

Principles & Goals for Collaborative Neighbourhood-based Planning in the City of Vancouver

Coalition of Vancouver Neighbourhoods

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Mission of the Coalition of Vancouver Neighbourhoods

The mission of the Coalition of Vancouver Neighbourhoods (CVN) is to restore and strengthen the central role of neighbourhoods in shaping land use, transportation, and development decisions in the City of Vancouver.

We aim for a genuinely collaborative partnership among the City and its residents, organizations, and businesses.

Neighbourhood-based planning founded on meaningful community involvement in decision-making is essential to Vancouver's future as a liveable city of neighbourhoods that is more sustainable, affordable, resilient and inclusive.

Neighbourhood-based Planning

Neighbourhood-based planning builds on Vancouver's history of meaningful community involvement in land-use planning and decision-making, as exemplified in models such as *CityPlan*. Such planning allows for various approaches to be developed, supports the unique character of each of Vancouver's diverse neighbourhoods, and gives consideration to current and future needs. Neighbourhood-based planning should be a key component of any process leading to a new citywide plan.

This approach leads to better, more positive planning outcomes by incorporating community assets and the City's most valuable resource -- its people, their wisdom, experience, and priorities -- into the process. It educates, builds tolerance and understanding, and strengthens community as people with different experiences and viewpoints work collaboratively to find solutions, reach agreement, and share in success.

Collaboration with neighbourhoods also increases the likelihood that resulting plans will gain acceptance in the community and face fewer hurdles to effective implementation.

The Purpose of this Document

The purpose of this document is to promote principles and goals for a citywide plan and neighbourhood-based planning that will ensure a truly collaborative partnership that works for all.

Planning Principles and Goals

1. Collaborative partnership with residents and communities

The fundamental basis for community involvement in developing a citywide plan and neighbourhood-based decision-making is the local knowledge and physical, social, cultural, and economic contributions and investments of area residents, organizations, and businesses. All stages of such planning from start to finish, including definition of problems, setting of goals, and design of processes, through to implementation, should be based on a collaborative partnership between the City and these same groups.

A collaborative planning process should:

- Strive for solutions that work for everyone.
- Promote neighbourhood-based planning.
- Work closely with local residents, neighbourhood associations, and other community groups to develop an open, collaborative, local planning process that is based on transparency and good faith and involves all interested community members.
- Foster collaboration on an ongoing basis for current and future planning processes.
- Respect existing neighbourhood plans and community visions that have been created in genuine collaboration with communities.
- During the implementation of the planning process, avoid interim rezoning and significant local land-use changes if they would foreclose options for a new plan.

If staff and community cannot agree on a planning proposal put forward as a result of a collaborative partnership, staff should report this to Council and await further instructions. Council should seek input from both the community and staff before deciding on a way forward.

2. Accountability

Vancouver's planning processes should be accountable first and foremost to its residents and communities.

Priority goals should include:

- Acting in the best interests of residents and neighbourhoods, as defined by the local community, including owners, renters, businesses, organizations, and vulnerable populations.
- Respecting residents and their views as central components of decision-making.

3. Transparency of the planning process

In order to facilitate transparency, a goal of the planning process must be to ensure that all pertinent information is readily available to all concerned. To this end, the planning process should:

- Be based on applicable factual information and data, including evidence-based research that is clearly demonstrable to residents.
- Include detailed data and analysis on current and future population demographics, growth projections (e.g. Regional Growth Strategy and Census data), zoning, and existing zoned capacity.

- Include detailed and comprehensive information on projected and actual impacts of major transportation or development projects, as well as other significant planning decisions and policy changes.
- Ensure that information provided to the public is timely, accurate, detailed and complete.
- Ensure open access to detailed land-use and transportation planning data and financial and budget information.
- Provide comprehensive and appropriate notification, in a timely and accessible manner, to individuals and groups affected by planning decisions.
- Provide full transparency on all steps involved and rationale for decisions made.

4. Vancouver as community, not commodity

Our goal is a vibrant, prosperous, affordable, and liveable city of neighbourhoods that values and encourages the diversity and character of local communities and ensures inclusivity for all. To this end, planning processes should place the interest of communities and residents above investment interests and activities in planning, development and policy.

5. A liveable, sustainable City

Meaningful community involvement and influence in land-use and transportation planning and regulation is essential for ensuring Vancouver and its neighbourhoods support efforts to increase liveability, sustainability, affordability, resiliency and inclusivity. The Coalition of Vancouver Neighbourhoods takes the view that applying these basic principles and goals citywide will facilitate a vibrant, diverse, and successful city that results in the well being of its residents now and into the future.