CITY FOR SALE:
PLANNING FOR URBAN TOURISM IN VANCOUVER

by

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B.A., Concordia University, 1995

A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT
OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF

MASTER OF ARTS IN PLANNING

in

THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES

(School of Community and Regional Planning)

We accept this thesis as conforming to the required standard

THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

April 2000

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ABSTRACT

Given the increase in tourism demand, this thesis examines how the City of Vancouver is currently planning for urban tourism for downtown Vancouver and identifies some alternative policy approaches adopted by other cities in the Northwest Region.

A review of the urban tourism literature provides an overview of various ideas and conceptual frameworks related to urban tourism supply and demand with an emphasis on the relationship between visitor activity and urban planning. This review concludes with the identification of a set of issues that have planning implications for the built, natural, and cultural environments of the urban setting. Having determined that the City of Vancouver does not address tourism activity in the Central Area Plan, selected tourism activity and development issues specific to downtown Vancouver are highlighted to draw attention to the need for planners to plan for urban tourism.

Urban tourism policy alternatives were derived from the planning documents and interviews with planners and destination managers from Seattle, Portland and San Francisco. The data was analysed and grouped according to the main urban tourism issues. An interesting progression is noted from minimal tourism land use planning in Seattle to moderate planning in Portland and finally, in San Francisco, thorough explicit and detailed land use planning which recognizes the impacts of tourism on the city.

Suggestions for City of Vancouver planners and destination managers are advanced to address the potential adverse impacts of urban tourism. More study is required on how visitors behave in downtown Vancouver to better inform planning policy.
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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This thesis was inspired by Vancouver’s ever changing cityscape. Coming from a city that had been experiencing a development drought, Vancouver presented an opportunity for a young, slightly idealist, planning student to discover firsthand the impact of change in the built environment on communities and cultures.

The path to a thesis defense is rarely simple and short. In my case, I may have managed to select the longest possible route. Many special individuals and organizations assisted me during my journey. Agreeing to be my first reader late in the process, Dr. Penny Gurstien managed to get me to produce a first draft, provided valuable feedback in tightening the scope of the thesis, and kept me on task if not on time. It was in Dr. Tom Hutton’s class that I had the opportunity to explore the topic of urban tourism. His immediate support and interest in this topic area convinced me it was worthy of more substantial study. Many thanks to Paul Vallee and Rick Antonson from Tourism Vancouver who answered my many questions and provided me access to a plethora of tourism data. Scheduling meetings with a dozen individuals over a short period of time can prove to be a monumental challenge. Almost all of the people interviewed for this project made room in their schedule to accommodate mine. They were all gracious hosts.

Both my immediate and parental family provided unlimited support during my years of study. My life partner Nina made room for this project over the duration of our relationship. For pretending to engage me in late night conversation about the visitor trade, letting me use her computer, contributing her insights, editing and proofing skills, and for caring for our beautiful babies – Eva and Sanyc – when I could not, I am forever grateful.

This thesis is dedicated to Moe Schwartz. With only a grade three education, my father built a business, supported a family, and gave me the gift of a higher education. He dreamed that one day his son, “should have the education I never had.” Daddy, dreams do come true.
CHAPTER 1 - INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

In the absence of holistic city planning for urban tourism, the growth of visitor facilities and services is transforming the nature of downtown Vancouver. If the current development trends continue, there is a real danger that the nature of downtown will evolve to meet more the needs of visitors than residents. For example, some downtown streets have radically changed from ten years ago. Robson Street used to be lined with shops owned by individual proprietors who generally lived in Vancouver. The intensely used Vancouver Public Library anchored these shops. Although still a popular shopping street for residents, much of the storefront space on Robson is occupied by franchises that cater to affluent visitors rendering Robson Street indistinguishable from other big city shopping strips. The former Vancouver Public Library site, since the relocation of the library outside the CBD, has been transmogrified into Planet Hollywood oriented to visitors yearning for a Hollywood [eating] experience (Figure 1-1). A holistic planning approach for urban tourism will better ensure that the vibrancy of downtown Vancouver remains a strong tourist attraction as well as a desirable place for residents to live and work.

Figure 1-1 Former Vancouver Public Library Building
1.2 Problem Statement

The advent of downtown Vancouver as a major tourist destination also heralds a new set of planning challenges. Visitor accommodation and visitors are currently considered “surrogate” residents in Vancouver’s Central Area Plan. This categorization presupposes that tourists place the same demands on goods and services, as do residents and businesses. If not addressed by planners, the fact that tourists consume a differing bundle of goods and services can cause problems. Currently, there are two significant forces driving the transformation of downtown: the change in socio-economic class of downtown residents, and tourism development. To ignore the scale tourism plays in shaping the urban texture and the destiny of a city is to also ignore opportunity to plan for positive growth. The loss of affordable downtown housing due to single room occupancy hotels conversion to visitor accommodation and local resistance to the Indy race are but two examples of problems caused by the lack of planning for tourism.

Municipal planners have thus far been able to balance the demands of tourism, residents and business in the central area en route to creating a vibrant city core. However, with the continuing rise in urban tourism, a previously invisible impact on the host community’s patterns of consumption (local vs. global; resident vs. visitor) can now be detected. As visitor numbers continue to rise this impact will slowly begin to materialize, exposing the need for a holistic planning to ensure that the needs and requirements of urban tourism are met while simultaneously mitigating impacts on Vancouverites living in the central area. The Central Area Plan does not address urban tourism at all, making it difficult for planners to effectively respond to future visitor demand. In the absence of cohesive municipal tourism planning new issues are sure to arise as the marketplace responds aggressively to tourism demand.

1.3 Research Question

Tourism demand is susceptible to many different variables making it a challenge to predict. Between 1991-1996, the demand for the Vancouver tourism product has consistently strengthened. The health of the Vancouver market is largely connected to economic conditions in
Asia and the United States and the strength of the Canadian dollar versus the American dollar. During this period the Canadian dollar remained low against its American counterpart while Asia enjoyed a period of economic growth. This thesis makes the assumption that the tourism demand for Vancouver will continue to grow in answering the following research question:

*Given the increase in tourism demand, how is the City of Vancouver currently planning for urban tourism in the Central Area and what are some alternative policy approaches?*

### 1.4 Research Methodology

Information for this thesis has been obtained by conducting a literature review of material related to urban tourism planning and through interviews with municipal planners. The bulk of this thesis consists of review, synthesis and analysis of current literature in the form of books, reports, government documents and articles from journals, magazines and newspapers. Particular attention has been paid to local government planning documents for the downtown or central area being profiled for this work. Supplementing this review, and interwoven within it, are personal observations, insights and ideas on the subject. While most of the thesis is informed by this review, Chapter Two provides an overview of various ideas and conceptual frameworks of urban tourism and its relationship with urban planning.

Most of the rich information assembled using face-to-face and telephone interviews with urban planners and destination managers inform Chapter Four. This chapter profiles the planning approaches and policies of Seattle, Portland and San Francisco using a narrative writing style aimed at capturing both the tone and energy of the interviews and the passion that the respondents have for their respective city. The interviews occurred between May - July 1997. Refer to Appendix A for the interview schedule and Appendix B for sample questionnaire. The data from the interviews was analysed and grouped according to five main issues that have been identified in Chapter Two and discussed in detail in Chapter Three vis-à-vis their impact on Vancouver. Comprehensive city plans and downtown land use plans from each city were reviewed and policy aimed at addressing visitor activity was highlighted. Alas, where urban
tourism policy was scarce, the number of times “visitor” or “tourism” was mention in the plan was noted along with the context.

1.5 Scope of Study

This thesis is a limited discussion on the relationship between urban planning policy and urban tourism activity. Within city planning, the subject of urban tourism is regarded as a development tool capable of revitalizing and re-imaging downtown areas through the creation of tourism attractions and precincts. Proponents of urban tourism planning look to city planning as a means of managing the growth of the physical, social and environmental impacts of urban tourism activities through local policy intervention.

Some important limitations of this study should be recognized. This thesis will not consider the inter-relationship between tourism and politics at the local level, nor any other level of government. This should not reduce the importance of how issues of power, values, and control over the decision-making process shape tourism development and public policy.

Economic impact studies and associated arguments usually in favour of tourism development are de-emphasized. These studies commonly concentrate on estimating tourism expenditures and the number of jobs created by tourism development while excluding the social, environmental and opportunity costs of urban tourism development. Besides, it is only of late that the social and environmental costs of the urban tourism industry are being analyzed. Moreover, some researchers argue that economic impact studies exist only to promote hidden political agendas aimed at justifying public expenditures on major tourism developments and infrastructure (Haywood, 1992: 10).

This thesis will not concern itself with identifying ways in which the urban planning process can address and incorporate tourism in a more substantial way. The focus of this study is to identify a set of issues posed by urban tourism activity and present a sample of policy responses.
Uncovering different approaches to integrating these issues into a city planning process is important if tourism is to be considered a means of developing cities rather than merely a form of development in cities.

The geographical scope of this study is downtown Vancouver with an emphasis placed on activity in and policy for the Central Area. Figure 1-2 is a map of the study area. This area has been selected as the study area for the following reason:

- most visitors and excursionists visit downtown Vancouver during their stay
- the majority of accommodations in the region are located downtown
- many cultural, physical and natural attractions are located downtown
- several residential neighbourhoods are home to more than 70,000 city dwellers
- downtown is the regional business centre where over 160,000 people work
- the City of Vancouver’s Central Area Plan contains land use policies that direct development in the downtown area

**Figure 1-2 Downtown Vancouver**

![Map of Downtown Vancouver](image)

*Source: Adapted from Discover Vancouver*
Tourism activity is not confined to downtown Vancouver. This study acknowledges that tourism activity downtown has "spillover" impacts on the rest of the city and region. Hotels and tourism attractions are sprouting up in the City of Burnaby, Richmond and other municipalities in the Lower Mainland. Conversely, other elements of the tourism industry influence tourism activity in downtown Vancouver. These elements include, but are not limited to, the proximity of Whistler to Vancouver¹, regional attractions, the cruise ship industry and the impact of the "open skies" agreement on the Vancouver International Airport. In the interest of keeping the focus of this study tight, these features of tourism activity will not be scrutinized.

Finally, it should be recognized that a critic of urban tourism in Vancouver does not translate into a criticism of the individual visitor.

1.6 Outline of Thesis

Following this introduction, Chapter Two offers a review of the urban tourism literature. After defining urban tourism and placing it in the context of urban growth, the discussion turns to a description of the supply and demand of tourism in cities. As with many evolving concepts, definitional and methodological inconsistencies in identifying the characteristic of an "urban tourist" and the elements that attract them to a city make a definitive analysis difficult. This chapter concludes with a discussion on some of the social and environmental planning issues posed by urban tourism activity, which in the aggregate, present a strong argument for the development of urban tourism public policy.

Chapter Three focuses on providing a profile of the tourism industry in Vancouver using primarily a market analysis approach. This is followed by a review of a selection of planning issues caused by tourism activities in downtown Vancouver and how they are being addressed in existing land use plans. Carrying over this analytical framework in Chapter Four, results from the

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¹ Whistler draws 1.4 million visitors per year. The Whistler 2002 municipal plan predicts that the city will become "the premier four-season mountain resort community in the world."
interviews and the previously specified planning documents of Seattle, Portland and San Francisco are examined, highlighting planning policies that respond and direct urban tourism activity. The final chapter summarizes the findings in this thesis, proposes some policy alternatives for the City of Vancouver to consider, followed by suggestions for further study.
CHAPTER 2 - URBAN TOURISM

2.1 Introduction

The realization that cities are “the most important type of tourism destination across the world” (Law 1993: 1) has gained strength. According to Blank (1994: 182), there are a number of factors which can begin to explain why visitors seek urban destinations. These are:

- Cities are characterized by high populations, thereby attracting correspondingly high numbers of tourists who are visiting friends and relatives.
- Most cities are major travel nodes that serve as gateways or transfer points to other destinations.
- Cities are focal points for commerce, industry, and finance.
- Cities harbour concentrations of people services related to health, education, government, religion, etc.
- Cities offer a wide variety of cultural, artistic, and recreational experiences.

However, urban planners and researchers of urban systems have overlooked the tourism function of the city. It is only recently that the urban setting is being seen as a tourism environment deserving of intellectual attention (Ashworth, 1989, 1992; Pearce, 1989; Ashworth & Tunbridge, 1990; Blank, 1994; Jansen-Verbeke, 1986; Law, 1993, 1996; Page, 1995). From a preliminary evaluation of the tourism literature it is apparent that:

Although many capital cities, metropolitan centres and historic towns and cities are important tourist destinations urban areas have been relatively neglected by tourism researchers.
(Pearce, 1989: 84)

In his seminal work Urban tourism: an imbalance of attention, Ashworth (1989: 33) confirms that those researchers who should have been studying urban tourism have overlooked an important urban function:

[a] double neglect has occurred. Those interested in the study of tourism have tended to neglect the urban context in which much of it is set, while those interested in urban studies... have been equally neglectful of the importance of the tourist function in cities.
According to commentators there are a number of reasons for the inattention researchers of urban systems have given to the role of tourism in the urban setting. Ashworth suggested that urban tourism activity is difficult to analyze because it remains relatively invisible. It is argued that the intricacy of forces that create urban tourism are so complex due to its multi-dimensional characteristics that many analysts have avoided conducting holistic studies on tourism in cities, abdicating research responsibility to privately operated visitor bureaus. Since tourism is rarely perceived as a major economic force in cities it remains an almost hidden function embedded in the urban economy (Ashworth 1989: 34). For instance, it is argued that employment generated by tourism does not appear within one tidy “Standard Industrial Classification” order or heading, and without detailed research it is difficult to estimate its importance (Law 1993). At the same time, researchers have tended to view cities such as Aspen, Colorado or Acapulco, Mexico as mono-functional communities centered around sport and leisure activities. “Viewing these communities as atypical, urban researchers have, by and large, ignored them in the study of urban form and process” (Hinch 1996: 98). Conversely, researchers have been inclined to overlook the "resort" function that exists in all cities, including Vancouver.

This lack of attention and interest was also characteristic of urban governments and planners until the 1980s when tourism began to be conceived as an economic development tool. Many private actors in the urban community promoted tourism development as a possible panacea for deteriorating cities struggling to adjust to the post-industrial economy (Law 1993). Local public officials jumped quickly onto the bandwagon without first gauging the possible impacts.

Perceived as a clean industry, local government officials did not bother to request the development of policy specifically addressing tourism in the city. A quick renewal scheme was badly needed since the process of deindustrialization was creating problems for most large cities. Jobs were disappearing, unemployment had increased, and derelict sites emerged, often in the inner city. It was apparent that the economic stability of the early post-war years had ended. Global competition combined with continual technological change meant that cities, regions and
countries had to constantly be renewing their economies or face decline. Consequently, urban planners and politicians began searching for growing sectors which could be developed to create jobs and raise incomes in the city. There was no desire to specialize in any activity, given the lessons learned from the industrialization era, but a desire rather to diversify the economy. In this context tourism was enthusiastically adopted and promoted in large cities. It was perceived to have “long-term growth potential based on growing affluence, increased leisure time and easier travel, and to be capable of development in urban locations” (Law 1996: 11). With city planners and decision-makers sold on the concept of urban tourism, it began to be treated as a significant component of a diversified economic development strategy (Law, 1993; Judd, 1995). “In their attempt to attract tourists, cities [started] aggressively reconstructing their physical environments” (Judd, 1995: 175) regardless of the social and environmental consequences. The physical reconstruction of cities such as Flint, Michigan in the USA (as documented in the motion picture Roger and Me (1989) written and directed by Michael Moore) exemplify this approach to urban tourism development as a panacea for de-industrialization. As in many other recent downtown redevelopment initiatives, urban tourism development is driven by the expectation that jobs will be created. By overlooking the socio-cultural impacts of urban tourism on the city and its residents, urban planners have not been able to address urban tourism as a policy issue.

Since cities are important destinations and have more recently encouraged tourism as an economic measure, planning for tourism by cities is important. In the absence of such planning (partly due to conceptual and methodological constraints) tourism is a function of the city worth scholarly study and is a deserving policy issue. The remainder of this chapter will layout the conceptual framework for the thesis.

### 2.2 Tourism and Urban Growth

Perhaps one reason why urban tourism has been so little recognized is that its evolution within the urban system does not easily fit into urban growth models (Law, 1996). A popular idea about
urban growth relates to concepts of a pre-industrial, industrial and post-industrial city. The pre-industrial or mercantilist city was based on trade, monopolies, and military power. From the late eighteenth century the industrial city emerged, growing on the basis of manufacturing activity within a capitalist system. Within the industrial period there were several phases, the latest of which is referred to as Fordist, involving mass production and consumption. Many commentators believe that since the early 1970s a new economic system has been emerging, variously described as post Fordist, neo-Fordist, or flexible accumulation.

With respect to cities, Harvey (1989) perceives the principal characteristics of this new system to be entrepreneurial cities, public-private partnerships, and increased inter-urban competition. The latter takes the form of "competition within the spatial division of labour for mobile investment, competition with respect to the spatial division of consumption, competition for the location of command functions (finance, business, information and government) and competition for the receipt of government funds" (Harvey in Law, 1996: 10). Harvey makes it clear under the second heading that the major cities are competing for the tourist’s income and that success or failure in this area could be crucial to the future of a city. This competition has resulted in a host of tourism innovations from convention centres, sports stadia, to re-designing parks and downtown into festival-like spaces.

According to Harvey (1987) imaging a city through the organization of spectacular urban space is a mechanism for attracting capital and affluent people in a period of intense inter-urban competition and urban entrepreneurism:

the modernist penchant for monumentality... has been challenged by an “official” post-modernist style that explores the architecture of festival and spectacle, with its sense of the ephemeral, of display, and of transitory but participatory pleasure. The display of the commodity became a central part of the spectacle, as crowds flock to gaze at them and at each other in intimate and secure places... Even whole built environments became centerpieces of urban spectacle and display (Harvey 1987: 275-76).
For Harvey, the post-industrial city is characterized by increasing class polarization, which city leaders seek to conceal though the use of community spectacle. This same spectacle will also make cities more attractive to tourists but not without a cost. As an illustrative example, Harvey's (1990: 421-22) comments on the redevelopment of the inner harbour in Baltimore captures the essence of the transformative power of urban tourism development:

The present carnival mask of the Inner Harbor redevelopment conceals the long history of struggle over this space. The urban renewal...effort was stymied by the unrest of the 1960s... The inner city was a space of disaffection and social disruption. But in the wake of the violence that rocked the city after Martin Luther King’s assassination in 1968, a coalition sprang to life to try and restore a sense of unity and belonging to the city... One idea that emerged from that effort was to create a city fair in the inner city that would celebrate “otherness”... but which would also celebrate the theme of civic unity within that diversity... by 1973, nearly two million came [to the fair] and the inner harbor was reoccupied by the common populace in ways which it had been impossible to envisage in the 1960s... during the 1970s, in spite of considerable public opposition, the forces of commercialism and property development recaptured the space... The inner city space became a space of conspicuous consumption, celebrating commodities rather than civic values.

Another idea about the modern post-Fordist city involves the concept of industrial districts (Scott, 1988). Emerging from Fordism, industries become smaller, seeking external rather than internal economies of scale. Linked through technology, there is a re-concentration of industries into areas held together by linkages akin to those which developed at the end of the nineteenth century and early twentieth century, but possibly on a larger geographical scale. In some respects tourism districts appearing on the edge of the city centre fits into this pattern and is consistent with attempts by local politicians in Vancouver to advocate for the establishment of an “entertainment and cultural district” just outside the CBD. The product which the city offers is a multi-faceted experience. Law (1996: 10) explains that:

Tourists may be drawn by the main attractions but they often patronize shops, restaurants and other facilities. Thus there is a group of producers who combine together in a small geographical area to offer the visitor a product. The more producers there are, the higher the quality of their offerings, and the stronger the linkages the better the product will be.
Both Harvey and Scott provide sound theory for understanding the relationship between tourism and urban form. They have been able to show how tourism can fit and in fact how it should be intrinsic to urban growth models. The discussion now turns to focusing on the tourism function itself and looking at it from a systemic approach.

2.3 The Urban Tourism System

In order to identify ways of improving the organizational planning framework for urban tourism, a greater understanding of the key elements and functions of tourism in the city is required. While models of urban growth shed some light on the role that tourism plays in the post-industrial city, there have also been many models of the tourism system described in the tourism literature (Butler, 1980; Gunn, 1988; Chadwick, 1987). Gunn's (1988) model is perhaps the most useful, providing a simple representation of the various elements of the tourism system. Shown in Figure 2-1, Gunn acknowledges the relationship between supply and demand sectors. Simply put, the demand for attractions, accommodation, services (shops, restaurants, entertainment, etc.) and transport is derived from the visitor market which has both the desire and the ability to travel to the destination.

In turn, this demand is responsible for the increased development of tourist attractions, accommodations, services, transport, and information. The system is cyclic. As the supply sector grows and the destination offers greater variety of attractions and services, then the attractions of the destination to its market increases, in turn causing an increase in demand. Gunn (1988: 69) points to the fine balance of the tourism system which in turn reflects the role that planners can play in adjusting the tourism system:

All components of the supply side are essential to a properly functioning tourism system. All must function in a delicate but tightly integrated balance. If tastes change, if transportation cost or mode changes, if new attractions are built, if new generations of service are developed, or as new information and promotion are created, the balance is upset and adjustments in all other components must be made to compensate.
Figure 2-1 The Tourism System

Source: Gunn (1988)
2.4 Production and Consumption of the Tourist City

Why do tourists visit cities? Law (1993) argues that an urban area’s reputation and attractions may be significant in influencing the tourist’s visit. This means that visitors may often have a preconceived notion or perception of the “tourist experience”. In other words, tourists and other visitors are not passive agents within the tourism system that exists in urban areas, since they have views or expectation of the services, facilities and products they may consume (Page, 1995). Shaw and William’s (1994: 16) state that it is important to examine the tourism function in cities within consumption and production framework since:

- Production, is the method by which a complex of businesses and industries are involved in the supply of tourism services and products and how they are delivered to consumers; and
- Consumption, is how, where, why and when the tourist acutely consumes tourism services and products.

Law (1993) builds upon this concept observing that:

In many respects tourism is the geography of consumption outside the home area; it is about how and why people travel to consume, whether it be historic buildings, landscapes, art and museum collections, or sport and entertainment. It is concerned with what makes tourists travel, what determines how far and in what direction they move. On the production side it is concerned to understand where tourism activities develop and on what scale. It is concerned with the process or processes whereby some cities are able to create tourism resources and a tourism industry (Law, 1993: 14).

Mullins (1991) takes a more theoretical approach in describing the relationship between production and consumption and urban tourism arguing that “tourist cities represent a new and extraordinary form of urbanization because they are built for consumption” (Mullins, 1991: 326). This type of city differs dramatically when compared with the rationale for industrial cities of the nineteenth and early twentieth century when industrial production, commerce and housing were the main functions. Mullins’s approach offers new insights into the conceptualization of how cities develop through tourism since the consumption of goods and services in resorts and urban areas is not a permanent feature, but a transitory function not related to basic human needs, but to the quest for fun, excitement, relaxation and leisure. Stanback (1985) notes that in the
USA, consumption centres (including tourist cities) have among the highest rates of urban growth, highlighting the significance of this phenomenon. These goods, services and facilities which feed visitor demand are considered as a city’s “leisure products” or “tourism product”. The reframing of what may formerly have been termed “urban infrastructure” in a “leisure” framework leads to important planning considerations. As the thesis turns to examining city policies related to tourism in Chapter Three and Four, care will be taken to find out if city planners have developed policy to mitigate the commodification of the built environment.

2.4.1 The Urban Tourism Product

Elements of the urban environment that attract and primarily cater to the demands of visitors comprise the urban tourism product. Jansen-Verbeke (1986) designed a functional approach in viewing the city as a leisure product (see Figure 2-2). The first or primary elements include activity places such as cultural; sports, amusement facilities, and leisure settings consisting of a variety of physical and socio-cultural characteristics. Secondary elements consist of supporting facilities and services that tourists consume during their visit and which shape the visitor’s experience of the services available in the city. These include accommodation, food and beverage, and various forms of shopping opportunities. Jansen-Verbeke argues that while these elements are important, they are unlikely to be the motivating factor for visiting the city. The third layer of the urban tourism product is additional elements such as infrastructure related to transportation and tourist information.

Jansen-Verbeke’s critique contends that not all tourists are motivated to visit a city because of the lure of a city’s primary elements. “In many cities, the so-called secondary elements of shops and restaurants may well be the main attractions for certain groups of visitors” (Shaw and Williams 1994: 202). While the boundaries between these categories can be debated, the three groupings of elements are all required for a city to function effectively as a tourism destination.
Generally speaking, many cities are equipped with all or most of the elements comprising the urban tourism product. If so, what differentiates one city’s urban product from another? From a sustainability perspective, Hinch (1996) suggests that the attractiveness of each city as a tourist...
destination is determined by its sense of place, or *genius loci*. As mentioned earlier, a sense of place can be thought of as the output from contact between people and space. The health of a city’s sense of place can be measured by its level of social capital (hospitality). Whether the interaction is temporary (as in the case of a day visitor) or relatively permanent (as in the case of a long-time resident), a sense of place is created:

Each place has a distinct character that is fundamental to the bond between people (tourists or residents) and a place. Without this unique character, the attractiveness of a place is reduced and the sustainability of the city and its tourism function is diminished” (Hinch 1996: 100).

Many elements contribute to a sense of place, but specifically include:

- Architectural style
- Climate
- Natural setting
- Memory, metaphor, or image
- Use of local building materials
- Craftsmanship
- Spatial relationships
- Cultural diversity and history
- Societal values
- Public environments
- Daily and seasonal activities

(Garnham, 1985)

For the purpose of this discussion, sense of place becomes the integral element of the tourism product. Equipped with all the “required” elements of the urban tourism product, without a strong sense of place a city could lose its competitive advantage despite the attractiveness of its primary attractions. Hinch (1996) follows this line of thought by outlining three basic dimensions of the urban setting that add to a sense of place: (1) the built environment, (2) the natural environment, and (3) the cultural environment. Each of these dimensions help to define a city and is therefore critical to the sustainability of the urban area. Also, the health of each environment can be measured in terms of physical, natural and cultural capital.
2.4.1.1 The Built Environment

The built environment is one of the most tangible manifestations of a city’s attraction as a tourism destination. Unique architecture, historic buildings and districts, sports and cultural centres, shopping areas, restaurants and entertainment, and even industrial and residential areas all combine to create what can potentially be a very appealing built setting in a destination (Inskeep, 1991). All these elements play an important role in molding the sense of place experienced by all within a city. In his seminal book, *A Pattern Language*, Christopher Alexander and his associates identify 253 elements, or aspects (they called them patterns) of rooms, streets, and districts that seem to have definite links with joyful experiences. It is the expression of these experience which “make people feel alive and human” (Alexander 1977: xvii).

Yet this unique sense of place, so important to the attractiveness of a tourist destination and to the quality of life of urban residents, is constantly under threat. For, as Hinch (1996: 101) argues:

> The widespread diffusion and globalization of urban design has created a trend of homogenized form between and within cities. Tourism businesses are some of the greatest perpetrators of this metamorphosis. Their contribution to conformity arises through standardized building designs associated with the growth of corporate chains and franchises seeking a recognizable identity. It is not only the widespread introduction of this structures in and of themselves that contributes to this sameness, but also the fact that they often replace structures and open space that give a place character and individuality.

Relph (1976: ii) described the result of this process as “placelessness” - that is, the casual eradication of distinctive places and the making of standardized landscapes that results from an insensitivity to the significance of place. One type of initiative that has countered this trend is the preservation of unique heritage buildings; but while specific examples of heritage buildings are of interest, it is naïve to assume that a few isolated cases of architectural heritage can retain the sense of place for a whole city.

2.4.1.2 The Natural Environment

While the balance of space in urban areas is weighted towards built form, the greening of cities is increasingly being recognized as critical to the quality of life of city residents and to the
sustainability of cities (Roseland, 1992). An assortment of natural areas within a city represents a central part of its allure as a tourist destination and is highly valued as tourist attractions. Yet the open space associated with these areas are continually under the threat of permanent alteration for other uses such as those associated with transportation, commercialism, or housing. In the context of tourism, although additional public transportation networks that use existing road space might enhance tourist infrastructure, all too often urban green space is replaced with roadways which quickly fill to capacity causing congestion and pollution. The benefits and costs of such a shift have to be carefully considered.

An even more insidious threat comes from within the tourism and recreation communities themselves. The attractiveness of these natural areas as sites for more intensive leisure developments is strong, whether it occurs through infrastructure development associated with hosting major events such as the Olympics or World Fairs (Hall, 1992) or whether it occurs more gradually through the encroachment of highly manicured landscapes and recreation facilities on natural open spaces. When viewed in isolation, the arguments for this transition in land use are powerful and reflect a popular, if mistaken perspective that sees open space as unused space. Over time, however, the accumulated impact of these incremental changes can have a major negative effect. Unchecked development may diminish the natural resource to the point where the balance is lost between the natural and the built dimensions of the urban environment.

2.4.1.3 The Cultural Environment

The third dimension of the city to be considered is the cultural environment. Visitors are often attracted to urban areas by the cultural patterns, traditions, and lifestyles associated with a place (Inskeep, 1991). Inskeep warns that “care must be taken in the presentation of cultural patterns and the interface between residents and tourist so that social problems are not generated (ibid., 83). The cultural dimension of a city may manifest itself in many ways but, from the perspective of tourism, one of its most tangible forms is through community festivals (Hall, 1992). While the essence of such festivals is a community celebration, there is increasing pressure for them to justify the public funding that they may receive on the basis of their success as
tourism attractions (Hinch & Delamere, 1993). In many instances, the dual function of these festivals as local celebrations and tourism generators represents a win-win situation for residents and their guests; but this is not always the case. If care is not taken, the efforts to develop the festival as a tourism event may have an adverse effect on the festival as a local celebration and residents may begin to view it more as a form of staged entertainment for visitors. In the absence of a genuine celebration, the authenticity and ongoing success of the festival as a tourism event may be impaired. At the very least, the community will have lost a unique cultural attraction along with its associated competitive advantages in favour of a much more common and replaceable tourism product. At the most, the cultural identity of an urban community can be lost.

Figure 2-3 Local Music Festival in San Francisco

Similar parallels can be drawn throughout the cultural dimension of a community that demonstrate threats to the cultural capital and therefore the sustainability of urban tourism. If a deeper understanding of how visitors use the natural, physical and cultural elements of the urban environment is to be achieved, then a typology of the urban tourist based on discovering the identity of visitors in terms of their tastes and preferences and what they do during their stay is an essential analytical tool.
An Emerging Urban Tourist Typology: the Demand Side

Why does urban tourism need to be planned at the local level? The answer hinges upon understanding who visits the city and how visitors behave in it. Information on the social, economic and demographic characteristics of visitors to a particular city as they differ from residents is needed to identify the “human sub-species” known as the urban tourist (Ashworth, 1992: 6). Steps need to be taken to ensure that the city is not overwhelmingly commodified in so far as the needs of residents become secondary to those of visitors. The link between demand for and supply of facilities is the behavior of tourists in the city. Jansen-Verbeke (1986) defines behaviour patterns of tourists in the inner city as “the way they spend time and money in a specific place, the kind of urban facility they make use of, and above all, their appreciation of inner-city leisure resources” (1986: 84). It is precisely this behaviour that determines the nature and intensity of the various impacts of tourism on cities. Therefore, an accurate tourist typology which captures and details the essence of visitor behaviour in the city becomes an essential analytical tool.

The following section will review three ways of studying the demand side of tourism. The first way of studying tourism is motivation. A review of the different ways researchers have tried to classify visitors’ motivation will be done. The second approach classifies “motivation” with the actual consumption/use of specific tourist resources. Accordingly “users” may be tourists within their own city. The third approach leaves the issue of motivation behind entirely, preferring to classify “users” according to the location and proximity of their accommodations. An understanding of the methodology used to study tourism is so important because unless we measure tourism appropriately, we either discount it as invisible or, even as we see the impact we are helpless in the face of its seemly amorphous nature. By classifying visitors as “users” of resources which we can measure and then also focusing on where these tourist stay, we are using information in a way which benefits planners concerned with resource allocation at the local level; we are measuring tourism in a way which is useful to the community.
tourism is so young, there is room for further development of analytical models. However, as is discussed below, the current array of models can serve as an appropriate starting point.

Several attempts by academics and urban researchers have been made to develop a typology of urban visitors (Blank and Petkovich, 1980; Ashworth & Tunbridge, 1990). This has not been an easy exercise since there are many different users in the city. Since this study focuses on centre city tourism Jansen-Verbeke’s (1986) pivotal study on inner city tourism is an appropriate starting point. She classifies inner-city tourists according to “their place of residence, situated outside of the urban service area; and their motives for visiting” (1986: 88). By using the urban service area as a defining feature, those living in peripheral bedroom communities are considered as tourist or “recreationalist” as well. Based on questionnaire data, Jansen-Verbeke discovered that recreationalists and tourists use the inner-city in different ways:

The tourist (a) tends to stay longer in the inner city; (b) has different motives to start with; (c) spends relatively more time on sight-seeing, ...(d) visits the inner city less frequently; and (e) spends relatively more money on pubs, bars, and restaurants (ibid.: 91).

Other researchers feel that the mysteries behind tourist behavior can be revealed through understanding what factors motivate them to choose to visit urban areas. In an earlier study, Blank and Petkovich (1980) note that while visitors may initially have a single purpose for visiting a city, they may also find themselves engaged in other activities related to the attractions in the city. A visitor’s principle purpose or motive for visiting a city may be to negotiate a business contract with a potential client or visit friends and family, however s/he may incidentally visit museums, theaters, events, and urban parks. Blank and Petkovich identified several factors related with visits to urban areas. These are:

- Visiting friends and family
- Business/convention
- Outdoor recreation
- Entertainment and sightseeing
- Personal reasons
- Shopping
• Other factors

As noted in their research, the importance of each motivation factor varied by the destination and its attraction. This simple typology of users seems incomplete in so far as it falls short of reconciling multi-purpose visits with motivating trip factors. Moreover, the researcher using such a model as an analytical tool may get a glimpse as to why people come to the city but will remain uninformed regarding what visitors do once in the city.

More recent motivation research based on questionnaires (Ashworth and Tunbridge, 1990) have identified a more comprehensive range of frequently cited motives:

• Visiting friends and relatives
• Business travelers
• Conference and exhibition visitors
• Educational tourists
• Cultural and heritage tourists
• Religious travelers (e.g. pilgrims)
• Hallmark event visitors
• Leisure shoppers
• Day visitors

Again, as Jansen-Verbeke’s (1986) study illustrates, urban tourists are only one set of visitors using the city because day visitors or “recreationalists” also have distinct uses for the city. This idea is reinforced in other studies which identify functional areas within the “tourist city” that express the relationship between the supply and demand for urban services (Burtenshaw et al. cited in Page 1995: 48-50). In other words, the researchers recognize that different visitors to the city have a wide range of motivating factors shaping their visit. Under this scenario, users can be classified as:

• City residents
• City-region residents
• Visitors seeking pleasure from their visit
• Conference visitors
• People working within the city
Consequently, urban tourists are only one set of users in the “multi-functional” city which (carved up in functional districts) comprises the “historic city”, the “culture city”, the “nightlife-city”, the “shopping city”, and the “tourist city”. The latter comprises all of the other functional cities and their resources (see Figure 2-4). At the surface, Ashworth and Tunbridge seem to be of one mind with Scott’s theory of industrial districts. However, while Scott characterizes districts as having separate functions, Ashworth and Tunbridge believe that the tourism function is capable of operating in an array of city districts.

From the existing tourism literature, it is clear that the complexity and nature of the multi-functional tourist city hampers the development of a precise typology of users. Hinch (1996) comments that “not only may a resident and a tourist have varying reasons for visiting a site but their reasons may be unique compared to fellow residents or tourists, and may in fact vary from one visit to the next” (1996: 98).

**Figure 2-4 Functional Areas in the Tourist City**

![Diagram of Functional Areas in the Tourist City](image)

*Source: Based on Burtenshaw et al., in Page (1995)*

It seems rather simple to put together a typology of urban tourists based on a single motive for visiting an urban area. Labels such as “tourist”, “day-tripper”, “business traveler” are descriptive
but fall short by assuming that the use of services and facilities is for one specific purpose. However, “neither the tourist nor the tourism industry exist as exclusively delimitable individuals or facilities. Both are really only definable in terms of the individual intent of the user at the moment of use” (Ashworth and Tunbridge, 1990: 118). A museum is a tourist resource in so far as it entertains visitors, although it may also service residents. Similarly, a renovated historic street such as Water Street in Gastown, Vancouver may be fulfilling many functions, including tourism and transport, to a wide variety of users. From the user’s perspective, a person can work, shop, and recreate downtown, moving swiftly across a spectrum of categories. What is an attraction for a visitor is an amenity for a resident.

In attempting to develop a more useful classification of urban tourists, within the context of the tourist-historic district, Ashworth and Tunbridge (1990) focused on the diversity of uses made in the city by the visitor. Using a market segmentation approach, it is argued that the most important issue in developing a urban tourism typology is the distinction between use/non-use of specific tourism resources within cities. Recognizing the importance of place in influencing individuals tastes and preferences, Ashworth and Tunbridge superimpose a geographical element to their analysis. This also ensures that all users of the urban system are integrated into the model.

Two broad types of users are identified: the intentional users and the incidental users. The intentional users are those users of tourism resources and facilities who are motivated by the character of the city while incidental users are those who see the character of the city as irrelevant to their use. Ashworth and Tunbridge (1990: 119-120) identified four specific types of user:

**Tourists**: intentional users from outside the city region, who may be holiday-makers staying in the city or outside it using the city for excursions.

**Recreating residents**: intentional users from inside the city-region, making use of the city’s recreational and entertainment facilities or merely enjoying its historic character while engaging in other activities.

**Non-recreating visitors**: incidental users from outside the city-region, which would include most business and congress visitors and those on family visits.
Non-recreating residents. Incidental users from inside the city-region, the most numerous group being ordinary residents going about their ordinary affairs.

This model has both its strengths and weaknesses. Its strength can be found in its flexibility; it can be “refined for other urban destinations since [the model] recognizes the significance of attitudes and the use made of the city and its services rather than the geographical origin of users as a fundamental starting point in the segmentation” (Page, 1995: 51). In practice, however, the model as an analytical tool has its difficulties because users tend to classify themselves according to the specific purposes for visiting a destination. Although users of a museum would fall into category one and two (attitude is likely to be the determining factor for the visit) users would probably continue to use descriptive labels such as conventioneers, shoppers, business visitors etc. Also, those asking the questions have mistakenly adopted the motivational approach when designing visitor surveys and questionnaires. Industry standards are difficult to change. Nevertheless, the framework remains available to those interested in defining and measuring the acceptable limits of urban environment consumption (often expressed as demand) and its tourism function.

Finally, there is one other urban tourist typology study of note. Its proponent’s voice can be added to the voices of those researchers calling for an urban tourist typology based on the activities of the user in the city. Van der Borg (1992: 123) argues that two types of visitors predominate in cities: the indirect and false excursionists. The indirect excursionist visits the city within 24 hours from a holiday destination other than the destination of the excursion. The false excursionists, even if they have previously intentionally chosen the city as a holiday destination, look for accommodation elsewhere. This occurs either because hotel capacity has been reached and cannot increase or the price level of accommodation has reached a level that repels additional tourists. At that point the inner city tourism capacity has been reached. From their peripheral location urban tourists will pay daily visits to the city. In other words, false excursionists could be thought of as pseudo suburbanites. Since the indirect as well as the false excursionists visit the city from a location other than the city itself, tourism will disperse across the region possibly
hastening the forces of urban sprawl. Suburban communities in the region, which promote unimpeded tourism development, generate false excursionism and end up depending completely on the inner city’s attractions and bundle of tourism goods and services. This is to the benefit of suburban communities because they can profit from increased property tax revenue collected from hotels and not have to worry about providing expensive infrastructure or amenities.

According to Van der Borg (1992), with the appearance of excursionism in a city, almost automatically the risk of the number of visitors surpassing the cultural or physical limits to tourism increases exponentially. This pressure feeds a process known as “crowding-out” which tends to expel the less lucrative urban functions and replaces them with tourism activities. The process of crowding out is not unfamiliar to Vancouver. Independent, locally owned businesses have and continue to be crowded out of Robson Street in downtown Vancouver, replaced by transnational corporations (TNCs). As visitor volume to Vancouver increased and with the rise of shopping as a leisure activity, local business owners situated on Robson Street, although profiting from visitor dollars, were finding it difficult to keep pace with rising rents. Retail TNCs such as The Gap and Banana Republic which cater to the tastes and preferences of the visitor market quickly swooped onto the street. Currently, fifty per cent of the business affiliated with the Robson Street Business Improvement Association are TNCs. “In the worst of circumstances, foreign control will lead to loss of ability on the part of locals to define their own culture” (McNulty & Wafer 1990: 295). Not only are TNCs a threat to the cultural dimension of the city, but their reliance on imports and duty to shareholders to make a profit does little for the urban economy. Profits are taken out of the community and local manufactures have few retail outlets to sell their wares. In short, this is an example of an urban region full of excursionists operating at an unsustainable level.

2.5 Urban Tourism and City Planning

Most city planning departments do not plan for tourism (Dredge & Moore, 1992; Haywood, 1992; Blank, 1994; Page, 1995). Yet effective local strategies are required to protect the integrity
of the urban environment and its sense of place. According to Dredge & Moore (1992), urban tourism is not a core element in the planning process, despite its overwhelming ability to transform the urban environment. For Greniers et al., “urban planners have an important role to play in the achievement of tourism goals and the management and resolution of tourism problems” (1993: 10). Haywood (1992: 14) accuses city planners of consistently failing to recognize the urban tourist as a user of city attractions/amenities:

Policies, as set by departments of recreation and parks, often neglect the existence of visitors as users of facilities or services...In general the diffusion of tourism planning responsibilities across public/private sectors tends to hinder careful formulation of long-range [city] plans. This piecemeal approach can hinder coordinated activity among city departments, and between developers and city authorities.

Current urban planning policies for tourism are a combination of economic, social, and environmental considerations implemented by a wide variety of organizations resulting in planning for aspects of tourism rather than tourism planning as a separate activity in its own right. This does not imply that cities are not actively involved in urban tourism as Law (1993: 143) notes:

The principal actors within the organization of tourism in cities may be drawn from either the public or private sectors. In addition to the local authority, the public sector may also include regional or national governments, development corporations, national and regional tourist boards, national museums, and other semi-autonomous public organizations. The private sector includes the prime attractions, hotel, and catering firms, and retailers and travel organizations.

Having presented the diverse array of urban tourism stakeholders, Law argues, it becomes necessary that the local authority seize control over planning and coordinating tourism activity in the city:

The local authority which is responsible for the city is the key actor in the local tourist industry. Its aim is to secure the benefits of tourism for the community, and it does this through its ability to control, coordinate and lead policy making (ibid.: 144).

This is no easy task for city planners, as discussed earlier, collecting information on tourism activity in the city is a complex task, presenting distinct challenges for urban planners as it:
Typically presents special problems, such as competing demands for
development of certain prime sites for hotels, offices, retail or residential uses,
traffic congestion in central areas, which may be exacerbated by tourism
development, and over-use of primary tourist attractions and perhaps their

Tourism planning fulfills an important function in urban areas (see Table 2.2). Instead of shying
away from planning for urban tourism and putting it in the “too hard basket”, Inskeep (1991: 237) urges urban planners to embrace the challenge because:

Urban tourism, in addition to its basic economic benefits of generating income and
employment, can be an important technique for helping support urban facilities
and services such as theaters and museums, helping to justify and paying for
historic preservation and infrastructure improvements and in some cases, can be a
vital force for inner-city redevelopment and revitalization.

As discussed earlier, from a sustainable urban tourism perspective the primary attraction of an
urban destination is its sense of place which is comprised of a city’s built, natural and cultural
environments. The vibrancy of each urban environment is measured in terms of physical, natural
and cultural capital. When each environment in the city is operating at a sustainable level, the
social capital (level of hospitality) in a given urban destination is high. It follows that if a city
wishes to maintain a high level of social capital, it must show its concern through planning to
preserve and enhance the city’s sense of place since it is the singular element which differentiates
one urban destination from another. Municipal governments have the power through bylaw,
regulation, and policy to maintain the significance of place in the urban environment. For this
reason, urban tourism needs to be planned at the local level. Once the need for urban tourism
planning is recognized, the next challenge for urban managers is adopting an appropriate
approach.

2.6 Summary
Planning for urban tourism (once a useful conceptual and methodological framework is in place)
no longer belongs in the “too hard basket”. With increasing recognition of the value of multi-
stakeholder community input and with holistic planning on all fronts becoming mainstream, there
is a necessity to include tourism in the forefront of the municipal planning agenda.
Given that tourism development has the power to transform the shape, feel and function of an urban environment, it is critical for local governments to begin integrating urban tourism into city planning. Adopting an organizational framework best suited to implementing sustainable urban tourism policy remains the primary challenge for cities wishing to get beyond promotional policy.
CHAPTER 3 - ESCAPE TO LOTUS LAND

3.1 Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to examine the importance of tourism in the urban economy, present a profile of the urban tourism market, and provide a summary of various elements of Vancouver's tourist product. After which, the chapter will be primarily preoccupied with policy matters: identifying current tourism policy in the Central Area Plan, and both the public and private players involved in developing urban tourism policy. Recognizing that visitor activities do not cease at city limits and that the successful management of visitor facilities and services needs to be broadly based and rooted in a wide range of policies (Human 1994: 221), planning initiatives at the regional level relative to tourism will be considered.

Vancouver, the largest city in British Columbia, rests comfortably sandwiched in-between the Coastal Mountains and the Georgia Strait. Downtown Vancouver (see Figure 1-2) contains most of the Greater Vancouver's visitor attractions and facilities including a great majority of visitor accommodations, several convention centres, sporting stadia, entertainment venues, and prime recreational spaces including the over one thousand acre Stanley Park. Also, the 1986 World Exposition was held in this area. Expo 86 attracted over 22 million visits giving the city an international presence and launching it into a new era as a premier urban tourism destination.

3.2 Profile of urban region

The City of Vancouver is part of the Greater Vancouver Regional District (GVRD) which occupies 2,930 square kilometers of coastal and river valley land. Of that, Vancouver covers 113 square kilometers of land at the mouth of the Fraser River. Twenty autonomous municipalities make-up the GVRD. These twenty municipalities are home to over 1.8 million inhabitants. The 1996 Census population data, released on April 15, 1997 by Statistics Canada, indicates that the Greater Vancouver Regional District (Vancouver Census Metropolitan Area) grew by 230,000 people (or 14.3%), from 1,603,590 on June 1, 1991 to 1,831,665 on May 14, 1996 (Greater
Vancouver Regional District). Table 3-1 Census Population by Municipality illustrates that during the census period 1991 to 1996, all municipalities in the region experienced growth. Vancouver’s population increased by approximately 42,000 people reaching a population of 514,008, an increase of 8.9%. Over this period, there has been a significant process of suburbanization. For example, Port Coquitlam, a typical suburban city, led the region with a growth rate of 26.9%, gaining almost 10,000 people during that period. Port Coquitlam was followed by Surrey, with a growth rate of 24.2%.

Table 3-1 Census Population by Municipality

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<td>84,021</td>
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<td>1,927</td>
<td>13.4%</td>
<td>896</td>
<td>5.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indian Reserves</td>
<td>4,324</td>
<td>5,222</td>
<td>5,526</td>
<td>988</td>
<td>20.8%</td>
<td>604</td>
<td>11.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vancouver CMA</td>
<td>1,380,729</td>
<td>1,602,590</td>
<td>1,831,665</td>
<td>221,861</td>
<td>16.1%</td>
<td>229,075</td>
<td>14.3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Statistics Canada 1996

Suburban growth is not a new phenomena in the region since, “at about the time that Vancouver turned fifty, in the mid 1930’s, it began to spread outwards into the Fraser Valley” (Kluckner 1991: 129). As the competition for space in Vancouver intensifies, land values and housing costs continue to rise. Many people move to suburban communities not as a lifestyle choice but as an
economic survival mechanism. In 1986, 31% of the metropolitan population lived in the City of Vancouver, by 1996 that number had dipped 3%. If this trend continues, in five years time only 1 in 4 regional inhabitants will live in the City of Vancouver.

3.2.1 Economy

According to the Downtown Vancouver Business Improvement Association (DVBIA) tourism has evolved into one of the most important industries in the region:

Ongoing research of Greater Vancouver Regional District (GVRD) residents shows tourism consistently rated as the most important contributor to the Greater Vancouver economy, and figures from the Tourism Economic Assessment Model show tourism supporting more than 64,000 jobs and contributing more than $730 million in taxes to all levels of government (DVBIA 1997).

This rosy economic-industry characterization of tourism may be accurate; however, the tourism industry has not always been significant in the region. In fact, Vancouver’s regional economy has been in a major period of transition from being closely associated with the province’s resource economy to its markets being reoriented towards the Asia-Pacific. Hutton (1996) explains that the linkages between Vancouver and the hinterland of B.C are not as important to the regional economy as in the past. Hutton puts forward four explanations for the reduced role of the resource sector in Vancouver’s economy:

- international corporate restructuring has shifted a significant amount of executive control outside B.C;
- resource processing firms have either shut down, downsized or moved outside the region;
- new high-tech industries have overshadowed the resource sector giving rise to a new class of service professionals; and
- other cities in the B.C. interior have extended their influence in the resource sector.

The resource sector continues to be a source of employment in the region; however as Table 3-2 Employment Change for Vancouver Census Metropolitan Area by Major Industrial Groups:
1989-1994 indicates, not as many people are employed in resource related industries as in the past. Tourism related businesses are clustered under the services heading along with other service businesses that cater to residents. As expressed in Chapter Two, one of the difficulties in accurately measuring employment generated by tourism is that no well-defined industrial heading for tourism exists.

Table 3-2 Employment Change for Vancouver Census Metropolitan Area by Major Industrial Groups: 1989-1994

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Manufacturing</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construction</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>39.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T.C.U**</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>-2</td>
<td>-2.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trade</td>
<td>167</td>
<td>162</td>
<td>157</td>
<td>177</td>
<td>172</td>
<td>151</td>
<td>-16</td>
<td>-9.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FIRE***</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>13.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Services</td>
<td>301</td>
<td>314</td>
<td>328</td>
<td>325</td>
<td>342</td>
<td>368</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>22.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Administration</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>12.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other primary/agriculture</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All industries</td>
<td>806</td>
<td>825</td>
<td>840</td>
<td>861</td>
<td>866</td>
<td>900</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>11.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: *Employment in 000s
**T.C.U. refers to Transportation, Communications, and Utilities
*** Incorporates finance, insurance and real estate

Source: Modified from Greater Vancouver Regional District 1995

The economy in the City of Vancouver, particularly downtown, is also going through profound changes. As mentioned earlier, much of the population growth in the region is occurring in suburban communities. This decentralization of population is only one element of a larger process. Both the public and private sectors have positioned themselves in suburbia to respond to the needs of suburbanites who have proven themselves to be major consumers. Hutton describes the new regional reality:

Suburban development has included the proliferation of retail, personal and business services, situated within new, nodal suburban sub-centres such as shopping malls, business parks, and regional town centres, significantly reducing the dependence of populations on the fast-growing metropolitan periphery of Vancouver (Hutton, 1996: 63).

2 Hutton characterizes the Asian-Pacific region as those nation in north-east, south, and south-east Asia.
While decentralization may have altered the role and function of the central city, new external economic influences are ensuring that Vancouver's glitter will not be dulled. Hutton argues that "metropolitan Vancouver’s contemporary transformation includes a profound and comprehensive process of economic and socio-cultural reorientation, within which Vancouver is assuming more important roles among the markets and urban societies of the Asia-Pacific and the Pacific Basin as a whole" (1996: 78). These links are being developed primarily by people who have immigrated to Vancouver from the Asia-Pacific region. Most of the industrial sectors that have benefited from the new economy such as financial and investment firms, communications, trade and tourism are located in downtown Vancouver. Table 3-3 Principle Economic Roles and Function of Downtown Vancouver outlines the variety of important functions that downtown Vancouver continues to provide in the new economy as identified by the GVRD.

Table 3-3 Principle Economic Roles and Function of Downtown Vancouver

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Downtown Vancouver plays a variety of specialized roles and functions at the regional, provincial, national and international levels. It:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• is British Columbia's banking and financial centre incorporating the Vancouver Stock exchange, major representative offices of the Canadian chartered banks, about 30 foreign banks, and other registered bank centres;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• performs a head office and business service function for the province's resource sector;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• encompasses much of the Port of Vancouver infrastructure, services, and trade, including bulk cargo exports, a substantial and expanding container traffic, and an important cruise ship industry;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• is emerging as the key Canadian business interface with the burgeoning Asian Pacific market, with a complex of financial institutions, trading companies, representative offices, consulting firms, and government agencies, catering to Canada-Pacific Rim trade;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• is BC's centre for specialized and chronic health care;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• contains considerable creative, artistic, and cultural industries and activities;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• is a major centre for higher education including an SFU campus and many important colleges and technical schools such as BCIT.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Besides being a major employment and residential centre, downtown Vancouver has increasingly been the chosen location for an ever expanding service sector that tends to cater more to the
tastes and preferences of visitors than surrounding residents. Hutton (1996: 64) describes the evolving tourism industry as follows:

Vancouver's downtown includes not only five-star hotels which serve tourists and business travelers, but also specialty shopping precincts, a major cruise ship terminal, and other urban amenities which cater in large part to visitors. As a consequence, it can be persuasively argued that the metropolitan core serves not so much an undifferentiated regional market as a whole, but instead is a more exclusive preserve of [Vancouver's] new "service elite" and a large and rapidly growing volume of foreign visitors.

Table 3-4 Employment by Industry Sector in Vancouver, 1994 as a % of the Total Metropolitan Employment Base shows the growing importance of the tourism industry to Vancouver's economy. Commercial services employed almost one third of the total regional employment

Moreover, the amount of tourism related businesses have jumped from 10,000 in 1991 to 15,700 in 1996 employing approximately 71,000 people in Vancouver (Daniels, 1997: D1). With an annual growth rate of over 9%, tourism businesses are generating more jobs than any other industrial sector in Vancouver.

Table 3-4 Employment by Industry Sector in Vancouver, 1994 as a % of the Total Metropolitan Employment Base

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Industry Sector</th>
<th>% of Total Metropolitan Employment Base</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Primary</td>
<td>1.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manufacturing</td>
<td>7.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construction</td>
<td>3.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T.C.U*</td>
<td>7.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trade Wholesale</td>
<td>4.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trade Retail</td>
<td>11.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FIRE**</td>
<td>11.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Services: Non Commercial</td>
<td>17.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Services: Commercial</td>
<td>29.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Sector</td>
<td>6.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: *T.C.U. refers to Transportation, Communications, and Utilities
** Incorporates finance, insurance and real estate


While the commercial service indicator includes some business not commonly associated with visitor demand such as diapers and funeral services it does capture restaurants, accommodation, recreational and sporting business that rely heavily on visitor dollar for their viability.
Besides commercial services, a significant amount of the retail trade in Vancouver is also dependant on tourist revenue for their viability\(^4\). For example, in both the historic districts of Gastown and Chinatown souvenir shops selling almost exclusively tourist goods are all too abundant. Other businesses on major sections of downtown retail shopping streets such as Robson and Alberni are reporting annual visitor sales of anywhere between 30-50\%\(^5\). Given the rosy picture portrayed by the economic indicators, urban tourism is a crucial element of Vancouver's economy.

### 3.3 Demand: Visitor Numbers

Most of the tourism demand data available covers the Greater Vancouver Regional District; however, some statistics have been recorded for the City of Vancouver. The convention and visitor bureau, Tourism Vancouver, compiles much of the visitor data available for the region. Tourism Vancouver is an industry interest group that works "to promote Greater Vancouver in targeted markets worldwide..." (Tourism Vancouver 1995: 1). What is important to note when examining visitor volumes for the Greater Vancouver region is that most visitors end up making at least one trip to the City of Vancouver. The results on a survey conducted by Tourism Vancouver (1996b) on the profile of visitors visiting the TouristInfo Centre found that approximately 70\% of those surveyed were looking for information on services and amenities located in the City of Vancouver. Moreover, while some of the 601 respondents may have been staying in suburban municipalities, 100\% of those surveyed had taken at least one trip to downtown Vancouver since the surveys were handed out over the counter from the main TouristInfo Centre located at the Waterfront Centre in downtown Vancouver.

Between 1991 and 1996 the volume of overnight visitors to Greater Vancouver rose from about 6 million to 7.6 million a year (see Figure 3-1). "1996 will be the fifth consecutive year of growth

---

\(^4\) Estimated tourism portion of retail trade for British Columbia is 8.3\% (Ministry for Tourism and Ministry Responsible for Culture 1993: 7). However, Vancouver is the destination of 25\% of provincial visitors which indicates that the city's tourism portion of retail trade is significantly higher.

\(^5\) These figures were obtained in a telephone interview with a representative from the Robson Street Business Improvement District which represents business on three blocks, Burrard to Jervis.
and record visitor volumes for tourism in Greater Vancouver" (Tourism Vancouver 1996: 4). The amount of overnight visitors to the region has been increasing steadily at a yearly rate of 4.7% between 1991 and 1996.

**Figure 3-1 Total Number of Overnight Visitors to Greater Vancouver: 1991 to 1996**

![Graph showing total number of overnight visitors to Greater Vancouver from 1991 to 1996.](image)

*Source: Modified from Tourism Vancouver 1995a, 1996a*

When viewed from a market share perspective, a clear divergence between the growth patterns generated by Canadian, U.S., and international visitors has begun to emerge. Figure 3-2 illustrates the phenomenal growth in visitor volume from Europe and the Asia Pacific between 1991 to 1996 while comparatively Canadian and US markets grew moderately. This is not to underestimate or undervalue the significance of the Canadian and American market segment to the tourist industry in Vancouver. Visitors from other areas in British Columbia and other provinces still comprise the majority of visitors to Greater Vancouver. The greatest contribution to total growth of visitor volume from European countries since 1991 was Germany (73%) followed by the United Kingdom (58%), Italy (59%), and France (42%). However, the visitor volume growth rate form some of the Asia Pacific countries has skyrocketed led by South Korea (613%), followed by Taiwan (363%), Hong Kong (92%), Australia (80%), Japan (79%), and New Zealand (42%).
From a big picture perspective, there were increases in overseas visitors to a 16% market share in 1996. This represents a 4% increase in market share over six years earlier (see Figure 3-3). While the United States remains the largest international market, overseas markets have demonstrated tremendous strength. A low Canadian dollar is largely credited for helping maintain the strong American tourist market in Vancouver.

A market segmentation approach focused on visitor origins has historically been used to better understand visitor data by those researchers analyzing the Vancouver visitor market. In turn, this has allowed city promoters to develop different marketing strategies aimed at increasing visitor
volume based on point of origins. In other words, Vancouver is sold differently to Koreans, Australians, Americans and Europeans. We need to keep in mind that point of origin data is useful for determining where people are coming from but is less relevant for urban planners.

From a planning perspective, it is more useful to understand how visitors are using the city rather than the traditional corporate market analysis of where they are coming from. Using a market segmentation analysis based on geographical behavior, such as the one developed by Ashworth and Tunbridige (1990) as discussed in Chapter Two, would enable city planners to shape an urban product to meet the needs of specific users. In turn, city policy-makers could then ensure that services and facilities development for one specific user does not negatively impact other users of the city. Later in this chapter, I will return to a discussion on how current visitor demand research practice has influenced city planning in Vancouver.

The traditional corporate analysis is temporal; it has an expiry date. As the number of visitors from a market area declines, promoters move quickly to attract visitors from other areas of the globe. Meanwhile, tourism facilities and services have been built in the urban environment that caters to the tastes and preferences of those visitors. Once the market changes, the demand for those facilities and service declines and many lose their viability. For example, a section of Alberni Street was reimagined to attract Japanese visitor dollars. Now that the Japanese market is in decline, businesses on Alberni are closing. If this trend continues, there will be a need to reimage the street again to avoid the area becoming vacant.

3.4 Supply: Tourist Product

[W]hile tourism and recreational activities are integrated within the physical, social and economic context of the city, no analytical framework exists to determine the functional or behavioral interactions in these activities. [Researchers] argue that more research is needed to assess the extent to which the clustering of tourism and recreational activities can occur in cities without leading to incompatible and conflicting uses from such facilities. (Page 1995: 68)
Profiling the attractions provides a limited viewpoint of their significance. They do not just happen as ideas or lines in tourist brochures, they take up physical space on the street. People live next to them, people use them and walk by them, and people gaze upon their character; defining their environment with the personality of such attractions. The sense of place as defined by a city’s built, natural and cultural environment (including but not limited to ‘attractions’) is the uniqueness that really ‘attracts’ tourists and residents alike to the city.

Vancouver has a strong sense of place largely due to its geographic setting. People have written volumes of literature on Vancouver’s sense of place, often dismissing entirely the idea that Vancouver is a city of over 550,000 people. As one advertisement defines it, Vancouver is: “Coast and mountains; gateway to the spectacular. From urban excitement to peaceful tranquility, it’s yours to discover! Dive, fish, golf, hike, raft, ski, or relax on a boat cruise or motor coach tour.” (Tourism British Columbia 1997: A7 ) This advertisement shows two people in a canoe with a scenic postcard mountain scene behind them. There is not one house, road, or other person in sight.

Whereas tourist pamphlets define Vancouver by what people can do outside the city when they finally arrive, the CityPlan is more accommodating to those who have already arrived. CityPlan (1995a) is a planning document whose purpose is to guide local government decisions on development, services and budgets. This plan was developed using a participatory process. The plan defines a future vision for Vancouver as:

a city of neighbourhoods; a city where there is a sense of community of all ages and cultures; a city with a healthy economy and environment; and a city where people have a say in the decisions that affect their neighbourhoods and their lives.

In regard to the downtown, the plan refers indirectly to tourism when it states:

Vancouver residents want a downtown that is a welcoming city centre and a place to work, live, and visit. [emphasis added by author]
This is a significant statement as it recognizes a fundamental principle: visitors need to feel welcome at a destination if they are to enjoy their holiday. Urban markets that fail to provide this genuine hospitality risk losing their market share to other destinations thereby calling into question the sustainability of the urban tourism function. For Hinch (1996: 99), the term social capital represents a way in which to measure the level of hospitality present in a community at any given time:

Hospitality represents the social capital associated with a destination, while it is relatively intangible, it plays a significant role in the sustainability of urban tourism. Urban tourism that draws on the social capital rather than on its interest is operating in an unsustainable fashion. The existence and extent of the social capital reflects the level of support that the community and its individual members have for tourism. Urban tourism is an activity of coexistent benefits and costs. As long as the perceived net benefits are positive, equal to, or greater than the expected costs and are considered to be equitably distributed, community support for tourism is likely to be expressed through welcoming behaviour towards visitors.

A strong community (bolstered by a collective awareness of the positive and negative impact of tourism) increases the likelihood of sustaining a high level of social capital required to maintain a healthy tourism industry. Equally, an equitable distribution of the benefits of tourism, with planning that mitigates the costs, can play a part in sustaining a strong community.

3.4.1 Attractions

The aim of this section is to analyze Vancouver’s urban tourism product using the framework developed by Hinch (1996) as a means of organizing a selection of downtown attractions. This method divides the urban setting into three distinct parts: the built, natural, and cultural environments. Together, these elements shape a city’s sense of place. Specific Central Area planning policy that influences the development of attractions will be discussed. This will be followed by an overview of the adverse impacts associated with tourism activity generated by attractions, which in the aggregate, demonstrate a need for urban tourism planning policy for the Central Area.
3.4.1.1 Built Environment

The built environment is one of the most tangible manifestations of a city's attraction as a tourism destination. Unique architecture, historic buildings and districts, sports and cultural centres, shopping areas, restaurants and entertainment, and even industrial and residential areas all combine to create what can potentially be a very appealing built setting in a destination (Inskeep, 1991). All these elements play an important role in molding the sense of place experienced by all within a city. Table 3-5 is a snapshot of built Vancouver's built elements and their associated activity or impact.

Table 3-5 Cursory Inventory of Vancouver’s built environment using Hinch’s model

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sub-Element</th>
<th>Attractions</th>
<th>Impact/activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Morphological characteristics</td>
<td>Gastown</td>
<td>Lack of services for residents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Chinatown</td>
<td>Heritage preservation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Victory Square</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>West End</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Yaletown</td>
<td>Housing mix</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sport Centres</td>
<td>GM Place</td>
<td>Congestion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>BC Place</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Viability of professional franchises</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Museums</td>
<td>Vancouver Art Gallery</td>
<td>Tour bus congestion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Vancouver Maritime Museum</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Vancouver Planetarium</td>
<td>Conflict of use of beach and surrounding areas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Science World</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Vancouver Aquarium</td>
<td>Exhibitions geared for tourists versus local interest (commodified exhibitions)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shopping Areas</td>
<td>Robson Street</td>
<td>Crowding out of local merchants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Denman Street</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Granville Street</td>
<td>Granville Mall Redevelopment proposal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Denman Street</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Davie Street</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Convention Facilities</td>
<td>Canada Place</td>
<td>Crowding out of low income housing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Robson Square</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Proposed “Portside”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3.4.1.1.1 Granville Mall Redevelopment Proposal

Granville Mall is a section of Granville Street in downtown Vancouver (see Figure 3-4). It is primarily an at-grade shopping street and only buses, emergency vehicles, taxis and delivery trucks are permitted on to travel on the street. As the primary function of Granville Mall is to service transit needs, it is considered a public amenity. The Vancouver Downtown Business Improvement Association, (DVBA) and the Downtown Vancouver Association (DVA), two groups who represent corporate interests, "sponsored a study (prepared by Hotson-Bakker Architects) presenting options for reopening the Granville Mall to automobile and other traffic as a strategy for revitalizing the street" (City of Vancouver 1998: 6). Many tourism-related businesses are affiliated both downtown organizations.

Figure 3-4 Granville Mall

From the perceptive of transit planners, the proposed introduction of car traffic to Granville Bus Mall may have the effect of shattering the structure and flow of the transit system. Over 50,000 people who take 1700 buses a day will be negatively impacted by way of bus schedule delays and complicated transit transfers.
The corporate interest proposal is to turn Granville mall into a boutique type-shopping street, making it more attractive to visitors. Local residents, for the most part lower income, couldn't afford the boutique retail products and services. The DVBIA and DVA argue that land values would increase if the street is restructured and reimaged making development of private lots along the street more lucrative. Vocal small independent businesses, transportation advocates and residents have put up an effective campaign to publicize the issue, which is still ongoing. The Granville Mall issue is a good example of the concept of crowding out in practice.

3.4.1.1.2 Proposed Waterfront Convention Centre

Although plans for the proposed “Portside” convention centre was cancelled in 1999 by the Government of British Columbia, the planning implications remain relevant to this study. The proposed convention centre would have used land on the waterfront, limiting the opportunity of eastside residents to define the use of their own neighbourhood. The interior and exterior of this development was designed to suit the needs and preferences of short-term visitors: conventioneers. The convention centre (called “Portside”) would have likely consisted of convention facilities (approximately 52,000 m² or 560,000 sq. ft. gross floor area), a fifteen hundred room Marriott Hotel complemented by restaurants, boutique retail and other uses, a new Seabus terminal, and a third cruise ship berth. The proposal also included 3.00 hectares (7.41 acres) of public open space. Figure 3-5 shows the proximity of the Portside to downtown neighbourhoods such as Gastown and the Downtown Eastside.
This urban tourism development would have taken up a significant portion of available waterfront land, to be primarily developed according to "compatibility and compliance" with existing Central Area planning policy. Upon completion, the Portside would have increased land prices significantly throughout the waterfront neighbourhood and adjacent low income neighbourhoods. High land values limit a mix of accommodation options and low income housing for residents, and crowd out services that cater to the needs of locals. As shown in Table 3-6, there are a significant number of SRO units located within a 15 minute walking distance of the proposed facilities.

**Table 3-6 Number of SRO Units Located within a 15 Minute Walk of the Portside**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Walk distance from Portside</th>
<th>Number of Buildings</th>
<th>Units</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Within 5 minutes</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>820</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within 10 minutes</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>1,409</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within 15 minutes</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>3,247</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: City of Vancouver 1998*

In the City of Vancouver report *New Trade and Convention Facilities Review Program Stage Two: Evaluation 'Site and Community Context' Summary* (1998), the Evaluation
Committee found six threats to the stock of downtown low-income housing by proposed convention facilities:

1. Conversion to conventioneer hotels
2. Conversion to housing for service sector workers
3. Conversion to hostels for tourist use
4. Redevelopment for higher return housing or commercial uses
5. Disinvestment of housing in favour of ground-level commercial uses
6. Increases in land value could make social housing not viable if land prices exceed that which could be afforded by social housing funding programs

The Portside would have been of such a scale that the building and the activity it would have generated risked taking over the adjacent neighbourhood, potentially leaving the beginnings of a support infrastructure for its low income residents in tatters.

3.4.1.2 Natural Elements

An assortment of natural areas within a city represent a central part of its allure as a tourist destination and is highly valued as tourist attractions. The climate is also part of the natural environment, for instance, Vancouver’s lack of sun in winter is a deterrent compared to Hawaii, but its lack of consistent sub-zero temperatures is an attraction compared to Edmonton. Table 3-7 aims to bring out some of the issues that arise from activity generated by tourism and the siting of tourist attractions

Table 3-7 Cursory Inventory of Vancouver’s Natural Attractions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Park/Beach</th>
<th>Function</th>
<th>Issue</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kits point</td>
<td>Museum and recreation</td>
<td>Tour bus crowding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stanley park</td>
<td>Nature, Recreation and tourist destination</td>
<td>Protection of natural habitat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Transportation corridor</td>
<td>Insufficient transportation on sunny days in summer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Bicycle access clogged by slow moving groups of tourists</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seawall</td>
<td>Recreation, scenic appreciation</td>
<td>Atmosphere of quiet natural appreciation so prized by many residents completely destroyed by the smell of popcorn (that is, by tourist consumption of the area in a</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3.4.1.2.1 Commodification of Stanley Park

Policy directions for the management of green space is unaccounted for in the Central Area Plan, which is the plan that would be most likely to set policy for tourism if such policy were in effect. However, a goal statement does speak to this area:

Ensure a central area reflecting nature with a strong connection to the magnificent natural setting; maintain and improve environmental quality

(City of Vancouver, 1991: 3)

The reason stated for this lack of planning is that this policy area is to be addressed in a "public realm" plan. Planning for the "public realm" is delegated to the Vancouver Parks and Recreations Board (Parks Board), with no obvious coordination among goals or plans with the Central Area Plan. The Parks Board is responsible for setting policies and procedures pertaining to Vancouver's Park and Recreation system. This is a unique model in Canada for managing parks as the policy-makers, Commissioners, are elected. Also, it generally operates as its own entity, separate from that of the larger city government.

The mission and goals of the Parks Board speak to meeting Vancouver residents' needs for space in the city to recreate and relax in. Still, one of the Boards "commitments" is to "recognize the contribution of visitors to the City's economy", (Vancouver Parks and Recreation Board, 1998: http://www.city.vancouver.bc.ca/parks/1.htm). In telephone interviews with the Parks Board, planners readily admit that they know little or nothing about tourist activity in the park system. This has not stopped the Parks Board from attempting to accelerate the placement of concessionaires in Stanley Park (the largest park in the system and closest to downtown) as a means of generating revenues. Pay parking for the "public good" is another revenue generating tactic implemented by the Parks Board. The numerous signs advertising parking facilities reduces the quality of the park experience. If these strategies are aimed at capturing a percent of the
economic contribution visitors and excursionists make to the City, then the impact of such a strategy is the commodification of Stanley Park.

**Figure 3-6 Stanley Park**

Thus, resident's interests are abrogated to those of tourists. The Parks Board does not recognize the totality of residents needs and interests but rather has chosen to bolster revenues by collecting fees from tourist using Vancouver parks. Such concessions in effect commodify natural space which is intended to serve the recreation and relaxation needs of residents. Moreover, the Parks Board's practices are in direct conflict with the Central Area Plan (as stated in the plan above) which envisions downtown as being connected to a "magnificent natural setting". This setting is in really danger of losing its magnificence through commodification.

3.4.1.3 Cultural Environment

The third dimension of the city to be considered is the cultural environment. Visitors are often attracted to urban areas by the cultural patterns, traditions, and lifestyles associated with a place (Inskeep, 1991). Inskeep warns that "care must be taken in the presentation of cultural patterns
and the interface between residents and tourist so that social problems are not generated (ibid., 83). The cultural dimension of a city may manifest itself in many ways but, from the perspective of tourism, one of its most tangible forms is through special events and festivals (Hall, 1992). The City of Vancouver has no comprehensive policy for accommodating large public events. No framework for event planning exists. Such a policy framework would help determine which events are welcome and those that are not. The Molson Indy is an example of an event which continues each year despite residents outspoken dissatisfaction it.

3.4.1.3.1 Molson Indy

Since 1990, the City of Vancouver has hosted the Molson Indy car race, which runs through downtown streets. City officials and destination managers have showcased the Indy as a great event to promote Vancouver, generate tourism revenue and create part-time jobs (Noel Hulsman 1997: 6). In spite of annual protests from city residents regarding the race noise, congestion, and pollution. Better Environmentally Sound Transportation (B.E.S.T), a local interest group for alternative transportation, has placed an information booth outside the Indy entrance gates to draw attention to the danger of speeding vehicles and issues related to glamorizing car culture (Figure 3-7). Vancouverites disdain for Indy was no more intense then when Molson Indy organizers were forced to relocate the track as per the terms of the Concord Pacific development agreement: "1997 would be Indy's final run around False Creek" (ibid., 5). Hastings Park was the site preferred by event organizers. Over 600 residents showed up to a public relations meeting at Pacific Coliseum with placards and anger words for event organizers. They were not interested in a car race going through their park, or their backyard. City official has no choice but to back the protesters. Indy withdrew the Hastings Park plan. Fearing the lose of a reported $19 million dollar in economic spin-offs, city officials quickly found another site close to the previous one, and without public consultation, approved a three year lease. All of the above protests underline the need to for the city to put together event policy that would help planners determine the appropriateness of this kind of event for Vancouver.
3.4.2 Accommodation

Since Expo 86 which showcased the city and people of Vancouver to the world, Greater Vancouver has evolved into a major tourist destination. Figure 5 illustrates the record demand measured by the annual percentage of occupancy which is stimulating current hotel development.

**Figure 3-8 Annual Percentage of Occupancy**

![Bar Chart showing annual percentage of occupancy from 1992 to 1996.]

**Source:** Modified from Pannel Kerr Forester 1993, 1995, 1996

Vancouver has blossomed into an attractive destination for urban tourists and the development community has taken notice. The City of Vancouver Planning Department has been busy
evaluating a flurry of hotel development projects and proposals aimed at absorbing the record setting demand.

Figure 3-9 Average Room Rates for Downtown Vancouver

![Average Room Rates for Downtown Vancouver](image)

Source: Pannell Kerr Forster 1996; Colliers International Hotel Realty 1997

According to Colliers International Hotel Realty (1997), the 1996 value-per-room rate returned a bullish 17%, while occupancy rates continued to climb topping the 77% mark. Visitors are paying more for accommodations in Downtown Vancouver in 1996: average room rates rose almost 12% from $127 to $141 as illustrated in Figure 6. These high investment returns have propelled developers to seek building permits for an additional 4000 rooms with build out scheduled by 2001 (Figure 3-9). This represents a potential supply increase of approximately 50% since 1995.

In the absence of city policy aimed at controlling the supply of accommodations in Vancouver, market forces are determining the amount of supply based on value-per-room percentages, occupancy rates and average room rates. Figure 3-10 shows that the supply of downtown hotel rooms is projected to increase at a rate greater than 8% well into the new millennium. This represents a slight decrease from the number of room added to the supply in 1995; nevertheless, the predicted increase in downtown hotel stock remains strong. Appendix C provides a detailed account of current and future hotel development in downtown Vancouver.
The adoption of tourism product policy would enable the city to accommodate a number of visitors close to its limit or carrying capacity (see Chapter 5). Without such public intervention, the visitor limits are defined by profit and loss.

### 3.5 Planning Implications of Hotel Development

Planning for urban tourism development in cities presents unique challenges such as competing demand for development of prime real estate for hotels, offices, retail or residential uses. In the case of Vancouver, most accommodations are being built within the CBD as encouraged by the City of Vancouver Central Area Plan (1991). The city’s housing policy for the Central Area is rooted in the vision of “An Alive Downtown” and “An Accessible Central Area” (ibid. 18). The housing policy objective is:

[to] increase the amount of housing and create new neighbourhoods for a range of households, to add people and activity and to reduce the need to commute from outside the central area. [emphasis added by the author]

As such, the city discourages residential development in the CBD preferring to promote hotel development as a means of maintaining activity and promoting vitality in the office dominated core. The plan sets out the following objectives specific to hotel development:
Delete or do not encourage housing as a permitted use in the defined CBD or Uptown office district. Encourage hotels. Retain hotel bonus in the defined CBD only, subject to urban design considerations.

These policies seem to conform to basic principles of urban tourism planning. Clustering hotels in a conveniently accessible area such as downtown with attractive, relatively safe surroundings, and near many primary and secondary elements of the urban tourism product is one such principle (Gunn 1994). To this end, the City of Vancouver has been successful in attracting hotel development to the core. The supply of large hotels with over 250 rooms will increase over the next five years by over 60%, nearly double that of smaller developments. Table 3-8 tracks the current and future rooms supply by hotel size in Downtown Vancouver.

Table 3-8 Current and Future Room Supply by Hotel Size in Downtown Vancouver

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Size</th>
<th>Properties</th>
<th>Rooms</th>
<th>% Change</th>
<th>Properties</th>
<th>Rooms</th>
<th>% Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>250+</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>64%</td>
<td>5745</td>
<td>9518</td>
<td>66%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>150-249</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>1914</td>
<td>2511</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>76-149</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>1314</td>
<td>1584</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-75</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>888</td>
<td>949</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Province of BC 1995; City of Vancouver 1996.

Given this apparent success, is planning for urban tourism needed in Vancouver due to the incredible growth of visitor accommodations? Gerald Hodge suggests that “the need for planning depends upon whether the growth and development give rise to problems for the community” (Hodge 1991: 7). One area the community has been affected by the growth of the tourism areas has been in the loss of scarce downtown low-income housing. Many SRO hotels have converted to hotels in recent years. In May 1997, activist and tenants of the Royal Hotel stage an unsuccessful protest against SRO conversions (see Figure 3-11). This is not the first time a tourism boom has forced people to relocate. In the case of the 1986 Vancouver Expo, 600 tenants were evicted including long-tem, low-income residents from hotels near the Expo site (Olds...
1988). This trend has continued at nearly the same rate. Since 1990, 631 SRO housing units have been converted to visitor accommodations.

Figure 3-11 Placard Protesting SRO Conversions

Community activists point out that eleven people died on the street shortly after that round of evictions, so this issue cannot be taken lightly by planners or others whose job it is to steward the welfare of the community (Vancouver Courier, 1999). It is important to remember that residents locating in the downtown core are often the members of the community with the least resources who avail themselves of the cheapest accommodation available, regardless of the quality. When they lose their homes the next step is often homelessness. Somehow, the lure of tourism blurs the moral aversion our society normally has to paying for corporate profit by offering up the lives of our most defenseless citizens.

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6 The City of Vancouver Housing Centre has kept track of the amount of SRO units lost since 1970. Most of the SRO units converted to budget hotels while the remainder converted to hostels. All of the SRO conversions occurred in downtown Vancouver.
Since the implementation of the Central Area Plan in 1991, most SRO conversions have occurred in downtown areas zoned for “choice of use” such as Granville South. This zone gives developers and landowners the flexibility to choose between developing housing, offices or hotels. While this is not the only reason cited for recent SRO conversions, given the fiscal returns offered by the accommodation industry, profit seekers are likely cashing in by evicting long-term, low-income residents in favor of increasing the supply of hotel rooms.\(^7\)

The recent growth of visitor accommodations gives rise to another planning issue as well. Potential Vancouver visitors not able or willing to pay the $141 per night rate for downtown accommodations are at risk of becoming false excursionists. As discussed in Chapter Two, false excursionists will look for affordable accommodation in outlying districts. From their suburban location, they will make long commutes to visit Vancouver contributing to pollution problems facing the region which work to decrease the quality of life in the city. Also, suburban communities that house false excursionists benefit by not having to supply visitors with attractions thereby avoiding costly public expenditures associated with attraction development. The suburbanite benefit is the urbanist cost. Besides the social costs just mentioned Vancouver residents' end up paying the full cost of tourism resources (parks, museums, and festivals) and associated support services (police, engineering services, and crowd control) without reaping the full benefits derived from residential tourism.

Another option open to visitors seeking an affordable vacation in Vancouver is to spend less time in the city during their holiday. Currently the average length of stay for a visitor to Vancouver is three nights, the lowest in the region. Most other visitors staying in other parts of the region book themselves in a room for close to five days.\(^8\) The less time a visitor stays in the city, the fewer downtown goods and services are consumed. This is important because the city does not

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\(^7\) The Carnegie Newsletter reported in the October 1, 1997 issue that the Hotel California evicted its residents over fears of a proposed hotel anti-conversion by-law. Adopted in San Francisco, the anti-conversion bylaw would likely include those buildings zoned residential hotels.

\(^8\) Tourism Vancouver conducted a study on the profile of overnight visitors to various municipalities in the GVRD. Both the exact dates the survey was conducted and number of people surveyed are not available.
benefit from a high rate of indirect excursionism. This kind of tourist visits the city for 24 hours from another holiday destination such as Whistler or a cruise ship. The impact of this visit must be managed without reaping the full economic benefits. The environmental and social costs to the city are significant as argued in Chapter Two.

3.6 Summary

Within the last three decades, few industries in Vancouver have experienced as high a growth curve as the tourism industry. With close to eight million visitors choosing the Greater Vancouver Regional District as their destination of choice per year, the tourism industry is the strongest economic performer in terms of employment, commercial services, and tax contributions. While the region has reaped great benefits economically from this growth, we are at a point where development aimed at cashing in on the ever-growing tourist trade is once again taking off. Without explicit planning policy in the Central Area Plan to mitigate the effect of such development, the cost of tourism risks impacting the health of communities. Without an awareness of tourism as noted above in the discussion of selected issues, the opportunity costs of tourism risk being seen as isolated issues, outside the control of communities. Once the full impact of tourism is perceived, dialogues and planning policy can be put in place to direct growth in a manner beneficial to all members of our communities. Growth, which benefits the health of communities, need not be seen as adverse to tourism but rather as achieving the long-term viability of neighbourhoods. Such viability has proven to be an attraction for urban tourism.
CHAPTER 4 - PROFILES OF THREE NORTHWESTERN CITIES

4.1 Introduction

Case studies of Portland, Seattle and San Francisco were conducted using written questionnaires (refer to Appendix for questionnaire), in-person interviews with city planners, and destination managers (refer to Appendix A for list of respondents) from each city, and analysis of their downtown land use planning documents. These three cities were chosen for this study because they have features that are similar to Vancouver. Moreover, all three cities are competing for the same visitor dollars.

The data was analysed and grouped according to five main issues that have been identified in Chapter Two and discussed in detail in Chapter Three vis-à-vis their impact on Vancouver. These issues may be seen as the opportunity costs of tourism in urban centres. Primarily, the case studies seek to explore how (and if) other cities have addressed or mitigated the impacts of tourism activity in the downtown area through specific municipal planning policies expressed in their respective planning documents.

Based on the literature review, the issues are:

1. Commodification of the built environment, including heritage sites and historic area footprints
2. The crowding out of merchants and services whose purpose is to serve the everyday needs of local residents
3. The accessibility of a housing mix for residents including low cost housing in the downtown core, and as well, the accessibility of a mix of accommodation options properly situated for tourists.
4. Tourist requirements placing undo stress onto the existing city infrastructure and services not designed to meet tourist requirements.
5. The commodification of local culture through festivals and special events that appropriate and dilute its distinctiveness for commercial gain, usurping the integrity of such culture.

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Each case study will begin with a cursory profile of the city, and an overview of its tourism product, followed by a discussion of the plan and the policy response. Much of the tourism product description below is based on field research conducted in the summer of 1997.

4.2 Seattle, Washington

Founded in 1869, the City of Seattle is located in the State of Washington on Puget Sound, 182 kilometers from the U.S.-Canadian border. Seattle is a commercial, cultural and advanced technology hub of the U.S. Pacific Northwest and a major port city for trans-Pacific and European trade. Surrounded by mountains and water, Seattle features picture-perfect views and abundant recreational opportunities year-round.

4.2.1 Seattle as a Tourist Destination

Tourism is Washington State's fourth-largest industry. In 1994, Seattle hosted over seven million overnight visitors. Seattle area hotels and convention facilities have gained a reputation as exciting venues for conferences and conventions. Major facilities include the Washington State Convention and Trade Center, Meydenbauer Center and Bell Harbor International Conference Center.

4.2.1.1 Tourism Product

4.2.1.1.1 Accommodations

There are 9,229 hotel rooms in downtown Seattle and approximately 23,754 hotel rooms in the Seattle-King County area. The occupancy for 1994 was 76%. Seasonally the occupancy rate was 60% in the winter, 80% in the spring, and 90% in the summer (Downtown Seattle Association 1995: 1).

4.2.1.1.2 Restaurants
Cuisine in the Seattle area has become famous for fresh seafood, local farm produce, and other Northwest specialties. The area's cultural diversity produces a wide variety of ethnic cuisine. There are more than 2,200 restaurants in Greater Seattle.

4.2.1.1.3 Major Events and Attractions

Among the most popular urban attractions are the Seattle Center and the Space Needle, Pike Place Market, the Hiram Chittenden Locks, Woodland Park Zoo, Tillicum Indian Village, Seattle Aquarium, waterfront, lakeside and sound beaches, Pioneer Square, International District, and local wineries and breweries. Outdoor activities include boating, fishing, golf, water sports, hiking, biking, mountain climbing, and skiing. Seattle is situated on the shores of two large lakes and Puget Sound, with remote wilderness less than an hour away, and is flanked by two major mountain ranges (Olympics and Cascades), with Mount Rainier in full view. Nearby are the San Juan Islands, Pacific Ocean beaches, and major rivers.

Major cultural attractions include Seattle Opera and Seattle Symphony, the Pacific Northwest Ballet, numerous art galleries and the Seattle Art Museum. Seattle is a rich theatre arts center (80 companies, 13 of them professional). Seattle and the surrounding region have become a major attraction for the TV/film industry due to location and promotion, with a world-famous international film festival. In professional major league sports, Seattle is home to Seahawks football, whose new stadium opens in 2002, Mariners baseball, whose new stadium opened in July of 1999, SuperSonics basketball at Key Arena, the Seattle Sounders and the Seattle Reign (professional women's basketball). Festival celebrations include Seafair, Northwest Folklife, multi-arts Bumbershoot, Seattle International Film Festival, International Children's Theater Festival and Bite of Seattle food festival. In addition to hosting large-scale musical concerts, Seattle has gained international attention as the place of origin of many trends setting rock and pop groups.
4.2.1.2 Municipal Planning Policy

Along with interview data, two planning documents were used in to identify how planners in Seattle are responding to the above tourism issues. Seattle’s Comprehensive Plan, *Toward a Sustainable Seattle*, sets out the goals and support policy directions that will guide the development in the city until 2014. Broken into elements, policy that is specific to tourism activity is discussed under two of eight elements: land use and economic development. Adopted in 1995, *The Downtown Plan* sets out the land use and transportation plan for Downtown Seattle. Respondent #7, Urban Planner pointed out that some areas adjacent to downtown, such as the Seattle Center, have specific plans which address visitor activity. Unlike the Seattle Center plan, the Downtown Plan doesn’t single out visitors as a defined user group. However, land uses that are "not compatible with the desired character of specific areas may be restricted or prohibited in an area" (City of Seattle 1995: 9). With this policy in mind, particular attention will be paid to areas defined as mixed use residential as these are the areas where visitors’ and residents’ needs tend to conflict.

1. **Commodification of the built environment, including heritage sites and historic area footprints**

In regard to land use, downtown Seattle is slated to undergo the “greatest intensity of development in the region” (City of Seattle 1996: 43). It is envisioned that most of development activity will support the burgeoning hospitality industry. Zoning regulations and policies are in place to preserve, restore and re-use historic buildings and clusters of historic building downtown (City of Seattle 1995: 32). Detailed guidelines aimed at protecting the distinct character of special downtown planning districts such as Pioneer Square, Pike Market and the Harbourfront are in place. No measures to mitigate commodification of the built environment are included in the plan. Respondent #6, a City PR Representative demonstrated sensitivity to this issue as many Seattlites have expressed their dissatisfaction with the uninteresting design of the downtown NikeTown and Cineplex development.
While regulations may save historic buildings, Seattle planners do not go far enough to ensure the character of neighbours are protected from commodification. Incentives are given to developers that integrate retail uses other than banks, airline ticket agencies, travel agencies and "similar uses" into their projects (ibid., 1995: 49). On the surface, planners seem to be separating visitor-related trade from other uses; however, in the absence of a rationale as to why these uses are excluded from being considered retail and without any other specific visitor trade policy it is difficult to draw any substantive conclusions.

2. The crowding out of merchants and services whose purpose is to serve the everyday needs of local residents.

Under the economic development element of Seattle's plan, "business climate" policies have been created to support a harmonious relationship between residents and the business community. Tourism is identified as an important industry as it supports "international trade and the health of the Seattle retail core" (ibid. 126). Respondent #5, a Business Association Representative estimated that between $.30-.50 of every dollar spent downtown is by visitors.
The sole land use goal for the downtown area aims to “establish ...the broadest mix of activities...” while encouraging the clustering of hospitality uses. (ibid.: 43). This policy framework will accelerate the crowding out process as business that cater to the needs of tourists will bid up the price of available commercial space making it more difficult for local independent businesses to keep their doors open. To buffer downtown residential neighbourhoods such as Belltown from this impact, Seattle has a guideline in place to encourage small neighbourhood retail uses through the provision of loans (City of Seattle 1995: 62).

3. The accessibility of a housing mix for residents including low cost housing in the downtown core and as well, the accessibility of a mix of accommodation options properly situated for tourists.

Seattle has adopted a number of policies aimed at providing and preserving affordable housing in the downtown area. Strategies include building, renovating and subsidizing low-income units. The city is committed to preserving a minimum of 7,311 low-income housing units downtown through public subsidies (City of Seattle 1995: 27). As of 1995, no provision has been made in the plan to address the conversion of low income housing into visitor accommodations. Absent from both planning documents is a discussion of visitor accommodations.

4. Tourist requirements placing undo stress onto the existing city infrastructure not designed to meet tourist requirements.

No provisions for tourism infrastructure are discussed in the either the comprehensive or downtown plan. However, Respondent #7 an Urban Planner noted that transit is free downtown. This measure was put in place to reduce congestion downtown. As he explained, “many visitors use this service to go the museum and Pike Market.”

5. The commodification of local culture through festivals and special events that appropriate and dilute its distinctiveness for commercial gain, usurping the integrity of such culture.

Seattle is in the process of developing a regulatory framework to address housing conversion issue downtown (City of Seattle 1995: 27).
Seattle does not provide public funds to festival organizers. Respondent #6, a City PR Representative explained that the city has a special event committee set up to evaluate the suitability of events and festivals. Successful applicants are granted a permit. The city maintains that festivals are not marketed to visitors: “festivals such as the Hempfest are only marketed to residents” she confirmed. Festivals are intended to provide residents with a venue to celebrate Seattle culture, heritage and values. In contrast, promoters at the Seattle-King County Convention and Visitor Bureau see Seattle’s arts community and festivals as a major attraction and tend to highlight this activity in their marketing materials. Respondent #4, a Market Analyst believed that Seattle’s lively festivals, such as Bumbershoot and Hempfest, provide Seattle with a clear visitor market advantage over other destinations such as Vancouver.

4.2.2 Summary

Respondents #4 through #7 admitted that little is understood about visitor activity in Seattle. Very similar to Vancouver in regards to its tourist offerings - except that Vancouver has more high-end hotels, a cruise ship facility, is closer to Whistler, and benefits from an attractive low Canadian dollar - Seattle’s plans do not have specific policies in place to mitigate the negative impacts associated with an increase in tourism development. Respondent #7, the Urban Planner believed “it is in the best interest of the city to create a tourism plan…to educate residents about visitor attractions”. While stringent historic preservation regulations laid out in the Downtown Plan will largely preserve the physical setting of areas, the character of neighbourhoods seems to be at risk. The quality of life for residents may deteriorate. Residents affected by the increase in tourism development may attempt to fight City Hall project by project but will largely fail unless Seattle city planners begin to recognize visitors as a specific user group and tourism development as different from other forms of development.
4.3 Portland, Oregon

Located on the banks of the Willamette river, the area that makes up Central City was once three separate cities – Portland, East Portland, and Albina - each with its own distinct residential, industrial and commercial districts (City of Portland, 1988: 14). With the 19th century melding of the three cities, the balance of functions shifted with industrial uses settling in East Portland and commercial businesses locating in what is now downtown Portland. Albina remains largely a residential community.

From a planning perspective, the City of Portland has long been recognized as a planners’ city. It has a long legacy of bottom up urban planning and design emulated by many other municipalities. The business improvement association, Association for Portland Progress, hails Portland as being one of the “best cities in the [United States] no matter how you define ‘best’” (Association for Portland Progress, 1995).

4.3.1 Portland as a Tourist Destination

Portland is a people town, where city blocks half the size of those in other towns provide a pedestrian-friendly city center, where outdoor benches are occupied with readers enjoying good books and spring sunshine, and where urban growth boundaries have protected the surrounding countryside - a scenic 20-minute drive from the city’s core (POVA 1998). Downtown Portland is the place where visitors stay and where most visitor attractions can be found. Within the downtown limits, sub-districts offer specialty functions such as the Lloyd Centre-Coliseum which is home to sports and convention facilities, and the North of Burnside district where many heritage buildings and international neighbourhoods can be found.

The City of Portland attracted 2.6 million out-of-state visitors in 1989 with a five-day average length of stay (Portland Development Commission 1989: 8).
4.3.1.1 Tourist Product

4.3.1.1.1 Accommodations

An active nightlife and increasing tourism volume has encouraged development of hotel accommodations throughout downtown Portland. Portland’s city centre has 5,525 rooms as of 1997 with an average room rate of $88 U.S. a night. Recently a set of downtown hotels occupying significant heritage buildings have been renovated including the Benson, Governor Hotel, and The Portland Hilton.

4.3.1.1.2 Restaurants

Portland has the distinction of having more restaurants per capita than any other city in the United States. More than 625 restaurants operate in Portland’s city center. No one type of food experience dominates the downtown Portland restaurant scene, as one can find a wide variety of cuisine ranging from Ethiopian to Irish.

4.3.1.1.3 Major Events and Attractions

Portland is known as the “City of Roses” and is quickly gaining a reputation as the “City of Festivals” in recognition of the many major events held every year. Downtown Portland hosts more than 200 festivals per year. In 1995, over one million people attended public gatherings at Waterfront Park (Association for Portland Progress, 1995). Among the most significant event is the month-long Portland Rose Festival. Highlights of the festival include an air show, Dragon Boat Races, Indy CART races, and an array of parades. Other major attractions are listed in Table 4-1.

Shopping is a key visitor attraction in Portland. The clean, vibrant downtown features three major department stores: Nordstrom, Meier & Frank and the only Saks Fifth Avenue other than the original to actually reside on Fifth Avenue. Downtown shoppers can find fashions, furnishings and sporting goods at Pioneer Place or sample Oregon-style outdoor gear at Columbia Sportswear, Jantzen, Pendleton or NIKE TOWN.
Portland is also known for the quality of its natural environment. Lush municipal and regional parks extend like fingers of green into the city, providing welcome oases amid the hubbub. Horseback riders take advantage of the trails along Alder Ridge at Oxbow Regional Park. Bird watchers can view bald eagles wintering on Sauvie Island, identify ducks on Laurelhurst Park's pond or breakfast with birds at the Portland Audubon Society's forested sanctuary.

Table 4-1 Selected List of Attractions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Visitor Attractions</th>
<th>Washington Park</th>
<th>Downtown Portland</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Washington Park</td>
<td>Fountains, Parks</td>
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<td></td>
<td>OMS</td>
<td>Historic Districts and Architecture</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Washington Park Zoo</td>
<td>Waterfront Park</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>World Forestry Center</td>
<td>Pioneer Courthouse, Square</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Rose Gardens</td>
<td>Portland Building (and Portlandia)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Japanese Gardens</td>
<td>Transit Mall and Light Rail</td>
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<tr>
<td>Museums</td>
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<td></td>
<td>American Advertising Museum</td>
<td>Children's Museum</td>
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<td>Portland Carousel Museum</td>
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<td>OMS</td>
<td>Oregon Maritime Museum</td>
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<td>Oregon Sports Hall of Fame</td>
<td>Police Museum</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hoyt Arboretum</td>
<td>Fire Museum</td>
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<td>Park County</td>
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<td>Portland Center for the Visual Arts</td>
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<td>Performing Arts Center</td>
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<td>Civic Auditorium</td>
<td>Artists Repertory Theater</td>
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<td>Schnitzer Concert Hall</td>
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<td>Intermediate Theater</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Portland Repertory Theater</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Exposition Center</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Civic Stadium</td>
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<tr>
<td>Special Events</td>
<td>Portland Rose Festival</td>
<td>Artquake</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The Bite</td>
<td>Neighborfair</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Saturday Market</td>
<td>Fun Runs</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Portland Development Commission, 1989

Forest Park is the largest forested municipal park in the United States. Of the 5,000 acres of hiking, mountain biking and running trails, perhaps the best loved is the Wildwood, 33 winding miles of nature trail. Towering fir and aspen trees shade the path that links such attractions as the
Hoyt Arboretum, Pittock Mansion and the Audubon Society. The Wildwood is part of a 140-mile hiking, biking and running loop around the city.

4.3.2 Municipal Planning Policy

At the time Portland's City Council approved the process and budget for the Central City planning effort, the Council identified the following key goals and objectives related to tourism:

- Assure a human scale, an inviting environment, and attractions for residents as well as visitors...

- Research and analyze the set of planning issues and district concerns within the Central City for needs to be addressed by the plan. Planning issues to be considered include...convention/tourism.

(City of Portland, 1988: 4)

Since 1988, Portland has had an integrated central area planning document which, while not explicitly addressing tourism in all sections, operates on a theme concept. Both functional and district policies have been developed for the central area. The plan attempts to see tourist related planning as part of a larger package related to economic development, while at the same time looking at issues such as livability.

Portland has been very successful in drawing visitors from surrounding communities who identify Portland as their home city. Using the concept of attractions serves Portland well since this does not conceptually alienate visitors from identifying Portland as their home city. Using the geography of the city as an organizing principle enables the plan to play up natural attractions such as the river and existing built environment attractions such as older neighbourhoods. The plan is very visual and visceral in its approach, focussing on the experience of the cityscape and then stepping down from this to more practical aspects. Planned infrastructure projects (and commercial interests) are explicitly linked to the theme areas, thus never bypassing the "attraction" aspects of the city while allowing the possibility of corporate sponsorship of infrastructure in places deemed profitable to the tourist trade.
1. **Commodification of the built environment, including heritage sites and historic area footprints.**

The commodification of heritage sites and historic areas linked to economic revitalization in Portland’s plan and thus actively encouraged confirms that “stringent design guidelines ensure that all attractions address the relationship between the street and the development” (Portland 1988).

Another mitigating factor can be found in the plan’s support of infrastructure such as public transportation at the site of historic areas. Providing a transportation window on the built environment can potentially increase public and community awareness of commodification and thus provide for a more inclusive process. Public transportation infrastructure can also prevent the usurping of an area’s ambiance by the large-scale projects required to accommodate cars and parking. Putting more people (as opposed to cars) on the street can enhance an area’s attractiveness and provide the added benefit of safety for tourists and residents alike. This also serves to diminish the impacts of tourism in these neighbourhoods since foot traffic is less intrusive than car traffic and since monolithic structures such as parking towers can be kept out.

2. **The crowding-out of merchants and services whose purpose is to serve the everyday needs of local residents.**

“Neighbors are increasingly uptight about the number of people acting as pedestrians cruising the avenue from out of town or out of the area and the number of businesses which serve that out of the area clientele. A lot of people are complaining there aren’t any businesses that meet their needs anymore evolving, edged out big box retailers”

Respondent #8, the Chief Planner

Portland’s economic development policy attempts to promote the city’s “role as a retail center [and] tourist attractor” while supporting the “retention and expansion of existing businesses” (City of Portland 1988: 38). At first glance, this balancing act signals that the city recognizes the need to take action to ensure the sustainability of independent merchants. However respondent #8, the Chief Planner admits that this is a difficult task as neighbourhood retailing continues to decline due to larger consumption trends such as catalogue shopping,
internet commerce, and big box retailing. He believes that it is these expenditure patterns that have really reduced the retail market share of neighborhood-based retail businesses to such an extent that the neighborhood retailers are losing ground.

He embraces new tourist development downtown as it bring “places alive”. Admitting that downtown is “probably becoming more touristy and less interesting to the folks who live nearby” he believes that this pattern urban of development is an “international trend for all sorts of places”.

Though no data yet exists to show conclusively that neighbourhood retailing is declining as a result of visitors (versus the shifting buying habits of residents themselves), the fact that the plan mentions retail shopping as a major tourist attraction points to a large enough trend deserving of more research.

3. The accessibility of a housing mix for residents including low cost housing in the downtown core and as well, the accessibility of a mix of accommodation options properly situated for tourists.

More people are projected to move to downtown Portland. The plan calls for at least 5,000 new housing units of varying types and cost to be built by 2010. Most of the existing SRO housing is clustered in the northeast area of the downtown district. Portland aims to “protect and preserve the City’s SRO housing resource” (ibid.: 46). This is to be achieved through an adopt-a-room program design to allow philanthropic individuals and organizations to sponsor a SRO unit. Portland is not only relying on good-natured people with deep pockets to help sustain affordable housing. The city has established a housing trust fund to help maintain and renovate low-income housing. No anti-conversion policy is in place to preserve the stock of SRO’s.

The accessibility of low cost housing is another area addressed solely by the hotel zoning aspect of the plan, which prohibits the siting of hotels in residential areas. My subjective opinion from walking around downtown leads me to believe that at least some lower income residents reside in
mixed-use areas and are not well served by this policy. Similar to Vancouver, Portland has issues with a conflict of low cost housing and visitor accommodation that could stand to benefit by more explicit and detailed attention in the plan.

4. Tourist requirements placing undo stress onto the existing city infrastructure and services not designed to meet tourist requirements.

To avoid incurring additional costs related to servicing visitors, Portland has situated all tourist facilities in districts such as downtown which have a relatively high level of services like police protection explained the Chief Planner. Portland successfully maximized the use of existing infrastructure to support tourism activities without placing a burden on the city taxpayer, for example, the vintage trolley that is capable of using the same tracks as the larger Light Rail Transit (LRT) system. This thematic transportation system links the Central City with major attractions, historic districts, retail centres and other activity nodes. It was designed to link attractions and bring visitors, local or otherwise, to and from downtown.

5. The commodification of local culture through festivals and special events that appropriate and dilute its distinctiveness for commercial gain, usurping the integrity of such culture.

Affirmed by city policy, Portland is a city fairly open and liberal about supporting festivals. Policy 9 in the Central City Plan (1998: 54) states that the City of Portland will:

Provide and promote facilities, programs and public events and festivals that reinforce the Central City’s role as a cultural and entertainment center for the metropolitan and northwest region.

In support of this policy, Respondent # 8 explained:

“Portland completely redid the sod conditions of our waterfront park so that the waterfront park could support more festivals during the summer. There is a festival of some kind or other in the park almost every weekend from around the end of May to the end of September. And in addition, like in Pioneer square downtown there’s actually a festival board that is charged with making sure that there’s something interesting going on in that square almost every day. To avoid the commodification of local culture Portland has come up with a sliding fee scale for festival permits and services thereby keeping the costs at a minimum for local organizers. The more community oriented the festival, the lower the scale. For
instance, if local organizers want to do a music festival in a neighbourhood park with local musicians and invite people in from around town a nominal fee is required. Large events such as a group festival in Waterfront Park with eighty thousand people a day coming in for three days requires another kind of fee schedule."

4.3.3 Summary
Portlanders have an exemplary land use plan, which addresses tourism implicitly and explicitly. Though the focus is on promoting demand for tourism, some of the mitigating factors, such as cultural commodification and the upsurging of infrastructure by tourism, are addressed thoroughly in the plan. Areas where Portland could use more sustainable tourism planning (and perhaps more research) are the shifting retail mix in neighbourhoods and the hotel zoning policy (vis-à-vis SROs). Recognizing that smaller scale pre-existing and distinct neighbourhoods may not necessarily follow the themed geographical pattern of the plan may allow for policies aimed specifically at preserving the quality of life for the residents of those smaller neighbourhoods. Consequently heritage sites and historic areas could be preserved on a more human scale and retail and service outlets (in specific predetermined areas) serving the needs of residents perhaps would not so readily give way to larger scale outlets.

4.4 San Francisco, California

Surrounded on three sides by the Pacific Ocean and San Francisco Bay, San Francisco's compact 125 square kilometres crowd the tip of the San Francisco Peninsula. "The City" has a population of 789,600, and is the hub of the greater Bay Area. The United States fifth largest metropolitan region registers a population of 6 million and hosts over 16 million visitors, conventioneers and business travelers each year.

4.4.1 San Francisco as a Tourist Destination

It is estimated that 3.3 million visitors stayed in San Francisco in 1995. As illustrated in Figure 4-2, add the visitors who stayed outside the city and elsewhere in the region combined with

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>San Francisco at a Glance</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Land Area: 201 sq. km</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Population, 1997: 789,600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Population density:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3928 persons per sq km</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
suburban day-trippers and that number explodes to over 16.2 million (San Francisco Convention and Visitor Bureau, 1997).

Figure 4-2 Breakdown of 1995 Annual San Francisco Visitor Volume

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Staying in S.F. Hotel</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staying Overnight Elsewhere in S.F.</td>
<td>46%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staying Overnight Elsewhere in the Bay Area</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bay Area Residents Making Day Visits to S.F.</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Modified from San Francisco Convention and Visitor Bureau 1996

The number of overnight visitors in San Francisco rose 7 percent in 1996 over the previous year, the largest annual increase since 1984. More than 3.5 million visitors stayed in commercial accommodations in The City last year compared to 3.3 million in 1995. (PKF Consulting, 1997).

4.4.1.1 Tourism Product

Readers of Conde Nast Traveler have named San Francisco the top U.S. city seven times since 1988. Its neighborhoods comprise its inner beauty. The City offers a range of maritime, shopping, and cultural attractions

Eighty-seven percent of San Francisco's visitors include Fisherman's Wharf on their itinerary. Waterfront marketplaces include The Anchorage, The Cannery, Ghirardelli Square and PIER 39. The Wharf's working hub, "Fish Alley," sells thousands of tons of sole, shrimp, salmon, sea bass, squid and other deep sea delicacies annually. During the crab season (mid-November through June) people line up for the best of the catch (San Francisco Convention and Visitor Bureau,
A fleet of historic ships berth at Hyde Street Pier, a component of the San Francisco Maritime National Historical Park, which also includes the Maritime Museum.

The downtown waterfront district has been transformed with the removal of the Embarcadero Freeway. Promenades and tidal stairs descending right to the water's edge offer easy access. In the South Beach district where a new neighborhood has risen, palm trees evoke southern inclinations. Sunny cafes with outdoor patios are plentiful. Skirting this area, Herb Caen Way along the southern Embarcadero is punctuated with historic plaques and pylons recalling events and people of the past.

Many visitors make it a point to spend some time at Ocean Beach on the westernmost edge of San Francisco. The windows of the Cliff House, erected in 1909, are a popular lookout. Just offshore are the abrupt outlines of Seal Rocks. Shore birds and a colony of stellar sea lions usually inhabit them. On a clear day the Farallon Islands some 38 kilometre distant are also visible. Swimming, it should be noted, is not allowed here.

Golden Gate Park, San Francisco's 1,000-acre backyard is another popular natural attraction. The park's trove of attractions includes Strybing Arboretum and Botanical Gardens, a "living library" where 6,000 plant species, including a stunning display of California redwoods, flourish.

4.4.1.1.1 Accommodations

It is estimated that only 30% of San Francisco's overnight visitors stay in commercial accommodations in The City, with the remainder staying with friends and relatives or in hotels in surrounding counties. In 1995, San Francisco had 30,475 hotel rooms with an average annual occupancy rate of 74%.
Table 4-2 San Francisco Hotel Inventory & Estimated Overnight Visitor Volume

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<tr>
<th></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Average Number of Hotel Rooms Available Daily</td>
<td>30,200</td>
<td>30,475</td>
<td>30,575</td>
<td>30,575</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average Annual Occupancy</td>
<td>71.5%</td>
<td>74%</td>
<td>78.7%</td>
<td>79.75%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Modified from San Francisco Convention and Visitor Bureau 1996

As expressed in Table 4-2, the supply of hotel rooms has increased only marginally. At the same time the occupancy rate has increased by 7%. This indicates that by limiting the supply of hotel rooms, the viability and profitability of existing hotel operations improved.

4.4.2 Municipal Planning Policy

The San Francisco Master Plan (1992) through its stated goals, objectives and policies, guides the land use and zoning decisions of the City and County of San Francisco. The plan is designed as a tool to obtain general goals related to land use, circulation, housing, conservation, open space, arts, noise and safety areas. The following general goal provides the rationale for planning for urban tourism:

Coordination of the varied pattern of land use with public and semi-public service facilities required for efficient functioning of the city, and for the convenience and well-being of its residents, workers, and visitors.

(City and County of San Francisco, Department of Planning, 199x: iii-iv)

This goal is significant as it identifies visitors as a specific user group that has particular land use needs. Also, this goal requires the city to think about the relationship between the activity generated by tourism related land uses and the provision of public service facilities.

General goals are realized through a "statement of objectives" and policies in a series of elements that are applied citywide. Area plans are provided for specific central area districts. The
information in the area plans expands on general policy statements. Policies that address urban tourism activity can be found in many of the elements and area plans.

Unlike the other cities profiled, San Francisco’s plan recognizes that certain negative impacts are related to tourism. These adverse impacts include:

Added density and congestion in some parts of the city; strains on parking, mass transit, and other important municipal services...; increased pedestrian and vehicle congestion at points of interest...; [and] visitors’ tastes have altered the mix of goods and services offered to the extent that local demands are no longer met.

(ibid.: I.2.42)

In response to these adverse impacts, city planners have developed policies to mitigate the impact of urban tourism activity. These policies are presented below grouped together in tables and organized in the tourism issue framework.

1. Commodification of the built environment, including heritage sites and historic area footprints

The plan includes policies aimed at ensuring buildings and streetscapes that embody civic values are not Disney-fied. Stringent restrictions on changing land uses prevent new businesses from attracting a dramatically different clientele. Downtown is considered a visitor activity area. It is the district in the city where hotels and other visitor facilities and services tend to locate close to each other. The visitor experience of the city is enhanced as they have quick and easy access to a wide variety of attractions and services. Too much clustering can lead to a commodification of the district. Respondent #11, a Senior Planner noted that “hotels tend to have blank facades and do little to enhance the pedestrian’s street experience”.

Hotel development is often considered a land use which facilitates the commodification of the urban fabric. The plan’s “guidelines for specific uses” address the nature of hotel development. Hotels are not permitted to bring attention to themselves through flamboyant design, displace neighbourhood-serving uses, or build large, semi-circle ground level driveways. Instead hotels
must contribute to an active street scene by providing ground level, general use retail space and minimize interruption of street activity that access to hotel parking may create (ibid.: 1.2.25).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AREA</th>
<th>OBJECTIVE</th>
<th>POLICY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Residential</td>
<td>To retain the existing supply of housing</td>
<td>Restrict the conversion of housing in commercial and industrial areas.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commerce &amp; Industry</td>
<td>Realize San Francisco's full maritime potential</td>
<td>Encourage maritime activity which complements visitor activity and resident recreation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Maintain and strengthen viable neighbourhood commercial areas easily accessible to city residents.</td>
<td>Promote high quality urban design on commercial streets. Preserve historically and/or architecturally important buildings or groups of buildings in neighbourhood commercial districts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visitor Trade</td>
<td>Enhance San Francisco's position as a national center for conventions and visitor trade</td>
<td>Guide the location of additional tourist related activities to minimize their adverse impacts on existing residential, commercial, and industrial activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Conservation of resources which provide a sense of nature, continuity with the past, and freedom from overcrowding</td>
<td>Preserve notable landmarks and areas of historic, architectural or aesthetic value, and promote the preservation of other buildings and features that provide continuity with past development.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban Design</td>
<td>Moderation of major new development to complement the city pattern, the resources to be conserved and the neighbourhood environment.</td>
<td>Avoid extreme contrasts in color, shape and other characteristics which will cause new buildings to stand out in excess of their public importance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Improvement of the neighbourhood environment to increase personal safety, comfort, pride and opportunity</td>
<td>Protect the livability and character of residential properties from the intrusion of incompatible new buildings.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Downtown</td>
<td>Enhance San Francisco's role as a tourist and visitor center.</td>
<td>Guide the location of new hotels to minimize their adverse impacts on circulation, existing uses, and scale of development.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Conserve resources that provide continuity with San Francisco's past.</td>
<td>Preserve notable landmarks and areas of historic, architectural or aesthetic value, and promote the preservation of other buildings and features that provide continuity with past development.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. The crowding out of merchants and services whose purpose is to serve the everyday needs of local residents

78
San Francisco’s diversity is perhaps most evident in its neighborhoods. The City’s restaurants, shops, theaters, art galleries, and museums are a big tourist draw. To prevent the loss of businesses that provide necessary goods and services to surrounding residents; and, to ensure that the character of a neighborhood is maintained, a set of criteria has been developed to determine the appropriateness of uses that are intended to be neighborhood-serving. Moreover, the plan contains guidelines for uses to which all business permits are measured against. These guidelines make clear that “no [commercial] district should include so many specialty stores that space is not available for businesses which serve the needs of nearby residents” (ibid.: I.2.21).

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<tr>
<th>AREA</th>
<th>OBJECTIVE</th>
<th>POLICY</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Residential</td>
<td>To provide a quality living environment</td>
<td>Allow appropriate neighborhood-serving commercial activities in residential areas.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commerce &amp; Industry</td>
<td>Maintain and strengthen viable neighborhood commercial areas easily accessible to city residents.</td>
<td>Ensure and encourage the retention and provision of neighborhood-serving goods and services in the city’s neighborhood commercial districts, while recognizing and encouraging diversity among the districts. Encourage the location of neighborhood shopping areas throughout the city so that essential retail goods and personal services are accessible to all residents.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visitor Trade</td>
<td>Enhance San Francisco’s position as a national center for conventions and visitor trade</td>
<td>Guide the location of additional tourist related activities to minimize their adverse impacts on existing residential, commercial, and industrial activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Downtown</td>
<td>Improve Downtown San Francisco’s position as the region’s prime location for specialized retail trade</td>
<td>Maintain high quality, specialty retail shopping facilities in the retail core. Encourage the retail businesses which serve the shopping needs of less affluent downtown workers and local residents.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Enhance San Francisco’s role as a tourist and visitor center.</td>
<td>Guide the location of new hotels to minimize their adverse impacts on circulation, existing uses, and scale of development.</td>
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</table>

3. The accessibility of a housing mix for residents including low cost housing in the downtown core and as well, the accessibility of a mix of accommodation options properly situated for tourists.

“Unchecked pressure to develop additional tourist hotels...can lead to conversion of existing dwelling units for tourist accommodations...” (ibid.: II.1.7). Residential policies prohibit the
conversion of rental housing into visitor accommodations. Moreover, SRO units which are highly susceptible to tourism pressures are protected "by zoning which does not permit commercial or tourist use" (ibid.: I.1.15). Essentially, an SRO unit can only be converted if the developer replaces it. These measures ensure that the supply of rental units doesn’t decrease.

While much policy has been adopted to mitigate the adverse impact of tourism activity in commercial neighbourhood districts, the plan also recognizes that some visitor use of these areas can bring economic benefits to such areas. However, the plan does not address in any substantial way the need for a mix of visitor accommodations.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AREA</th>
<th>OBJECTIVE</th>
<th>POLICY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Residential | To provide new housing, especially permanently affordable housing, in appropriate locations which meets identified housing needs and takes into account the demand for affordable housing created by employment growth | Obtain assistance from office developments...in meeting the housing demand they generate, particularly the needs for affordable housing for lower income workers and students.  
Encourage construction of new single room occupancy residential hotels. |
| | To retain the existing supply of housing | Prohibit the conversion of rental housing to time-share, corporate suite or hotel use.  
Preserve the existing stock of residential hotels. |
| | To provide maximum housing choice | Increase the availability of units suitable for special user groups with special housing needs including large families, the elderly, and the homeless |
| Visitor Trade | Enhance San Francisco’s position as a national center for conventions and visitor trade | Guide the location of additional tourist related activities to minimize their adverse impacts on existing residential, commercial, and industrial activities  
Support locally initiated efforts to improve the visitor trade appeal of neighbourhood commercial districts. |
| Downtown | Enhance San Francisco’s role as a tourist and visitor center. | Guide the location of new hotels to minimize their adverse impacts on circulation, existing uses, and scale of development. |
| | Protect residential uses in and adjacent to downtown from encroachment by commercial uses. | Preserve existing residential hotels. |
4. Tourist requirements placing undo stress onto the existing city infrastructure and services not designed to meet tourist requirements.

Rather than building new infrastructure to support tourism activity, the San Francisco Master Plan sets out guidelines for the provision of additional city services to ease congestion caused by visitor activity.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>AREA</th>
<th>OBJECTIVE</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Commerce &amp; Industry</td>
<td>Maintain and strengthen viable neighbourhood commercial areas easily accessible to city residents</td>
<td>Regulate uses so that traffic impacts and parking problems are minimized.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visitor Trade</td>
<td>Enhance San Francisco's position as a national center for conventions and visitor trade</td>
<td>Assure that areas of particular visitor attraction are provided with adequate public services for both residents and visitors.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meet the needs of all residents and visitors for safe, convenient and inexpensive travel within San Francisco</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transportation</td>
<td>Support and enhance the role of San Francisco as a major destination and departure point for travelers making interstate, national and international trips</td>
<td>Develop direct transit connections from downtown to the Airport that will maximize convenience and minimize confusion for airport patrons. Encourage the use of public transportation and improve its services between the airport and all Bay Area communities, for airport employees as well as air passengers. Secure a berth for cruise ships in an attractive location, well-served by public transportation, to enhance San Francisco as a recreational port destination.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Downtown</td>
<td>Enhance San Francisco's role as a tourist and visitor center.</td>
<td>Guide the location of new hotels to minimize their adverse impacts on circulation, existing uses, and scale of development.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Revenue to cover the cost of services is collected directly from tourists to support city services through the city's 12% transient occupancy tax. Figure 4-2 illustrates how the funds collected were distributed.
4. The commodification of local culture through festivals and special events that appropriate and dilute its distinctiveness for commercial gain, usurping the integrity of such culture.

The City and County of San Francisco levy a 12% transient occupancy tax. This is an innovative way to bring tourism dollars directly into the public coffers to pay for the arts. In 1995/6, 23% of the $96,352,000 collected went to Art and Cultural organization and facilities (see Figure 7). This funding source limits the need for commercial support of the arts although it doesn’t preclude it.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ARE</th>
<th>OBJECTIVE</th>
<th>POLICY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Commerce &amp; Industry</td>
<td>Maintain and enhance a sound and diverse economic base and fiscal structure for the city</td>
<td>Maintain a favourable social and cultural climate in the city in order to enhance its attractiveness as a firm location.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arts</td>
<td>Increase the contribution of the arts to the economy of San Francisco.</td>
<td>Continue to support and increase the promotion of the arts and arts activities throughout the City for the benefit of visitors, tourists and residents.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Secure new sources of revenue for the arts</td>
<td>Establish a coordinated, flexible city-wide percent for art program</td>
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<tr>
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<td></td>
<td>Determine the means of providing in-kind resources and service to the arts.</td>
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<tr>
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<td></td>
<td>Develop partnerships with the private sector and the business community to encourage monetary and non-monetary support of the arts, as well as sponsorships of arts organizations and events.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 4.5 Summary

An established, mature tourist destination, San Francisco doesn’t feel pressured to buy into commercial schemes simply to keep in the running for tourist dollars. The key here is that the plan does not preclude viable operations which serves tourists, it simply recognizes the primacy of resident’s needs over visitor’s needs. While there is room for more concrete and detailed policy in some areas, on the whole San Francisco does an excellent job of planning to mitigate the effects of tourism on the city and its residents. The San Francisco Master Plan should be considered an essential resource for other cities interested in planning for urban tourism.
CHAPTER 5 - SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Chapter one stressed the need to examine tourism planning more closely. The problem stems from the omission of tourist planning in Vancouver's land use plan. Chapter two surveyed the meager literature which exists on tourism planning. Through an appropriate ordering of the concepts available in this literature an emerging sense of the appropriateness and even the necessity of tourism planning was presented. Chapter three presented an overview of Vancouver's tourism policy. Along with the information available (mostly based on the promotion of tourism) problem issues were presented and conceptually linked to tourism factors. This served to highlight the absence of appropriate policy and to demonstrate the impact of this omission in terms understood by anyone familiar with the issues and conflicts plaguing the growth of Vancouver as a city. Chapter four examined the tourism planning policies for three other cities both in order to illustrate similar problems as Vancouver and to survey solutions where tourism policy was explicitly stated in land use plans. An interesting progression is noted as we go from minimal tourism land use planning in Seattle to moderate planning in Portland and finally, in San Francisco, thorough explicit and detailed land use planning which recognizes the impacts of tourism on the city. Perhaps, these differences could be attributed to the length of time each city has had exposure to extensive tourism and therefore the amount of time each city has had to experience the impacts and develop mitigating policies.

Based on this analysis, the following suggestions can be made for Vancouver's land use plan and the Department of Planning. These suggestions are an attempt to meld the best strategies used by the three case study cities with specific examples and issues relevant to Vancouver such as those raised in chapter three. As a relatively young city on the urban tourism bandwagon, Vancouver has a tremendous opportunity here to profit from the experience and perspectives of other cities and to overlay the useful perspective of tourism planning on its unique neighbourhoods and landscape.
5.1 Guidelines/Suggestions

Based on the urban tourism literature and a review of tourism policy and guidelines from the three north-western cities profiled, below are suggestions for the City of Vancouver aimed at managing urban tourism activity in the city. The policy guidelines have been organized using the “issue” framework:

1. To mitigate the commodification of the built environment the City of Vancouver should consider:

- Creating development guidelines specifically for visitor facilities
Tо ensure that design features of hotels, restaurants, and other visitor facilities are unique, planners should consider creating a design envelope specifically for tourism development. Any public intervention needs to be informed by the needs of corporations to build brand recognition for their services. Treatment of signs and use of building material are all tools in a planners toolbox to help retain a built environment that has a look and feel that links to Vancouver’s past and enrich the urban tourist experience.

- Developing tourist attractions that contribute to the well being of city residents
Big retail giants are eager to enter the downtown Vancouver market. As the resident community increases downtown, planners and destination managers should consider the particular needs of residents when siting a tourist facility. Space is limited on the peninsula and locating a shop that sell bananas or a screwdriver is becoming increasingly difficult for residents.

- Avoid extreme contrasts in colour, shape and other characteristics, which will cause new buildings to stand out in excess of their public importance.

In the absence of tourism policy and qualitative research on resident’s views of tourism activity and development in the city, it is difficult to speculate how the public would feel about a hotel
dominating the skyline. Until such a study is done, planners should strive to protect the cityscape from usual developments that detract from the unique sense of place found downtown.

2. To mitigate crowding out of merchants and services whose purpose is to serve the everyday needs of local residents the City of Vancouver should consider the following policy guidelines:

- Define those uses that provide goods and services that meet the needs of Vancouver residents and create a “neighbourhood-serving” retail land use category

This is a good exercise for planners and destination managers to develop a deeper understanding of land use planning with regard to tourism (as delineated in Chapter 2) and could lead to alternative explanations for the decline of neighbourhood retailing. Simply perceiving the possibility that tourists (or excursionists) are driving the big-box retail takeover could allow for a distinction between what local residents want and what an undefined consumer appears to be buying. This distinction is crucial in that it sets up a definition of community, which allows for the planning of desirable neighbourhoods for the people who live in those neighbourhoods as opposed to the people who visit. In any case, healthy neighbourhoods, in the long run, are a more sustainable tourism practice than retail shopping attractions which are subject to arbitrary changes in consumer preferences, tax laws, and corporate policies outside of the control of local government and which, most importantly, do not necessarily serve the needs of local residents. This is not to say that retail shopping attractions shouldn’t be conceived of and planned as tourist attractions. But as such, they should be subjected to policies that consider the primary client for the products being sold. If the primary clients are not from the surrounding neighbourhood than appropriate policies and guidelines to ensure residents have access to services should be designed to meet their needs.

- Encourage the retail businesses which serve the shopping needs of less affluent downtown workers and local residents
Those employed by the service sector tend to earn less income. As housing prices are significantly higher in the city, hospitality worker paying a higher percentage of their income to live closer to work should be able to find affordable goods and services. Without access to affordable goods and services, many hospitality worker will move to suburbia thereby contributing to the negative impacts of urban sprawl.

- Guide the location of new hotels to minimize their adverse impacts on circulation, existing uses, and scale of development.

Hotels create a high volume of vehicular traffic. Visitors are constantly coming and going. To mitigate negative impacts on residents, hotels should be restricted from residential zones.

3. To ensure a housing mix for residents including low cost housing in the downtown core, and a mix of accommodation options properly situated for tourists the City of Vancouver should consider:

- Prohibiting the conversion of rental housing including residential hotels to time-share, corporate suite or hotel use.

If an anti-conversion bylaw is not adopted by the City of Vancouver in the near future, downtown Vancouver will be left with an inadequate low-income housing stock.

- Provide for a mix of visitor accommodations

The average downtown room rate is out of reach for many visitors especially youth, elders and low income earners. Planners should plan for a range and mix of accommodations to ensure that many different types of visitors have a place to rest downtown during their stay in Vancouver.

4. To ensure that tourist requirements do not put undo stress on the existing city infrastructure and services the City of Vancouver should consider the following policy guidelines:
• Promote the restructuring of the hotel tax at the provincial level so that city facilities and services used to meet tourist requirement are adequately funded.

Like other jurisdictions, a hotel levy should be applied to all visitor trade and earmarked, in part, for infrastructure improvements. The vast majority of revenue currently being generated by the hotel tax in Vancouver is earmarked for destination marketing. While it is important to continue to promote Vancouver as a destination, it is equally important that visitors contribute to improving and maintaining the city's infrastructure. Many of the most popular destination in Vancouver such as Stanley Park, the Sea Wall, and the Vancouver Museum are maintained with public dollars. As tourism demand and use of these amenities continues to increase, public access and enjoyment of these places is being degraded as a result of congestion. Without adequate funding from all users, conflict between visitor and residents over the use of attractions is clearly on the horizon.

• Consider the travel patterns of visitors when developing alternative transportation policies and infrastructure.

To alleviate congestion in the downtown core, Seattle planners create a free transit zone. Currently, little is known by Vancouver planners about how tourists get around the city. As the city grows by almost 50% in population in the summer months, planners should be aware of how visitors are getting around so that appropriate adjustments can be made.

• Partner with other stakeholders to secure a rapid transit link between the airport and downtown Vancouver.

The Granville Rapidbus debate highlighted the growing concern with the high volume and speed of traffic along Granville. As much of this traffic is destined for the airport, the city should actively work with other stakeholders to secure the Arbutus corridor for rapid transit use.

5. To ensure that local culture expressed through festivals and special events is not overly commodified, the City of Vancouver should consider the following policy guidelines:
• Promote the restructuring of the hotel tax at the provincial level so those arts organisations that co-ordinate festival and special events are adequately funded.

Funding for events is limited in Vancouver. Taking note of San Francisco's progressive transient occupancy tax, Vancouver should work with other agencies to collect revenue from visitors to help fund events that celebrate local culture. Organisations that put on local events, such as the Folk Festival, are in constant economic stress and are in desperate need of core funding. As introducing as new tax is complicated and controversial strategy for generating revenue, it will be important for the City to work with visitor representatives and ensure all stakeholder buy into this initiatives.

• Provide in-kind and monetary support to organisations that are co-ordinating festivals as expressions of community civic pride and celebration.

In the absence of a tax that generates revenue for organisations that co-ordinate events, the City should explore in-kind contribution possibilities like providing theatre space, offsetting printing costs, loaning city equipment.

5.2 Suggestions for Further Research

Research techniques used by cities to collect information on tourism activity are woefully underdeveloped. Planning departments generally rely on visitor bureaus for their information. These organizations exist to bring people to the urban destination not manage their activities once they have arrived. City planning department should budget staff time to conduct research on the tourism industry and its impacts so that they understand how visitors use the city and interact with residents.

Studies on the displacement of businesses and people caused by tourism development and the change in land values as a result of tourism development need to be conducted. Transnational
corporations continue to infiltrate neighbourhoods by going around planning guidelines developed to direct their location. While discriminating against corporations is illegal, other methods for discouraging market forces from driving up the cost of land for neighbourhood commercial space is need.

Stresses that tourism activity places on city infrastructure and services should be quantified. Tourist should pay the full cost for their visit whether through a regional hotel tax or higher attraction user fees.

Finally, little has been done to determine the composition of a healthy visitor accommodation typology that ensures lodging within the city for youth, the elderly and other disadvantaged groups.

For city planners, the opportunity to pro-actively plan for urban tourism activity in downtown Vancouver is during the development of strategic and land use plans, development guidelines and city policies. These documents form the basis of day-to-day decision making by Central Area planners, and it is therefore vital that a well-thought out tourism strategy based on research and an understanding of the visitor trade be a part of these documents. Recognizing that visitors are a user group of the city and have specific needs and preferences will help ensure that the most desirable and resident friendly form of development is set out.
SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY


City and County of San Francisco, Planning Department, 1990


Stage Two: Evaluation ‘Site and Community Context’ Summary. Vancouver: City of Vancouver.


Vancouver Courier. 1999.
APPENDIX A - SCHEDULE OF INTERVIEWS

Vancouver
Respondent #1, Market Analyst: Paul Vallee, Vice President Tourism Vancouver. June 11, 1997

Respondent #2, Urban Planner: Michael Gordon, Planner, Central Area Planning City of Vancouver. April 1997

Respondent #3, Regional Planner: Joe Stott, Senior Planner, Strategic Planning Department, Greater Vancouver Regional District. November 19, 1997.

Seattle
Respondent #4, Market Analyst: Anais Winant, VP Public Affairs, Seattle-King County Convention & Visitor Bureau June 12, 1997

Respondent #5, Business Association Representative: Irene Klima, Downtown Seattle Association June 15, 1997

Respondent #6, City PR Representative: Donna James, Director, Mayor's Office of Film & Development, City of Seattle June 15, 1997

Respondent #7, Urban Planner: Nathan Torgelson, Development Project Coordinator, Office of Economic Development, City of Seattle June 15, 1997

Portland
Respondent #8, Chief Planner: Michael Harrison, Chief Planner, Neighbourhood Planning, City of Portland June 16, 1997

Respondent #9, Development Manager: Less Prentice, Development Manager, Portland Development Commission June 17, 1997

Respondent #10 Business Association Representative: Lane Tobiassen, Program Manager, Marketing, Association for Portland Progress June 17, 1997

San Francisco
Respondent #11, Senior Planner: Inge S. Horton, Senior Planner, Planning Department, City and County of San Francisco June 19, 1997.
Urban Tourism Planning

• Briefly, what is your tourism development policy?

• Does the city planning, economic development, or parks and recreation departments set policies that specifically address tourism?

• When it comes to planning tourism activities, have efforts been made to improve communications, and coordinate activities between the visitors bureau, city departments, the Commission and other tourism stakeholders?

• How successful have these efforts been in creating an interactive planning milieu?

• Does the city get involved in creating the city’s official, marketed image? If so, in what way?

• Can you think of an example in the city of a street that was primarily a residential shopping street which is now used more intensely by visitors (a process commonly referred to as “serial reproduction”)? If so, how does this form of transformation affect the nature of the city?

• How is the city made user friendly for visitors?

• Do spatial problems arise from too many visitors in the city, i.e. rerouting circulation systems, zoning to protect residential areas; tourism accommodation zoning etc.?

• Does tourism in the city put stresses on infrastructure and service support systems such as police and health care?

• Are visitors encouraged to use transit in the city? Does the transit agency offer visitor fares?

• Does the City/Visitor Bureau/Association discourage tourism development on sites where it may negatively impact the character of a neighbourhood? If so, in what ways?

Tourism Demand Research

• How much does the Commission know about visitors behaviour in the city?

• Do consumption patterns differ between tourists and residents in regard to consumer goods and services? Is research available to support this information?

• In your judgment, should urban tourists or tourists accommodations be characterized for planning purposes as surrogate residents or surrogate residential housing? Why or Why not?

• Has there been any research done on downtown residents’ attitudes towards visitors and tourism? Any difference between those living in tourist districts and residents living in non-tourist area in the city?
Attractions

- Is the City/Visitor Bureau/Association involved in the design and develop of tourist attractions process, particularly as it pertains to creating sense of place, creating city images, and providing gathering spaces.

Accommodations

- What is the process for determining the spatial locale of visitor accommodations in the city?
- Just as housing for the homeless is an important topic today, is more effort needed to ensure that the young, the elderly, and the disadvantaged have access to the cultural and recreational resources housed in the city?
- Does the City/Visitor Bureau/Association encourage the development of hostels?
- Should zoning regulations covering bed and breakfast establishments in the city be made more-or-less stringent?

Public Consultation and Urban Tourism Planning

- Is public participation a critical component of the tourism development planning process? If so, which method of public involvement does the City/Visitor Bureau/Association use?
- Can you think a situation when residents of the city/region have complained about tourist activities? i.e., tour bus traffic, parking, disliked events, etc.
- Are there any other comments you have?
### APPENDIX C - DOWNTOWN HOTEL DEVELOPMENT IN 1998

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<th>NAME</th>
<th>ADDRESS</th>
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<td>Hotels completed during 1998</td>
<td>Best Western Downtown</td>
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<td>Delta Conference Plaza</td>
<td>550 W. Hastings</td>
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<td>SRO conversions in 1997-8</td>
<td>Ramada Inn</td>
<td>435 W. Pender</td>
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<td>Royal Hotel</td>
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<td>Gateway Hotel</td>
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<td>The Pinnacle</td>
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<td>111 Robson</td>
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**Total** 7,017