planner. As a regional planner said, "There is nothing worse than being surprised in a public environment by a regional director's actions or views [when you thought you had their support previously]." In order to protect himself one planner stated, "To avoid being surprised by an elected official I use all opportunities for early dialogue and confirm understandings by creating a follow-up paper trail by using good note-taking and record-keeping." This professional behaviour makes one wonder whether elected officials carry out similar record keeping to indemnify their actions and understandings, and if so how much time is lost to this endeavour. Trying to build positive relations with elected officials and yet at the same time preparing for alternate outcomes appears to be an intricate planning strategy.

3.3.1.3 Making Strong Efforts to Educate Elected Officials
Three regional and one city planner (equating to 20% of all respondents) noted helpful principles and methods used to educate elected officials. In terms of principles, one regional planner frankly stated, "We do not assume that the elected officials have a basic knowledge on the issue at hand," in designing and carrying out the process of communication with the officials. This respondent added, "We spend time showing officials how their decisions relate back to consequences." A different regional planner speaking to the same point said that the style of this communication is important. This respondent stated, "I do this in a non-confrontational way because some of them would get their backs up otherwise." A city planner reiterated the value of brevity in attempting to educate officials, "I keep council apprised on a need to know basis and with very succinct reports." Finally, another method was noted by a regional planner, "We make sure they attend workshops and receive a stream of information that we forward to them. UBCM [Union of British Columbia Municipalities] meetings also help."

3.3.1.4 Politically Sophisticated and Strategic Communications with Officials
Six planners equally divided between regional and sub-regional planning (representing 30% of all respondents) identified the importance of politically savvy, including timing and persuasion, as essential to advancing sustainable development in the political realm of planning. A senior regional and a junior city planner spoke on the need to analyze existing guidelines from an integrated sustainable development perspective and advance new programs where gaps exist and remove or revise programs hindering sustainable development. But both respondents said that it is essential to make these changes, "very palatable to council...show them how 'easy' these changes are to make." Again the point was made by a city planner who advised taking successful planning projects and using them to build political credibility. Several regional planners and a few city planners stated the fundamental importance of picking one's battles with council carefully. As an aside, picking one's battles was reflected as such a core principle and activity of practicing planners in all three (political, institutional, public) realms that one might say it is the key distinction between theoretical planning and practicing planners. One
respondent spoke with fervor and perhaps emotional fatigue about needing to choose when to fight with officials about a planning issue and when to lose a battle in order to win the war. The personal energy spent trying to advance radical planning in a political system oriented to incremental change seems significant. Nonetheless, this respondent pointed to a copy of the Planning Institute of British Columbia's Code of Principles and said planners need to keep these central to their thinking in picking their political battles. In summary, sophisticated and strategic communication is an important strategy for advancing effective sustainable development planning in the political realm. Perhaps one regional respondent stated this point most succinctly, "Immense political subtleties and intricacies exist in planning. Diplomacy is everything."
3.3.2 Institutional and Structural Strategies

The strategies used to address institutional-related challenges to sustainable development planning fall into three main categories. The first category consists of personal outlooks and actions that planners identified as useful. The second category represents actions oriented towards building lateral and internal departmental support. The final category consists of a number of methods that planners use to advance sustainable development planning in their interactions with provincial and federal levels of government.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 7. Planners Identifying Strategies: Institutional Environment (s.3.3.2)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Q: &quot;What Strategies Do You Use to Advance Effective Planning for Sustainable Development?&quot;</td>
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<tr>
<td>Types of Strategies:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Altering Planner's Insights &amp; Actions (s. 3.3.2.1)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thoughtfully Choose One's Battles (s. 3.3.2.1.a)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Perseverance in Taking Risks (s. 3.3.2.1.b)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Building Internal Bureaucratic Support (s. 3.3.2.2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategies for Interagency Action (s. 3.3.2.3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demonstrate Strategy and Leadership with the Province (s. 3.3.2.3.a)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use a Principled, Reasoned, Planning Process to Mediate Public and Provincial Interests (s. 3.3.2.3.b)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foster Interagency Coordination and Cooperation (s. 3.3.2.3.c)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
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</table>

3.3.2.1 Altering Planners' Insights and Actions

3.3.2.1.1 Thoughtfully Choosing One’s Battles

While cognizant of institutional constraints to advancing sustainable development planning, five (or 25% of all) planners were aware of actions that they could take to improve their own effectiveness. The first of these was "to pick one's battles" carefully and thoughtfully. A senior regional planner rephrased this point noting that it is valuable "to practice flexible planning so that one can deal with the times when there is money and when there isn't." Similarly, this planner noted that it is important "to not be fixated on an unattainable goal...and realize that sometimes the best way to an end goal is not a straight line." A couple planners spoke of the need to uphold respect for the process regarding achieving planning objectives. Upholding the integrity of the planning process was exemplified as respecting the value of community involvement by one junior planner. A senior planner provided an example of procedural integrity when the respondent said, "It is an ethical line of knowing when a report is ready to go or not [to elected officials and other agencies]." Many planners agreed that planning ethics are important but timing and strategizing when to demonstrate them is equally or more
important. Several respondents echoed the sentiments of two junior city planners who argued emphatically that planners have to be able to distinguish skillfully between essential and non-essential planning process principles and/or proposal characteristics. Thus one is able to distinguish when and how hard to push against institutional constraints, because as a city planner said, "We have to recognize the need to win the war, not all the battles."

3.3.2.1. B Persevering in Taking Risks
Fifteen percent of respondents identified risk-taking as an essential method of addressing institutional constraints on sustainable development planning. A couple regional planners tied risk-taking integrally to innovation and advancing new beneficial ideas. A city planner spoke on the dynamics of perseverance and building solidarity in civic servants' willingness to be innovative. In this person's own words, "Sticking one's neck out over and over leads other people to join in over time...this way we move from a period of gestation to the pregnant moment...when the time has to be right and many people stick their necks out together [from different city departments]." Particularly speaking to the role of perseverance, this planner stated, "I've gotten shot down several times." The respondent added, "Once I got shot down twice on the same issue, but, by the third time I raised it, other departments were getting complaints related to this issue and saw the need to support me and we won approval." It is clear that planners' activities take place within a hierarchical situation where levels of risk-taking can be forcefully encouraged or discouraged by the orientation of superiors. No particular suggestions were given on how to create or maintain good institutional conditions that facilitate innovative planning action.

3.3.2.2. Building Internal Bureaucratic Support
Thirty-five percent of planners (including a majority of city planners; 50% of sub-regional respondents) from all levels of government identified developing relations of trust, respect, and camaraderie within local government bureaucracy as required to make their planning work successful. According to one city planner, "being seen as reasonable and flexible, not rigid, but also knowing where to draw the line in the sand," is essential to achieving positive and productive relations within the local government. A senior regional planner stated that it is valuable to build support in other line departments. One city planner stated that even physical proximity to other departments such as engineering can help build positive relations with them.

3.3.2.3. Strategies for Interagency Action
3.3.2.3.A Demonstrating Leadership with the Province
Two senior regional planners (or 10% of all respondents) provided strategies to use in lobbying the province for changes in policy, positions, and other matters. These suggestions begin with a recognition of the need for improvement. As one regional
planner said, "We don't do enough lobbying of the province. The municipalities do it better [than the Regional District]." The same respondent went on to state, "It is a very politicized province here, and there are hidden political structures. If one just plays by the rules, one will lose [because there are hidden modes of provincial influence]...and the squeaky wheel gets the grease." In terms of emulating a squeaky wheel, this regional planner provided an example involving leadership. The planner said, "The Region here told the province we are going ahead with planning here, with or without you, so do you want to come along? And the province responded, 'we'll be there.'" It was an effective strategy of demonstrating leadership, with a solvable attention-garnering issue needing provincial action.

3.3.2.3.B Using a Principled, Reasoned, Planning Process to Mediate Public and Provincial Interests
Several regional planners described regional planning's balancing role of building and maintaining planning support from the public, elected officials and other (often provincial) agencies. However, one regional respondent provided a detailed description of this process. This planner creates a list of concerns raised by provincial agencies such as MELP in their review of regional district official community plans. The planner prioritizes the issues and assesses the level of local support and/or opposition. Then the planner meets with an advisory committee from the community to discuss the issues, and then meets in similar fashion with MELP and keeps brokering agreements until a deal is reached.

3.3.2.3.C Fostering Interagency Coordination and Cooperation
Primarily regional planners (five of the eight respondents were regional planners - with a total of 40% of all respondents) provided a number of strategies to address interagency challenges. They made many positive comments about the value of interagency committees and forums. One senior city planner stated, "Interagency committees are helpful even when they are on an unusual planning topic. Because they then allow individuals within each organization to build relationships." One planner noted that in the Capital Regional District in the past, all the municipal planners used to meet together every two months to inform and be informed of regional planning processes. "This was very helpful," noted this planner. A senior regional planner stated that they had more success using this strategy of getting multiple agencies in one room together at the political level.

Several principles and methods of optimal interagency communication were outlined by two regional planners as follows:
• "Provide lots of opportunities for input and give feedback to the agencies"
• "Early shared involvement is important to bring other agencies along constructively"
• "Exposing conflicts among provincial agencies to themselves is one way of trying to avoid these conflicts becoming our local or regional problem"
• "Use regular-level or minimal facilitation -- surprisingly preparing for heavy duty facilitation has resulted in more antipathy and negative dynamics coming out sometimes."
• "Avoid position taking and media amplification of negative comments that result in the comments and a resulting negative dynamic taking on a life of their own."

A city planner noted one successful strategy of interdepartmental communication at the city level. He described a funneling process where each department had a champion who regularly met through an effective interdepartmental committee. This method of coordinated championing might have potential use for provincial and regional interagency communications. Even just having the different branches within MELP such as sewage treatment branch and the water licenses branch practice greater coordination would aid interagency activities. In regards to this, one regional planner stated, "Although interagency meetings on specific items at the local level has been helpful, it would drain a lot of energy if there was constant local interagency involvement at the community level." Nonetheless, many regional planners echoed one planner's words that, "Interagency coordination is the way to go." Again planners recognize the value of sharing successful examples of interagency communication in order to make it more appealing to individual agencies.
3.3.3 Public Process and Citizen-related Strategies

Planners at all government levels offered numerous strategies for advancing sustainable development planning in the context of public involvement challenges. These suggested techniques fall into three general categories: (1) overcoming the negative aspects of interest group influence, (2) negotiation strategies to deal with development interests, (3) methods of public outreach and citizen involvement. The strategies suggested by respondents did not directly address all the challenges identified in the public involvement realm. Specific means of addressing anti-planning and anti-sustainable development views, and raising planners' credibility were not identified by respondents.

Table 8. Planners Identifying Strategies: Public Environment (s.3.3.3)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Types of Strategies</th>
<th>Respondents (n=20)</th>
<th>Regional Staff (n=10)</th>
<th>Sub-regional Staff (n=10)</th>
<th>Senior Staff (n=9)</th>
<th>Non-senior Staff (n=11)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Moderate the Public Influence of Interest Groups (s. 3.3.3.1)</td>
<td>4</td>
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<td>Sophisticated, Flexible Negotiation with Developers (s. 3.3.3.2)</td>
<td>3</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Use Multiple Avenues of Public Outreach and Input (s. 3.3.3.3.a)</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identify &amp; Use Optimal Ways to Consult the Public (s. 3.3.3.3.b)</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>New Planners Need New Consultation Skills (s. 3.3.3.3.c)</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Partnering with Community Resources (s. 3.3.3.3.d)</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
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<td><strong>Totals</strong></td>
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<td><strong>16</strong></td>
<td><strong>12</strong></td>
<td><strong>16</strong></td>
<td><strong>12</strong></td>
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3.3.3.1 Moderating the Public Influence of Interest Groups

Several strategies for moderating undue levels of public influence of some interest and citizens groups were suggested by twenty percent of respondents. One of the simplest and perhaps most effective strategies was suggested by a senior city planner. This planner spoke about the value of carrying out representative sampling studies in determining community needs and gauging support for different proposals to circumvent loud organized interests. A senior regional planner noted with similar intent that, "We try to counter impact of interest groups by holding open houses to enable individual input. Also our public surveys go to all householders."

This respondent also suggested that using a wide variety of public consultation tools such as surveys, open houses, public meetings, and "the steering committee to a great degree" prior to going to public hearing is essential to getting feedback with breadth and depth. One regional planner noted that their planning department intentionally held simultaneous community input meetings in different neighborhoods in order to prevent multiple attendance and to lessen the influence of organized citizens and interest groups.
A senior city planner provided a condition, but not truly a strategy, for limiting the public sway of private interest groups. He stated, "Our APC [advisory planning commission] is pretty good at reflecting the public at large probably because the community itself is small." He also stated that APC members are appointed by the council as a whole which, from his point of view, "...is a good thing."

3.3.3.2. Sophisticated Negotiating with Developers

Several planners from all levels (comprising 15% of respondents) noted that strategic negotiations with development interests can be an effective strategy for advancing sustainable development planning. This strategy responds to political and institutional challenges identified earlier. These challenges include: a lack of political leadership, a lack of implementation of recent environmental planning powers, and an inability to enforce existing regulations. Several planners see their ability to negotiate with developers for public amenities and other sustainable development concepts as an important tool that is still within their purview.

As one senior regional planner forcefully stated, "The key thing as a planner is to...ask what is in it [the proposed development] for the community?" More specifically, one city planner stated, turning currently informal activity in development services branch into more formal approaches with environmental aspects is an important strategy. This planner stated this is a transformation from saying, "We don't want this and not that either [to developers]" to saying, "This is what we do want to see. Can you add something like this to your proposal?" Several examples were provided of how to use regulatory incentives in these negotiations. One planner suggested trading faster development proposal processing for the proponent's adherence to voluntary guidelines. A second example provided by this planner would be to barter "...zero-lot lines or relaxing height restrictions if the development follows other voluntary environmental guidelines such as: protecting stands of trees [tree clustering] or follows steep slope development or [erosion-prevention] guidelines."

It was recognized that planners' abilities to negotiate successfully with development interests depends to a great degree on elected officials' support. It was also noted that levels of officials' support for planners to negotiate varies greatly between communities and likely between elections. The differences between negotiating development at the regional versus the city level provide another structural factor affecting the success of this strategy. A senior regional planner stated, "The region can be a tough negotiator" compared to the city-level because the region cannot directly increase its funding levels by increasing the tax base of development. Thus, city planners appears to be in weaker negotiating positions with developers than regional planners due to the municipal tax-revenue structure.
3.3.3.3. Public Involvement

3.3.3.3. A) Using Multiple Avenues of Public Outreach and Input

Five regional and two city planners (comprising 35% of all respondents) suggested that a strategy of creating diverse communication paths between the public and the planning department is essential to comprehensive, bi-directional information flow. One senior city planner stated, "We use multitudes of ways of reaching out to the public." This planner noted that it is important to elicit from the public what they want and realize that "The public does not know how to address council and is generally not well organized." In response to these goals and constraints many planners made comments similar to the following one from a city planner: "We go out of our way to reach the public... We use all types of public involvement." A junior regional planner also noted the importance of using many workshops, open houses, and public meetings before going to the public hearing stage. This allows for using multiple two-way communication mechanisms before going to the one-way communication setting of a public hearing.

3.3.3.3. B) Optimal Ways to Consult the Public

Ten planners (or fifty percent of all respondents) from all levels of government offered strategic principles and ideas on ways to best consult the public in order to advance sustainable development planning. When designing public involvement processes, several regional and city planners stated that, in the current pro-consultation planning context, it is important to "...recognize situations when it is not needed or not appropriate to consult with the public." A regional planner stated that planners have to realize that some members of the public, "the unreasonable, no-growth people" in particular, will never be persuaded to support a plan. One senior city planner spoke about the goals of public involvement to inform and build contextual understandings of proposed plans and bylaws. This planner stated that "We have to show the outcomes of a plan fairly quickly to the public, provide simple, immediate results, and send out consultation 'info' to everyone. We aim to create processes that tell people where they've been, where they are presently at, and where they're going, in order to keep them involved."

A wide range of operational tactics for public involvement was suggested by many respondents. "Identifying and involving community leaders is important even though they often surface by themselves," said one city planner. Similarly another city planner stated, "We must keep active people motivated but not predominating [in the public process]." It was suggested that planners should use more open-ended consultation at the beginning of a process to get all the issues on the table and narrower consultation mechanisms towards the end. A successful alternative strategy to this large linear process was used in the development of a trail in one region. Planning the trail involved working intensively with groups of residents block by block, but it required significant resources.

Regarding public consultation forums, one senior regional planner stated that "face to face meetings are liked better than polls... because meetings make people more accountable ... and are an opportunity for learning." The same planner stated that open houses combined with meetings are liked by the public. As noted earlier, a number of
planners stated the value of using two-way communication forums before holding the legislated one-way communication forum of a public hearing. A few planners echoed the following thoughts of a senior regional planner, "A public hearing that involves a question and answer session at the beginning [prior to the formal hearing] and then one-way input from the public is what has evolved here as best practice." This innovative practice to circumvent legislative constraints seemed to be spreading to other regions.

A few planners provided two other concepts on ways to best prepare for public consultation. A senior regional planner stated that thorough use of steering committees and/or APCs is essential to backing up their work so that if the planner is attacked by political interests or in a public forum the planner can point to community support. The second point made by a city planner but reflecting the thoughts of several planners was that "One should know ahead of time the main issues the public will raise at a public hearing before it actually takes place". Another senior regional planner noted an important distinction between municipal public hearings and regional public hearings. At the municipal level all city council members are required to be present. Regional public hearings do not have this stipulation. A couple regional planners noted that they had been accused of bias in reporting the results of a public hearing to regional directors not present at the hearing. One senior regional planner said that where a public hearing had become very controversial in the past, the planner had asked to shut it down and postpone it until all regional directors could be present. Although this strategy prevents a loss of further public credibility in planners at the particular hearing the strategy does not preclude this problem reoccurring at future public hearings. One regional planner said in frustration with the nature of public hearings that British Columbia might benefit from moving away from public hearings towards pursuing independent arbitration models for public decision making.

3.3.3.3. C) New Planners Need New Consultation Skills

Fifteen percent of the planners identified several consultation skills that need to be better emphasized in the education of future planners. A city planner stated that there is a need to better educate planners about the significant level of politics involved in planning decision making. This planner also stated that planners need more skills in facilitation. Related to this point on facilitation and earlier comments on the value of diplomacy, this planner said, "Having empathy as a planner for both neighbors and developers is essential." A regional planner spoke more pragmatically about empathy by stating planners should be nice to enemies of local planning because there is a value in appeasement. Whether this value was for personal survival and mental health or for plan advancement was not clear. A city senior planner stated that planners have to be able to sort out "[public] feedback -- is it fluff or real?...and also be willing to ask deeper questions. For example, maybe an issue of needing a street-crossing, or not, really is a question of 'why are people crossing the street at this location, and should they be doing so?''" This planner argued that to ask these deeper questions planners "need better diagnostic tools and tools to translate vision into reality." Finally, a regional planner stated that, fundamentally, planners "have to believe in the value of planning;" planning
must be a part of a planner's "core values of what is right" in order to succeed in public involvement processes.

3.3.3.3. D) Partnering with Community Resources

A few planners noted that partnering between community groups and the region or city had proved to be valuable methods of public involvement. Both a city and a regional planner stated that involving the public and the private sector in building park structures had been successful. One city planner stated that, "It is important to try to get ourselves out of the providing of services job where citizens and community groups can do things very well. We facilitate many people to take local action..." Recognizing and acting on the potentially beneficial role that can be carried out by community groups or general public involvement appears to a useful strategy for advancing planning activities.
3.4 Sustainable Development: Perceived Challenges and Strategies

Planners were asked about planning for sustainable development. However, most appeared to have difficulty explicitly distinguishing between their experiences of practicing effective planning versus experiences practicing sustainable development planning. Nonetheless, the responses that made specific reference to planning for sustainable development produced the findings presented in this section.

A junior regional planner stated, "Planning is all in three dimensions now!" Sustainable development planning is seen to be causing the input and outcome variables involved in public planning analysis to increase in number. For example, one junior, city-level planner spoke of discovering a small, rare species of flora on a piece of urban development property that forced major redesign of the proposed development. It is easy to see that sustainable development causes planning to be perceived as increasingly complex.

Greater planning uncertainties are one specific type of complexity that is perceived to be increasing under a sustainable development planning approach. Dealing with planning uncertainties is difficult in regions where traditional economic welfare, specifically average family incomes, have fallen. According to a senior city planner, the "classic battle" or tension (whether sustainable development goes against short term economic development) is pronounced. A junior regional planner echoed these thoughts and the conflicting roles of public planners when in response to the concept of sustainable development he stated, "There still are fundamental conflicts. How can we create economic development and yet not cut down any trees?" Many of these complexities about the reliability and distribution of the benefits and costs of development (or rather human activity) involve significant planning uncertainty.

Sustainable development planning also was perceived as coexisting with larger socio-political influences on planning. One senior regional planner stated that there is "...a dichotomy between two trends: global integration and global influence of local activities, but also greater local control over activity...[resulting in]...likely a return to interconnected city-states because of the devolution of provincial and federal government responsibilities." These words raise a concern about the potential for increased parochialism. One example as expressed by a senior city-level planner was that accessing provincial and federal funds for local planning was becoming increasingly tied to personal skills and contacts of a municipal staff person and less straightforward -- less easily accessed according to need and merit. At the same time the devolution of responsibilities and sufficient power can increase the potential for local planning to advance sustainable development.

In general the twenty respondents in this study were about equally divided among three different viewpoints on sustainable development planning. One group of planners, predominantly located in rural areas facing economic hardship, perceived sustainable development as a threat that might cause further local socio-economic harm. This
understanding arose not just from a fear of further "locking up" of natural resources from economic use, but also a feeling that local citizens have little power or control over provincial land-use decision-making. One senior regional planner stated that he heard a provincial government minister say that much of the land in his region was going to become a park for citizens of Vancouver. The second group, primarily from wealthier, urbanized areas felt that sustainable development is a laudable goal and being incrementally achieved, but that more significant progress needs to be made. The third group did not explicitly distinguish sustainable development from traditional public planning goals and actions. A few members of both the second and third groups felt that sustainable development was being used as a political means for citizens' groups to give more legitimacy or standing to their questionable interests (i.e. often to aid in legitimating local social and political opposition to economic development).

3.4.1 Sustainable Development Challenges

Several challenges were noted regarding attempts to practice sustainable development planning. These challenges include: a history of not planning for sustainable development, the short term costs sometimes associated with it, difficulties communicating the concept, irrational political decision-making, and a lack of institutional risk taking.

A history of planning that results in urban sprawl and related non-sustainable development-type concepts has caused difficulty trying to initiate sustainable development planning. One junior regional planner stated, "We have a history of poorly planned development -- of just building for profit." This resulted in few success stories that this planner could point to on the community map in her/his office. The planner pointed to a number of infill development planning efforts none of which were very successful. A senior city-level planner stated, "Sustainable development is a different approach than the past decades of planning here." These comments were said in a tone that conveyed frustration at the need to so radically redirect local planning efforts. One junior regional planner noted that past development patterns make it difficult to find a starting focal point (a social or economic nexus of community) for sustainable development planning. This planner stated, "If we were going to locate a community parade, according to population distribution, we should hold it out in the suburbs not in the downtown area," because of the current development pattern. These remarks all point to the difficulty of trying to reorient planning efforts away from past directions that were antithetical to sustainable development planning and that were largely dependent on widespread use of private automobiles.

The presence of short term costs and long term benefits often associated with sustainable development efforts were noted by respondents as another specific challenge to sustainable development planning. According to one junior city planner, "initiatives for council must pay off in the very short term." A senior city planner similarly stated, "There is a feeling that as a planner I can't slow up the works too much...Long range activity always goes to the bottom of the pile." Only two planners noted this challenge
directly in relation to sustainable development, but many planners noted similar concerns about the speed of political decision-making as mentioned in an earlier section of this chapter.

Two junior and one senior city-level planner said that their local councils were pro-economic growth to the detriment of being open to a wide range of sustainable development planning efforts. One of the junior planners stated that although they attempt to practice sustainable development planning they avoid drawing attention to the sustainable development frame of reference from which they are working. "Sustainable development is a negative trigger term that would be more self-defeating than helpful in labeling my work. It is what we are doing, but we don’t call it that for political reasons." This political framing of sustainable development planning activities appears tied to the concern by the same respondent that there are many poorly justified or "shoot from the hip decisions" made by elected officials. Another senior city planner stated that this type of decision-making is related to the lack of trust some decision makers have in research methods and in planners. One can suspect a vicious circle emerging here where planners and elected officials fail to trust or respect each other and this is exemplified by a disregard for the value and quality of their respective information analysis and decision making activities. One suspects that this dynamic is amplified when politically controversial or institutionally innovative sustainable development issues are discussed.

Three senior city-level planners expressed that communicating the meaning of sustainable development to different audiences and in different contexts is a difficult challenge in itself. One respondent stated, "The importance of sustainable development is significant but not well understood... The problem with sustainable development is communicating the idea simply but not too simply." One can understand the difficulty of communicating such a concept because in its most holistic definition it offers a profoundly different paradigm or cosmology from the dominant economic expansionist mindset in Canada. This difficulty in advancing sustainable development planning efforts as related to problems of communication was exemplified by a senior city-level planner. "[Sustainable Development] pops up in other names in the issues we face. We had to create esoteric economic values for the fishing pier we built. We had to measure the economic value of expected fishers versus walkers." Thus one can see how sustainable development planning activities will be judged according to their value within a non-sustainable development set of socio-economic values and the resulting challenge to practicing sustainable development planning.

This aspect of communications and accountability was echoed in an institutional sense by a junior regional planner who said that the provincial government is not politically accountable to new sustainable development-type thinking. He felt that it is difficult for regional districts as a subsidiary level of government to be advancing sustainable development planning efforts under this overarching context. Similarly a senior regional planner felt that the level of institutional risk-taking is less than optimal. The respondent illustrated this point by saying the small minority of regional districts on Vancouver Island are presently seizing the opportunity to take on the role of authorizing subdivision
developments in rural (non-city) areas, over from the Ministry of Transportation and Highways. It should be noted that a junior regional planner in another district stated that the regional district does not have the funding to take on this new responsibility. There are a few examples of successful institutional innovation such as the multi-governmental stakeholder efforts that include the Regional Aquatic Management Society in the Alberni-Clayoquot Regional District and the Courtenay River estuary management program in the Regional District of Comox-Strathcona.

3.4.2 Sustainable Development Strategies

Two respondents gave comments specifically regarding strategies they used to practice sustainable development planning. One junior city-level planner stated that the first priority is to identify missing programs and actions that local government could be doing to increase the degree of local sustainable development. The planner stated that modeling their environmental planning work on successful examples from other places is very helpful. "Before I begin anything, I scout around to ensure we are not reinventing the wheel." This was seen to "save time by reducing learning curves and lends more legitimacy to my actions in the eyes of council."

A senior regional planner also responded regarding sustainable development planning strategies. The planner stated that planning for future flexibility and adaptability although not traditionally seen as part of sustainable development is an important strategy. To this end, "Even through public transit is essentially a social service program now for low income people, the system must be maintained for when it is required by the needs of sustainability."
Chapter 4: Discussion of Findings

"Eutopia, then, lies in the city around us: and it must be planned and realised here or nowhere, by us as its citizens -- each a citizen of both the actual and the ideal city seen increasingly as one." - Patrick Geddes

This inquiry arose from an interest in exploring continuities and discrepancies between planners' perceptions of ideal versus actual public planning. I also hoped to similarly explore the relationship between these perceptions of planning and the principles of sustainable development planning. Findings relating to planning for sustainable development were perhaps the most surprising, and they will be discussed first. This will be followed by discussion of findings relating to the challenges and strategies that the interviewees mentioned.

4.1 Sustainable Development Planning

The primary finding with respect to sustainable development is that few planners responded in any depth regarding challenges and strategies specific to sustainable development planning. Only seventeen of the two-hundred and sixteen categorized responses referred explicitly to sustainable development. This is somewhat surprising given the structure of the key informant interview schedule. The interview consisted of explaining the purpose of the research, then providing a brief definition of sustainable development and finally asking open ended questions regarding planners' experiences attempting to "practice effective planning and/or sustainable development planning."

There are multiple plausible explanations for this research result. These explanations are not mutually exclusive. These explanations range from a lack of knowledge about sustainable development through to a possibility that it is internalized professionally to such a high degree that it is not seen as distinct from traditional planning objectives.

It is possible that respondents made few comments explicitly relating to sustainable development because the concept has not been disseminated in breadth, nor in depth, amongst planners on Vancouver Island. However, the level of public discussion and digestion of the concept of sustainable development would cause one to presume that public planners are aware of it. Nonetheless, not a single respondent mentioned ideas of ecological limits, thermodynamic entropy, or other scientific reasons for concern about ecological sustainability. Nor did any respondents note any future negative consequences of unsustainability such as resource scarcity (tangentially though one senior regional planner mentioned future road capacities being inadequate with current auto-use trends). Correlated to this lack of responses about causes and consequences of ecologically-unsustainable development, planners did not state related challenges and strategies.

23 Hodge quoting Patrick Geddes 1998 p.91
The few responses related to sustainable development mainly referred to two social dynamics of sustainable development planning. Half of the interviewees referred to the public's tightly-held but unsustainable lifestyle values. One-quarter of the interviewees described the institutional difficulties of planning against the grain of unsustainable development planning history. The majority of planners demonstrated a general understanding and appreciation for concepts of social equity and public welfare but only two senior regional planners discussed these concepts with explicit reference to future generations or sustainable development. These two planners stated they were concerned with taking actions now to maintain decision options to benefit future generations.

I suspect planners were more familiar with the social than ecological aspects of sustainable development because there is significant overlap between the modern planning goals of identifying, protecting and developing the (social-aspects of the) public interest and the sustainable development planning goals of advancing present and transgenerational social equity and well-being. In this sense, a number of challenges and strategies were identified regarding protecting and developing social well-being, even if only ten percent of the respondents viewed it in a sustainable development context. These points lead to a possibility that the lack of responses regarding sustainable development planning arises from a lack of knowledge about its meaning and implications, especially the concept of natural capital.

A second explanation for the minimal number of responses specifically regarding challenges and strategies for sustainable development planning is that the concept might be internalized to such a high degree as to become invisible within the discourse. It is possible that sustainable development is so ingrained in planners' professional cosmology that they did not specifically distinguish it from their other planning concerns. This explanation is supported by the fact that every single respondent identified planning practices conforming with the theory of sustainable development planning. The stories they used to explain planning dynamics included: facilitating infill development and clustered housing, regulating steep slope development, reducing residential waste streams, advancing integrated and inter-governmental watershed management, creating and maintaining urban growth boundaries, developing multi-modal regional and community trail systems, encouraging low-impact eco-tourism, and more. However, I must note that it would be difficult for planners to provide examples of their efforts that they could not describe as advancing the public good. Even planning to facilitate a wasteful industrial development might be described as advancing the public good through the 1950's-type of traditional economic planning analysis. The single recurring example given by Vancouver Island planners that might be in most conflict with sustainable development planning was their many stories of overcoming community opposition to increased population growth. However even this example is not easily judged to be in conflict with advancing the public good nor sustainable development. The judgement depends on how one defines such broad as concepts "the public good" and "sustainable development."
Thus, although few respondents discussed public planning challenges and strategies with explicit reference to sustainable development planning, they explained the predominant dynamics they face using many examples that conform with sustainable development planning. This response pattern hints at the possibility that, although sustainable development planning was not explicitly discussed, its substantive principles and goals are embedded in the mindsets and everyday actions of these planners.

There is a third plausible explanation for the low response rate regarding explicit challenges and strategies for advancing sustainable development planning. Possibly neither are planners unaware of the concept, nor so completely aware of it that they did not feel a need to explicitly discuss it. It might be argued that they are aware of sustainable development to varying degrees but the particular response pattern highly reflects the situation and structure of the interview. The questions emphasized planning challenges and strategies they encounter in the real world. Furthermore, all but two of the interviews took place in the planning offices of the respondents where they were surrounded by desks piled high with current work, ringing telephones, planning documents, other staff, and inquiring public citizens. This context of daily planning realities and its limited duration might have influenced the responses by constraining planners' ability or willingness to respond more broadly about the overarching concept of sustainable development planning and dynamics particular to it. Related to this explanation is the possibility that planners just do not find sustainable development meaningfully involved in hindering or helping them politically, institutionally or with the public. The structure of the interview emphasized these three realms of public planning. Thus, perhaps the failure of respondents to identify planning dynamics specifically related to sustainable development planning was a result of respondents not perceiving direct connections between this emphasis on three realms of planning and the idea of sustainable development.
4.2 Implications of Response Findings Regarding Sustainable Development Planning

The three possible explanations identified for the small number of responses regarding sustainable development planning have several implications for sustainable development planning. Likely all three explanations played roles of varying importance, although no systematic response pattern is evident. This leads me to contend that the responses reflect challenges and strategies that are relevant for advancing planning for sustainable development and/or advancing non-sustainable development (liquidation of natural and social capital). See Diagram #1 Relating Planning Practices for and against Sustainable Development.

One might propose that many of the challenges and strategies respondents identified are relevant for advancing sustainable development planning even if they were not explicitly identified as such, because of planning's academic and professional history of addressing ever-broader concerns. If one views modern, European, public planning originating largely as a response to the social ills of early industrialization, then sustainable development planning can be seen as part of the continuing evolution of public planning. This perspective regards planning as centrally attempting to assert the primacy of the highest qualities of humanity over the role of technology and machines in society. It also sees public planning as a means of placing public welfare above private interests; indeed reversing the capitalist concept of "privatized benefits and socialized costs" through creating public amenities and causing costs to be distributed appropriately and ethically. These points are made to illustrate that while the shift to sustainable development might be a paradigm shift away from the current dominant socio-economic paradigm, it is in many ways a natural evolution of the broadening (humanitarian) conceptual basis of public planning. (See Diagram #2 Evolution of Public Planning's Analytic Lenses) Therefore the challenges and strategies that respondents identified are likely highly relevant for advancing sustainable development planning even though they were not explicitly linked to it.
4.3 Challenges Versus Strategies for Effective Public Planning

Many discussion points are discoverable through a further analysis of the findings. First, without discussing the fit between specific challenges and strategies, on average for every single strategy suggested for advancing effective planning and/or sustainable development planning, almost two challenges were noted (See Table 8). This suggests that planners may be encountering numerous recurring difficulties that they are unable to overcome for sustained periods of time.

Table #8 Numbers of Identified Challenges & Strategies Responses by Planning Realm

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Political Realm</th>
<th>Institutional Realm</th>
<th>Public Process Realm</th>
<th>Totals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Challenges</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>133</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategies</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.3.1 The Political Realm

The political realm contained the largest ratio of challenges to strategies compared to the institutional or public realms. This reaffirms a common planning dynamic that planners and their political masters can often experience conflict regarding a range of issues from demonstrating informed decision-making leadership to the durability of political will and direction. These challenges primarily represented situations where planners felt that elected officials: lacked valuable decision making knowledge, failed to demonstrate appropriate decision-making leadership, or failed to have respect for the planning process. These challenges were identified almost equally by junior, senior, regional and sub-regional respondents. The even distribution and quantity of responses suggest that political difficulties facing effective planning are very significant.
It is important to note that professional frustration and conflict is not necessarily negative in and of itself. In an organizational setting, different groups of actors can be in opposition to balance out and reflect conflicting societal values. This appears to be the situation of planning where elected officials and planners must cooperate to create functional, real-world land-use outcomes while they simultaneously and respectively (theoretically) represent short and long term interests. Similarly, a "healthy dialogue" would not be reflected if planners and politicians completely agreed or disagreed all the time (Boles in McClendon & Catanese, 1996, p.124-125).

It appears positive to note that many of the strategies identified for advancing effective planning in the political realm reflect conscientious means of improving healthy and effective communication. It might also be that less ethical means of dealing with political problems exist but respondents were not interested in expressing these methods in this research context. This point is made to reiterate the exploratory, but not exhaustive, nature of this study.

4.3.2 The Institutional Realm

The challenges and strategies respondents identified did not demonstrate many differences among regional and local, senior and junior planners. Two logical differences did arise from the response patterns. Regional planners were more likely to describe difficulties involving provincial agencies. Structurally they have closer working relations, than city planners do, with provincial agencies. Conversely city planners were more likely to describe institutional difficulties involving other branches of municipal government.

What is interesting about the responses is that while they identified many organizational challenges (to practising effective planning and/or advancing sustainable development planning), the strategies they identified did not include actions explicitly oriented to changing the structure of these relationships. They confined their responses to more limited day-to-day actions, not actions to reform the system in fundamental ways. The strategies suggested ranged from adaptive changes in personal outlooks and behaviour to concrete work practices for increasing interagency coordination.

4.3.3 The Public Realm

The public process and involvement realm contained the greatest number of both challenges and strategies identified by respondents. Two findings arise from the breakdown of responses. First, regional planners reported more challenges dealing with the public than city planners. This difference was most pronounced regarding the challenge of planning's lack of credibility with the public. This might be due to the fact that elected regional officials appear politically more distant from citizens than city
councilors and thus regional planners become the more publicized face of regional government. Regional officials might be seen as more distant because in incorporated areas they are indirectly appointed from amongst already elected municipal councils. As well regional planning deals with a higher quantity of rural land and inhabitants whose livelihoods are more directly tied to land-use such as farming, or conversely ex-urbanites who value preservation of natural areas from development planning. Both types of rural inhabitants can hold significant misunderstandings of planning and resentment of regional planning which impacts them to a greater degree than it affects citizens of incorporated areas. More strategies were identified as helpful for dealing with the challenges of public consultation and participation than identified for either the political or institutional realms of planning. These strategies related to: thoughtful designing of phased public involvement processes, finding methods to hear from all interests not just dominant ones, encouraging the public to have a sense of responsibility, facilitating public ownership of their input, and acting (as a planner) with diplomacy, empathy, and a constructive mindset that does not take negative public opinions of planning too personally.

4.4 A Synthesis of the Challenges to Effective Public Planning

The comments given by respondents as a whole reflect a group of professionals sincerely concerned to maintain and increase the quality of life and standard of living of local citizens. Success in this occupation appears predicated on the development of effective relationships and skilled communication with multiple sectors: the lay public, the organized public, other planning institutions, political officials and government workers. Planners have a sophisticated role to play in maintaining credibility with the multiple groups to whom they are simultaneously accountable. Similar to a chain, the effectiveness of a planner is limited by the strength of its weakest link or weakest relationship with any of the above-noted sectors.

Generally the interviewees focussed on the need to educate political actors and the lay public about the consequences of their actions. This was not perceived as an easy task when political actors have difficulty exerting leadership that might create a knowledge or values gap between themselves and the public to whom they are accountable. Neither was the education of the public and public involvement described as a simple task because of conflicting public values including individualist versus collectivist, and short-term versus long-term. Also the need for planners to aspire towards objectivity when informing the public and elected officials can make communication difficult when different paradigms or sets of values simultaneously exist. Pro's and cons of an issue when seen from an expansionist neo-classical paradigm are quite different than pro's and cons as defined under a paradigm of sustainable development. Communicating this type of complex information succinctly yet maintaining comprehensiveness and professionalism is viewed as a recurring challenge. The corollary of this point is that poor communication and relationships with elected officials and the public result in a loss of respect for planners and lack of credibility in the planning process. Overcoming issues of respect and trust constitute significant on-going challenges to effective public planning.
Interacting with other planning agencies of equal and superior legislative authority who may have consistent and/or inconsistent planning goals was also perceived to add complexity and frequently frustration to the planning process. Often municipal planners spend energy contending with other municipal departments such as engineering for decision-making power. Regional planners spend considerable energy mediating between provincial legislation or ministerial interests and local plan acceptance and implementation. The challenges that appear endemic to public planning reflect Roseland's comment that the environment is not a management problem but rather management is an environmental problem (Roseland, 1992, p.18). The political, institutional and public-realm challenges planners reported provide an interesting framing of their occupational goals and hazards.

4.5 A Synthesis of the Strategies for Effective Public Planning

"There must exist in each of us who calls himself or herself a planner that tension between how to get things done in the practical world of service delivery and a vision and a sense of idealism founded in public values." -Honourable Henry A. Cisernos, Mayor of Antonio and a planner (James, 1989, p.5)

The strategies that planners identified for advancing effective public planning and/or sustainable development planning present a valuable perspective on how they perceive and enact their professional roles. Planners mentioned strategies that reflect modern planning goals: informing broader understandings of elected decision-makers and citizens, facilitating the development of shared community visions and objectives, constructively coordinating policies with other public planning entities, fostering public-private agreements and cooperation, and advancing rational decision-making through the use of analytic tools.

At a meta-level the identified strategies reflect planning skills that include:
• practicing diplomacy despite political, bureaucratic and public pressures and frustrations;
• demonstrating perseverance and patience given the inevitable power-sharing with the public and elected officials and resulting limited influence over policy development and other decisions;
• strategically searching for and seizing, often time-limited, windows of opportunities to advance planning goals;
• coalition building with other community actors internally within planning agencies and externally outside of the local planning agency;
• selecting one's battles with caution is essential. Similarly, knowing what conflicts to engage in, and to what degree, and when to give up or compromise is also integral;
• analyzing problems from different perspectives to find innovative and creative solutions; and
• being willing to take risks and show courage to advance the effectiveness of public planning and the principles of sustainable development.

These skills and strategies illustrate creativity and ethics in professional action. It is easy to view planners as powerless given that they are answerable to many groups of people, where uncertainties and complexities constantly increase and where they have limited control over implementation and outcomes. However the ability of planners to develop means of addressing recurring challenges reflects their levels of perseverance, intelligence and creativity. Perhaps the success and power planners achieve by using creative and ingenious strategies will help lead toward sustainable development. Planners are not powerless in facing the profession's challenges if, as Roseland suggests, "To a considerable extent, the environmental crisis is a creativity crisis" (1994, p.3).

Recurring challenges of the kinds noted by respondents may, however, exact a toll that is dealt with by a strategy that is more evident by their actions than their words. This strategy is to change employment. The planners in this study had a mean of twelve years of planning experience but had only worked an average of four years in their current positions. The latter finding was influenced particularly by two respondents who had over 20 years experience in one particular position. Without these two respondents the proportion of years in their current position compared to total years of experience would be more extreme. This finding suggests that planners may switch employers as a means of reducing professional frustrations or increasing professional satisfaction.
Chapter 5: Conclusions

Through asking public planners about implementation experiences I tried to elicit responses that might enable me to develop a better understanding of factors that affect their efforts to advance sustainable development and practice effective planning.

5.1 Sustainable Development

When asked about sustainable development planning, most respondents identified traditional barriers to mainstream, incrementalist public planning and strategies for advancing such planning. This is consistent with Hodge's argument that, because of the high degree of institutionalization of the planning profession, responses to present and future challenges (such as sustainable development) will likely "have to be adaptations of structures and styles that currently exist." Hodge further argues that critical analysis of the adequacy of planning to respond to challenges needs to start with "understanding the underlying dimensions of planning practice in Canada and those aspects that need to be changed" (Hodge, 1998, p.442). This paper has been written with the intention to be consistent with and flow from Hodge's above point.

5.1.1 Sustainable Development and Incremental Progress

Many of the respondents discussed frustrations and strategies for advancing social and economic aspects of the public good, but did not express similar understandings or actions to sustain or increase natural capital. Yet clearly some policies such as Nanaimo's urban growth boundary implicitly reflect ecological concerns, even if it is the recognition of the traditional economic costs of sprawl that have largely spurred the development of such policies. In any case it is difficult to say that the respondents consciously viewed themselves as advancing sustainable development planning if one applies a strong definition of sustainable development with an emphasis on ecological limits and social equity aspects. Wackernagel and Rees state that the "sustainability merits" of a decision can be judged by whether it decreases people's Ecological Footprint (amount of human material throughput) and increases quality of life. "Only those decisions or activities that satisfy at least one of these criteria without violating the other can move us toward sustainability" (1996, p.154). This definition of sustainable development would likely cause many planning decisions (such as increased traditional commercial and residential development) to be seen as inconsistent with sustainable development.

Step by step actions, without guiding principles, leave society vulnerable to substantial negative impacts because while the "impacts of any individual decision may be small, the cumulative effects are substantial" (Beatley & Manning, 1997, p.7). In the past, incremental planning, despite being praised for practicality and adaptability, has been criticized as "unprincipled, unethical, apolitical" (Forester, 1982, p.69). More recently from an environmental perspective, "[t]here is a widening understanding that effective conservation and management of natural environmental systems cannot be achieved by an incremental approach. Rather, system integrity must dictate how the increments are..."
treated" (Boles, 1996, p.122). This begs the question whether 'system integrity' and sustainable development principles are currently guiding all incremental planning decisions? The answer is likely negative because the dominant social paradigm is still one of expansionist neo-classical economics and materialism. "Although the rhetoric of sustainability is now widely used by government, non-governmental organizations, and business in addressing the public, there is no evidence of a broad shift of behaviour in response to it" (Myers and MacNaughten, 1998, p.506).

5.1.2 Sustainable Development and Social Learning

Another key finding is that respondents did not discuss reasons or methods for advancing social learning amongst the public. While respondents did speak particularly about helping elected officials connect cause and effect, they did not similarly discuss engendering deeper understanding amongst the public from a long-term perspective. This response pattern exists arguably because planners are accountable to much shorter term deadlines and perhaps more oriented towards facilitating public acceptance and agreement than towards fostering long-term critical discourse and learning in society.

5.2 Effective Public Planning

Some specific analytic planning tools such as Ecological Footprint Analysis have the ability to help us move from the current paradigm to one of sustainable development. They can do this by focussing attention on core aspects of ecological, social and economic problems. Wackernagel and Rees say,

"It seems that general ignorance combined with immediate economic and political constraints at all levels of decision-making force us to make what appear to be unsustainable policy choices. However, rather than bemoan the constraints of "real-life" decision-making, which result in slow but incremental ecological destruction, non-government organizations (NGOs), planners, and policy analysts now have tools that allow them to estimate and reveal publicly the extent to which 'development' decisions compromise a sustainable future" (1996, p.150).

One of this study's findings is that planners face similar challenges and use similar strategies despite different planning goals and contexts. These challenges and strategies reflect the interplay between core planning principles (such as comprehensiveness) and the daily environments that surround them. Indeed, planners may not solve problems by creating "once and for all solutions" but rather they can effectively structure recurring problems to make them more easily addressed (Forester, 1982, p.67). Recurring constraints appear to influence when planners are sanctioned to use what analytic tools, to what ends face. These same constraints affect what strategies planners might employ in a given situation. The constraints are reflections of the persistent tensions built into the

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nature of public decision making.\textsuperscript{25} To say that planners are not heavily constrained by political, institutional, and public power belies the well-known comment that "If planners ignore those in power, they assure their own powerlessness" (Forester, 1982, p.67). Although planners amongst others may have the tools to advance sustainable development planning, whether they have the liberty to use them is a different question.

Concomitantly then what is needed "...[is] to develop a better understanding of the organizational milieu that encompasses planning practice and an awareness of the emerging politics of power and conflict that drive the agendas of community evolution" (Witty, Dave, 1994, p. 153). This information should be used to create institutional settings and planning contexts in which a variety of planning tools can be used to guide sustainable development. This might also help increase the capacity for critical thinking and action and thus help avoid simplistic understandings such as equating public participation as the prime characteristic and mechanism of sustainable development planning without recognizing overarching institutional influences and local community power structures. Thus we need political, public and institutional environments that foster critical thinking about sustainable development planning and support use of analytic tools to advance it.

5.3 Implications

This research points to several ways that elected officials might better assist planners' efforts to be effective and implement sustainable development concepts. Primarily, officials need to be more open-minded to the breadth of variables involved in land use decisions. Political consideration of the particular decision criteria regarding long term effects, social equity effects and the irreversibility of decisions would help advance sustainable development planning. Elected officials also need to demonstrate greater leadership not just in setting progressive policies that empower planners but also in helping to educate citizens to think more broadly, more ecologically, and more responsibly about the long-term impacts of their lifestyles.

Regional planners according to this research play central negotiation and implementation roles between provincial regulations and citizen ownership of official community plans. These roles need to continue to be played with diligence, creativity, perseverance, diplomacy, and by seizing opportunities to increase planning coordination, and yet maintaining integrity of the planning process and outcomes. Both regional and city planners need to continue to evolve thoughtful and effective public participation processes, and advocate for positive legislative changes in this area. City planners need to help advance consistent vision and goal setting for municipal departments. This could improve local planning coordination and reduce energies lost to intra-governmental conflict which takes away energy that could be used for advancing the local public

\textsuperscript{25} Recurring planning challenges may also originate from the structure of the human mind -- from difficulty dealing with long-term thinking. "Whatever gets close to us, in space or time, is immediately overemphasized" (Ornstein and Ehrlich, 1989, p.92).
interest (e.g. the creation of public amenities and benefits through local economic development). Perhaps the single strongest note of wisdom for planners is that they should choose their battles carefully and choose their actions appropriately.

Planning departments also need to provide better incentives (through security and promotion) of planners who are willing to innovate and take risks to improve planning for public benefit. This would be the opposite of a Peter Principle dynamic; whereby people do not rise to their highest level of incompetence but rather are rewarded for their creative initiative and competence. Citizens and organized citizens perhaps have the greatest need to change, particularly with respect to how they hand over power to institutions and cease to see themselves as responsible for their actions. They also need to be open to thinking longer term and thinking more deeply about the impacts of their actions on others including future generations.

This study also suggests that formal planning education might increase its efforts to educate practicing planners about sustainability (especially concepts such as natural capital). It would also likely be profitable to bring practicing planners together with students so that students can gain more understanding of day-to-day planning challenges that planners face and strategies they use to address these challenges.

Public planners can help implement sustainability of human settlement and human ecology despite the fact it might be more realistic for them to plan for oncoming cascading ecological, economic and social calamities. Appropriate planning actions prior to realizing ecological overshoot and those actions suitable afterwards might be quite similar (Rees, 1995a, p.358). Nonetheless, all these planning actions will likely continue to be bounded within certain political, institutional and public constraints. This is because public planners are inescapably nested within and dependent upon public, political and institutionally-conferrered power. This might be called the ecology of power. To act effectively and with wisdom within environmental constraints is a challenge for human civilization. It is hoped that better understanding how planners advance public planning for sustainable development with effectiveness and wisdom within political, institutional and public constraints will aid in the larger challenge.
Appendix: Literature Review on Sustainable Development and Planning Practice

A review of literature regarding this study has resulted in a number of findings that have helped shape the study's research methodology. However prior to a discussion of literature findings about planning challenges and strategies, it is useful to look at the goals of planning and sustainable development planning.

Reasons for Public Planning

Historic Reasons

Planning literature recognizes that there are historic and modern objectives of planning, and objectives for sustainable development planning. The antecedents of modern public planning arose in response to urbanization and industrialization and crystallized around issues of public health, and urban design for social order and aesthetic reasons. A critique of planning is that it has been fundamentally historically oriented to serving the owners of means of production through efforts to pacify, mollify or preclude social unrest. "And the social critics of the 1960s and 1970s and Marxist critics of today" according to Klosterman, "have demonstrated convincingly that traditional planning practice, while couched in terms of neutral technical competence and the public interest has primarily served the interests of society's wealthiest and most powerful members" (Campbell and Fainstein, 1996, p.163). Despite these critiques, the "dominant view of the planning profession is that the planner's primary obligation is to serve the public interest" (Hodge, 1998, p.402.).

Modern Reasons

Modern public planning in British Columbia has evolved to a point where it attempts to facilitate, articulate, or "represent the shared interests of the community, coordinate the actions of individuals and groups, and consider the long-range effects of current actions" (Klosterman, 1996, p.158). Hodge identifies values of modern planning as supporting: "beauty/orderliness, comprehensiveness [and long-range thinking], conservation of resources, democratic participation, efficiency, equity, health/safety, and rational decision making" (1988, p.112-115). Similarly, Richardson states that good land use planning involves the following elements:

- explicit goals, problem and issue identification,
- comprehensive approach,
- continuity over time,
- systematic application and flexibility,
- defined responsibilities,
- opportunities for stakeholder, public and staff implementation, options and implications,
- (and) awareness of the means, limitations and costs of plan implementation. (Richardson, 1989, p.6)
Hodge and Richardson echo the change from an older view of planners as experts to the modern (although contested) view of planners more as educators, facilitators, synthesizers and enablers of community interest. The Canadian Institute of Planners balances these views in their two sentences that define the current role of a public planner. "A planner works with communities to provide research, reasoned analysis and recommendations on urban, regional, environmental and social issues. Experts in public participation processes and conflict resolution, planners help develop solutions that are practical and effective." Other theorists have recently merged concepts of modern planning and sustainable development planning arguing that the goals of planning should centre on "affordability, ecology, [designing for the] human scale, [protecting the] public domain, [promoting] community, integration, history, and regionality" (Artibise, 1995, p.9).

The Imperatives of Sustainable Development
Planning for sustainable development is a strong current of modern planning theory. It also builds on the solid foundations of traditional and modern planning approaches. (It also is aware of the need for innovation based on the "less-than-compelling record of orthodox regional planning" [Wight, 1998, p.33]). It emerges from traditional issue areas of economic and social planning and adds a third area of ecological sustainability. Moreover, it involves the integration of these traditionally, separately-managed sectors of human activity. Artibise stated similar thoughts in his keynote address to B.C. planners at the Planning Institute of B.C.'s 1995 annual general meeting. "The expertise of planning departments lies in their understanding of the social, economic, environmental and demographic matters affecting a community" (Artibise, 1995, p.11). Planning for sustainable development has been a core concept of the main graduate planning school in B.C. In fact the mission statement of the School of Community and Regional Planning (SCARP) at the University of British Columbia is "To advance the transition to sustainability through excellence in integrated policy and planning research, professional education and community service." Ten years prior to this study, SCARP held a highly-successful symposium "to explore how sustainable development applies to specific planning and policy decisions at the provincial and municipal levels, particularly in British Columbia" (Rees, 1988a). A background paper produced for this seminal symposium, provided the following definition for sustainable development:

"The principal conditions of a sustainable society -- one that to all intents and purposes can be sustained indefinitely while giving optimum satisfaction to its members -- can be simply stated: 1) minimum disruption of ecological processes; 2) maximum conservation of materials and energy -- or an economy of stock rather than flow; 3) a population in which recruitment equals loss; and 4) a social system in which the

26 Canadian Institute of Planners website frontpage Sept 10, 1998 http://www.cip-icu.ca/
27 School of Community and Regional Planning at the University of British Columbia, Website http://www.interchg.ubc.ca/plan/scarp.html September 11, 1998
individual can enjoy, rather than feel restricted by, the first three conditions.\textsuperscript{28}

Another useful definition of sustainable development is provided by the National Commission on the Environment. Sustainable development is,

"a strategy for improving the quality of life while preserving the environmental potential for the future, of living off interest rather than consuming natural capital. Sustainable development mandates that the present generation must not narrow the choices of future generations but must strive to expand them by passing on an environment and an accumulation of resources that will allow its children to live at least as well as, and preferable better than, people today. (National Commission on the Environment 1993, p.2)"

Note that this definition is about qualitative improvement of existing conditions to leave a better legacy to future generations rather than simply requiring maintenance of current wealth. Definitions that focus on leaving equal amenities to future generations as presently exist are vulnerable to neglecting the maxim of strong sustainability – that we should conserve natural capital.

It has been argued from an organizational decision-making perspective that in order to move towards sustainability decision-making must:

- take into account longer-term effects than is usual at present, and the effects that an action will have on opening or closing of future opportunities;
- take into account influences and actions on wider range of actors and activities than those of immediate concern or purpose (in effect, the boundaries of concern and accountability become diffuse and greatly enlarged);
- integrate actions and changes caused by humans with the processes and characteristics of the natural world" (Roots, E.F., 1989., p.85-105.)

These conditions for sustainable development are well suited to the capabilities and interests of public planners especially regional planners. Indeed, "From this perspective, regional planning as concept, art, discipline, and process is the indispensable action -- the \textit{sine qua non} -- for the sustainability of cities and their environs." (Fielding and Couture, 1998, 14-19). Finally, there are calls for the Canadian Institute of Planners to redefine planners, not primarily by their activities to allocate and dispose of land, resources, facilities and services, but rather primarily by their aims to "create[e] the healthy, or sustainable, or good community" (Richardson, 1998, p.5.).

This review of the goals and ideals of public planning was presented to contribute to understanding the challenges faced and strategies used by public planners.

Challenges and Barriers to Planning for Sustainable Development

A review of recent planning literature identifies numerous challenges impeding the ability of public planners to achieve the ideals of modern planning -- let alone achieve the ideals of planning for sustainable development. Many types of challenges exist, however this study focuses on planning practice. Therefore challenges regarding external background or societal issues were not analyzed. These types of societal challenges, from rapidly changing age and multicultural demographics to economic globalization (Hodge, 1998 p.437) could be the subjects of another study.

The first finding is not a barrier but more of an evaluation of the cumulative impact of planning challenges. It was found that several authors are openly critical of the lack of success in public and regional planning. Although looking at the American and British experience, Klosterman wrote,

"An objective evaluation of sixty years' experience with town and country planning in Great Britain and the United States must recognize the tremendous gap between planning's potential and its performance. While there have been several remarkable successes, much of contemporary practice is still limited to the preparation of 'boiler plate' plans, the avoidance of political controversy, and the routine administration of overly rigid and conservative regulations." (Klosterman, 1996, p. 163)

Similarly in Canada, a recent issue of the national journal of Canadian Planning, Plan Canada, argued for a return to basic understandings and honest appraisal of the levels of success in Canadian regional planning. One of the authors argued the performance of regional planning is hindered by it being either "too municipal to be truly regional, or (too) provincially-dictated [in Canada]" (Gertler, 1998. P.38-39).

This leads into a categorization of the challenges faced by planners according to recent literature. The literature suggests a categorization of areas as follows (Fielding and Couture, 1998, p.14-19) -- challenges arising from: 1) political authorities 2) organizational structures and institutionalized functions 3) the public and organized interest groups 4) the dynamics of regional planning and sustainable development sui generis.

Political Processes and Elected Officials

Fielding and Couture recently argued that "it is the responsibility of city council to provide leadership...visioning and priority setting." Similarly, Canada's federal Minister of the Environment, Lucien Bouchard, addressed the United Nation's General Assembly in 1989 stating that leadership in rhetoric means little without corresponding action. "While speeches and rhetoric are important, and may often be powerful and moving, their value is limited if words do not result in concrete changes to our political and economic behaviour" (cited in Stark, 1990, p.49). However, Artibise and others have argued that

"planners today become ineffective and powerless poll takers for weak politicians" and refers to public "participation overkill" in this context (1995, p.11, also see Perkins, 1991, p.27). Indeed, analysts have long recognized that the election cycle can severely limit the vision and activities of municipalities beyond the length of time between elections (Moore, 1994). This is likely one of the reasons why ideally shared decision making for corporate municipal strategy is far more unidirectional from council to planning staff than bi-directional despite significant skills and experience of staff (Fielding and Couture, 1998, p.14). Similarly, arguments have been made about regional planning in B.C. -- "Regional planning is inefficient [because] it is a preserve of the senior governments and is marked by a top-down, not a bottom-up approach" (Artibise, 1989. p.7). The ability of elected officials to develop vision and demonstrate leadership in ideas is, in practice, dependent on the ability of the public to understand this vision and leadership. This points in an interdependent fashion to the qualities and education of the public.

Institutional and Behavioural Barriers

Although Canadian planning is seen as highly bureaucratic and with its share of past mistakes, many planners now struggle to turn personal and professional values into positive action. However, organizational values, structures, and functions confine planners activities to a significant degree. Recently, Filion pointed to an example of this dynamic. He argued that the "hierarchical form of [municipal] decision making slows the planning process and reduces planners' capacity to make commitments" (Hodge, 1998, p.401 citing Filion, 1997, p.30.) One can normally expect bureaucratic stresses to be present in regional and municipal planning. These stresses could include: short-term deadlines, seemingly irrational decision-making by superiors and elected officials, competition over work 'territory' or 'turf' within and between government agencies, a lack of needed resources, multiple and diverse sources of accountability, and complex integration or coordination of diverse resources. Furthermore, "[d]espite the concentration of population in urban areas, many city and local governments do not have the regulator and financial authority required to effectively contribute to sustainable urban development. Other levels of government must provide resources and support..." (Roseland, 1998, p.211). Regarding battles over (decision-making) territory or jurisdiction, some have noted that for urban development planning to succeed, "inter-government cooperation is imperative and public-private resources must be effectively integrated" (Artibise, 1989. p.7).

Jennie Moore, a graduate student who studied barriers to implementing environmental planning concepts in the Greater Regional District of Vancouver found the following organizational challenges identified by council members and staff: "Limitation of Jurisdiction,...Inadequate Funds,...Lack of buy-in by Civic Staff,...Lack of Understanding About Issues,...Acceptance of the Status Quo,...Weak Link Among Policies of Civic and Senior Levels of Government,... [and] Inappropriate Structure of Government (vertical)" (Moore, 1994. P.104). These points are consistent with an earlier study of barriers that found, "[i]nadequate funding, uncertainty and delay in program administration, inadequate communication with senior levels of government, and inadequate technical
assistance were all perceived in the mid 1970's as major impediments to adequate local responses to environmental problem solving". (Magazine 1977 cited by Roseland, 1998, p.210-211). One other structural barrier is the high level of inertia related to the amount of energy and capital spent to develop the current system of unsustainable land uses and the lifespan of the system's components. For instance, "[m]ost buildings have a lifespan of anywhere from 50 years or longer. Roads and services, once positioned, are the next best thing to permanent" (Perkins, 1991, p.23, Perkins also refers to Johnson 1969). Thus the literature reveals a large range of institutional barriers to planning for sustainable development.

The Public and Organized Interest Groups

Planning literature suggests that societal values and dynamics along with political and institutional phenomena can result in barriers to sustainable development planning. Recently Canadian society seems to have shifted social values towards the political "right." This is exemplified by political parties' calling for reducing tax rates and the size and powers of government, and general libertarian currents repeatedly surfacing in public discussions. Some authors call this an ideology of neo-classical economism and argue that it is largely opposed to public planning (Klosterman, 1996, p.150). This results in an attack on the fundamental rationale for public planning -- to advocate for the public interest. It attacks the very idea of the public interest and how it is defined (Hodge, 1998, p.402). Concomitantly, planners are finding it harder to challenge peoples' values and lifestyles, because of both institutional constraints and political will which are directly connected to social values about the sovereignty and freedom of individuals (Beddow, 1998, p.1). As well attitudes and lifestyles of the public "might resist change (or at least not support it) for much the same reasons that a smoker continues to smoke: ignorance, addiction, or enjoyment" (Perkins, 1991, p.25).

The values of organized citizens groups can be challenged by using creativity and courage as demonstrated in the story of developing a pedestrian mall in Curitiba, Brazil. To prevent an automobile club from driving through a new pedestrian mall to destroy it and 'reclaim' the road, the mayor who began as a planner did something extraordinary. He arranged for strips of paper to be rolled down the street for children to occupy and paint pictures on and thus prevented the destruction of the public amenity (McKibben, 1999, p.25). Although this incident is not Canadian, and the central figure was a planner-turned-mayor it still demonstrates the power of ingenuity in dealing with public values that are in conflict with sustainable development.

Some Canadian planning academics have stated that a feeling exists amongst many planners that they are substantially losing their leadership role and public respect for their expertise due to their subordination to views of the lay public (Hodge, 1998, p.445, Seelig and Seelig 1996, p.3). Increasingly public consultation and participation are stressed as important prerequisites for planning activity despite its own challenges. For example, "[Public] Participation usually does not come from a representative sample of the population. Often it reflects narrow self-interests rather than any larger sense of public concern, and more often than not it expresses the views of the wealthier and better-
educated strata of society" (Lucy, 1996, p.480). Yet others argue that planners should devolve more power in public participation processes and that it would "...be more effective if local government and community organizations had a more equal share of power and resources...it is critical that equal weight be given to community members' contributions to the (planning) process (as the weight given to planners)" (Nairne, 1991, p.15). Last of all, some argue that a current cultural pattern of being "obsessed with pursuing the 'how' of our lives with less than reasonable attention afforded to the 'why' [and being embedded in a society experiencing rapid social change has made] planning...become intensely challenging" (Sinclair, 1998: p.38). These literature findings suggest the dominance of private rights over the public interest is also impinging on the ability of planners to practices sustainable development planning.  

Dynamics Of Regional Planning and Sustainable Development

Recent planning literature suggests that a number of challenges to sustainable development planning arise from the very nature of both regional and sustainable development planning.

First, regional planning has a short history in Canada. "The fact that there was only one city in Canada -- Toronto -- that by the end of WWII had a formal planning department and that fewer than two dozen towns had zoning by-laws and plans (most of them well outdated by then) indicates the state of community planning in Canada [at that time]" (Hodge, 1988, p.110). Specifically in British Columbia in 1950, there were only "four to five professional planners." The association of B.C. planners, the Planning Institute of B.C., was incorporated only in 1958 and regional districts were created in 1960's. Partly as a result of this short professional history, there is a lack of documented success stories and models (Richardson 1989). Others have recognized the failure to learn from planning history and the irony that "Even though planners pioneered rigorous methods of evaluation, little use is made of them by practitioners -- we just don't test practice" (Hodge, 1998, p.446).

Where planning experiences have been documented, there also exists the potential for studies of past planning to suffer from "mistakes of exclusion, contradiction and experimentation" (Krueckenberg, 1997, p.269). Challenges to the success of public planning can also arise from how planning is formally taught. One author argued that planning schools need to place more focus on the questions of 'why' and less on the 'how' and questions of means.--"For planning to really make a difference (and avoid marginalization along the way), theory must be wired to practice with mindfulness, integrity, and sensitivity. Along our path the quest for the why must be held as far more substantial than the obsession with the how" (Sinclair, 1998, p.38).

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30 See John Ralston Saul's, "The Unconscious Civilization" (1995) and David Korten's "When Corporations Rule the World" (1996)
31 PIBC News, Feb 1997, p. 9
32 PIBC News, Feb 1997, p.11
Challenges to effective sustainable development planning also arise from the nature of sustainable development, according to planning literature. These challenges can best be summarized by two concepts integral to sustainable development: interdependency and long time horizons. It is a large challenge for society and its governance structures to recognize and act upon knowledge of the dependency of the human economy upon ecospheric resources and processes and the interdependency of relations within the ecosphere. Municipal and regional structures are still challenged to work in interdependent, cooperative ways where accountability and actions are shared. Indeed, as Robinson and Hodge note, "there is a need for an organ of governance at the urban regional level to ensure that planning is holistic, integrated and considers the entire region" (1998: p.10). Perhaps this point was made most eloquently in 1987 by the report, Our Common Future. "The integrated and interdependent nature of the new challenges and issues contrasts sharply with the nature of the institutions that exist today. These institutions tend to be independent, fragmented, and working to relatively narrow mandates with closed decision processes...The real world of interlocked economic and ecological systems will not change; the policies and institutions concerned must" (WCED, 1987, as quoted in CORE, 1994d, p.11).

In terms of time-horizons, sustainable development planning is certainly about thinking about long term visions and consequences and then trying to guide present action appropriately. This is increasingly difficult when people find themselves 'trapped' in mindsets of scarcity, economic growth that impoverishes (people and the ecosphere), and looking for satisfaction in decisions that have short-term gratification and benefits. This runs against the grain of precautionary thought associated with sustainable development that argues some 'short term pain is worth consequent long term gain.' Acutely, one can see the challenge for planners who attempt to equitably place more responsibility upon elected officials and the public for the (ecological, economic and social) consequences of their short-term decisions because of long term benefits (likely to benefit other, future humans and non-human creatures).

A last challenge for planners from the very nature of sustainable development is that it poses a new paradigm of thinking. It argues that "social equity is not only desirable but essential" implying improved means of redistributing wealth (Roseland, 1998, p.212). Furthermore, in its most radical form sustainable development redefines wealth, and a negentropic purpose for humanity. This in essence is a cosmology very different from dominant Western thought built on Enlightenment concepts of Descartes, Bacon, Newton and Locke that conceptually cut and reconfigured the ties between the human and non-human world. Some argue that current planning decisions are severely limited by the existing (but often undeclared) normative framework or hegemonic worldview. Beatley argues, albeit in the American land-use planning context, that "serious constraints [are placed] on public land-use discourse...[because]...professional land-use planners, feel obligated to justify their decisions, indeed their very existence, in terms of market failure" (Beatley, 1994). Moreover, Beatley argues there is a fundamental failure to recognize the ethical components of land-use decision making that exist outside of the paradigm neoclassical microeconomics and specifically, its central decision criteria of Pareto.
optimalism. These thought echoes Rees' argument about the need to shift paradigms from an "expansionist worldview" to a "steady state (ecological) worldview" (1995, p.345-348). Indeed, it may be that the nature of sustainable development planning requires significant change in cultural worldviews at the same time as it is an agent of this change.

The following three broad comments in the literature regarding barriers to planning for sustainable development were found over a span of ten years, but all encapsulate many of the literature findings. Richardson stated in a national report on land use planning and sustainable development, that "The barriers to integration [and land use planning for sustainable development] can be identified. They include: short-term socio-economic goals that reflect wrong perceptions and attitudes, economic incentives that encourage decisions contrary to sound ecological planning, vested interests wedded to non-sustainable but profitable enterprises, fragmentation of planning process and administrative structures, lack of proper training by professional planners. These barriers must be removed" (Richardson, 1989). Roots stated that, "Many obstacles lie in the way of making decisions that will lead to sustainability, including the entrenched socioeconomic managerial system, and increasingly short-term focus of business and politics,...a social reward system that discourages co-operation for the common good, and some "sacred cows" of society that relate to human population growth, the rights of individuals and the dominance of the human species" (Roots, 1989, p.85). Similarly, Artibise in addressing the Planning Institute of B.C. identified the following barriers to planning for sustainable development: "an anti-urbanist bias (by society and environmentalists), [a] lack of financial resources, lacking [of political] mandate, economic and demographic pressures, [difficulty of] integration with other planning, [the] unrecognized value of prevention, [the] need for [greater] collaboration, [a] lack of public sympathetic constituency, [and the] difficulty of communicating sustainable development [concepts] to the public" (Artibise, 1995, p.11). These quotes summarize many of the key findings on planning barriers.

The above literature findings help inform a current analysis of possible barriers to effective planning for sustainable development on Vancouver Island. A short note should be made on two barriers that were not found in the literature to the degree one might expect. One understated barrier that has significant relevance for sustainable development is that "It is a delicate, if not impossible, task for the planner to balance the value of being a neutral technical advisor and the social values of the profession" (Hodge, 1998, p.402). Increasingly as the idea of the public interest is attacked and the goals of sustainable development continue to aspire to greater heights one might expect this delicate task to be the focus of much more discussion. The other understated finding regards the adequacy of resources. Planning for sustainable development, (if not involving long-term planning and vision setting than at least broader contingency-planning), will likely require more planning and resources than currently exist. In this context only one author contended that acquiring greater resources and powers for planners does not seem financially realistic at this time (Hodge, 1998, p.445).
Strategies for Planning for Sustainable Development

One of the finest strengths and greatest tragedies (according to some authors) of humans is their potential for adaptation to new situations. In the context of the above goals and challenges of public planning for sustainable development, planning literature also contains information about strategies used by public planners. The categorization of strategies suggested by the literature is similar to the categorization of barriers. Although it was more difficult to find strategies for effective planning identified in the literature, if one examines the barriers and thinks of their converse one could argue that many strategies are identified in reverse. For example, when a lack of resources is seen as a barrier, a strategy might be to ensure sufficiency of resources before and during planning activity.

Political Processes and Officials

Few strategies were explicitly identified in the literature for public planners to deal with political authorities. Implicitly the literature suggests the need to be strategic in identifying actors and interests, build coalitions of support internal and external to your planning agency, be pragmatic, and accept incremental victories for sustainable development. One comment was found about balancing pragmatism and idealism. Planners need to be “working within the reality of the political environment in as grounded a manner as possible, while not losing sight of the larger role we must play in regenerating the biosphere” (Harrington, 1993, p.7). Although functioning within present realities, it was also suggested that municipal governments have an important role in "making direct challenges to inappropriate policies and legislative constraints" (NRTEE, 1991b, p.39).

Internal Organizational Structures and Functions

I found an emphasis in the literature on organizational analysis on the importance of leadership capacity and role clarity, and at the same time a need for on-the-ground flexibility. Regarding leadership and vision, Robinson and Hodge state that, "First and foremost there needs to be set in place,...an institutional arrangement for governance that has the capacity to build a consensus on a comprehensive, long term vision of where the region should be going." They state that inclusiveness is also an important objective for effective planning and partnership-building. "[There is a] need [for] appropriate mechanisms to be inclusive of local interests...even including other public agencies and private and not-for-profit groups" (Robinson and Hodge, 1998, p.10). Richardson emphasizes the importance of role clarity. “If land use planning is to be used effectively to support sustainable development, there must be a clear and coherent structure of communication and responsibilities, from policy direction to day-to-day management and decision-making, in every land-related public program” (1989, p.3). These aspects of clarity and coherency resonate with Alexander's call for coordinative planning. He states that the planning paradigms of rational planning (goal focussed) and communicative planning (means-focussed) and the latter's derivative frame-setting
approach to planning all "leave us with a problem: how to account for implementation?" He argues for the birth of a new paradigm, "coordinative planning", better focused on how implementation relates to plan creation; and that focusses attention on enhancing analysis and coordination of "heterogenous institutions and organizations" (1998, p.304).

While Artibise supports flexibility, advocating that "projects should be unapologetically experimental" and strong, "creative and responsible" leadership "leaders have persuasion, vision and use advisers" (Artibise, 1989, p.7 and 1995, p.11). These strategies sound like calls for action within planning organizations as much as tried and tested means of plan development and implementation.

The Public and Organized Interest Groups
Planning literature suggests that there is a need for "build[ing] strong citizen organizations...with collective not [just] special interest orientations." Concomitantly, public education is important to successful plan implementation (Artibise, 1995, p.11). Again, flexibility and creativeness are also seen as required skills to deal with a variety of organized interest groups. For example, in an article on new modes of planning in New Westminster, Winnipeg and Tacoma Washington, Hulsman states that "thought, design, and a little give and take in zoning is the key"(Stallard, 1997, p.16). Regarding public involvement processes "Visioning exercises ...[that ask people] to express their hopes for the future and to formulate practical goals for reviving their city," have proven successful in cities like Chattanooga, Tennessee for advancing sustainable development planning (Girardet, 1999, p.17). Means of communicating information to the public that minimize the possibility of misinformation and/or manipulation include ensuring that information is "(1) clear and comprehensible, (2) sincere and trustworthy, (3) appropriate and legitimate, and (4) accurate and true..." (Forester, 1982, p.71).

At a more overarching level, fostering public awareness of ecological and social impacts of unsustainable activities can lead to increased political leadership, political accountability and public support for sustainable development planning. One way that this awareness can be engendered is through use of a planning tool called Ecological Footprint Analysis that illuminates the degree of sustainability of different patterns of material consumption and waste associated with different lifestyles (Wackernagel and Rees, 1996). Particularly, "Ecological Footprint analysis can help to probe the structure of cultural denial and expose the barriers to sustainability be they misunderstanding; inadequate information; incomplete or distorted world views; conflicting value systems; simple carelessness; economic desperation; fear of the future; or external sociopolitical constraints such as an increasingly competitive economic environment" (Wackernagel and Rees, 1996, p.152).

The General Nature of Public Planning
At a general level, a few strategies were found in the relevant literature that apply to planners in terms of professional values that are useful to their success. "Ray Spaxman [who was Director of Vancouver city planning for 16 years] stated that it is important for
planners to care for others who they may not like. Their job is to communicate, to negotiate, to get and understanding of what the dialogue is about. ...[They] must also have an idealism for the community as a whole. 33 At a profession-wide level, Artibise proposed that the Planning Institute of B.C. take action by “fostering a profession that is confident, innovative, that speaks out and gets things done, and that is committed to building sustainable communities” (1995, p.13). This is in line with Wackernagel and Rees' calls for planners to use "...tools that allow them to estimate and reveal publicly the extent to which 'development' decisions compromise a sustainable future" (1996, p.150).

The literature did not explicitly suggest a flood of strategies for planning for sustainable development. There are books such as Roseland's, Towards Sustainable Communities that document models and stories for sustainable development planning success; but not necessarily the principles and strategies for success. Though as previously stated, if one looks at the challenges or barriers in their opposing meanings, one could say the literature is full of strategies for effective planning practice.

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