

The Sustainable Region Initiative

**Presented to the Parks Partnership Forum
April 23, 2002**

The what and why of sustainability

■ What is Sustainability ?

- Integrating economic, social and environmental perspectives to meet current needs while not compromising the ability to meet future needs

■ Why Sustainability ?

- It is comprehensive/relevant in dealing with community issues; current and future focus; large overlap with our mandates; global movement; motivating

Key characteristics

- the three legged stool
 - integrating environmental, economic and social dimensions; the triple bottom line
- beyond the horizon
 - short term to inter-generational analysis
- waste not, want not
 - eco-efficient, cyclical processes, within limits
- core social values
- enduring prosperity

Changing emphases

■ From:

- short term
- silo
- minimum cost
- treatment
- isolated standards
- infrastructure
- planning

To:

- longer term
- integrated
- triple bottom line
- prevention
- integrated risk management
- sustainability
- planning

A (highly?) hypothetical example of an application to Parks

■ From:

- undifferentiated recreation opportunities, seen as conflicting with environmental values, funded year to year from tax sources and therefore minimum cost driven

■ To:

- economic development opportunities, as part of a broader financially viable and environmentally sound eco-tourism system, providing jobs or educational opportunities for target social groups

A three-level approach

- GVRD as a sustainable organization (adjusting business practices and corporate policies)
- GVRD mandates (plans and services) reviewed and amended to conform to sustainability principles
- GVRD as a partner with business, community groups, other governments and agencies, and the public in advancing regional sustainability

Outcomes: Ends and Means

- a new vision for Greater Vancouver
- a framework for building a positive urban regime
- a basis for government partnerships and actions (GVRD/GVTA, municipalities, senior governments)
- a set of integrated and adaptive regional plans and strategies
- realigned and re-energized organization
- connection to and example for global initiatives

Challenges and Opportunities

- 'Sustainability don't play'
 - redirect to 'what kind of Vancouver/GVRD do we want and how do we sustain it'
- Credibility of regional government, broader scope
 - inter-connectedness and relevance;
 - recognize GVRD role to facilitate not to deliver; connecting the partners
 - partners want to engage, and accept and endorse role of GVRD as coordinating agency;

Even more challenges and opportunities

- Time consuming (research, consensus building, formal adoption processes for plans); questionable implementation record
 - not a fixed plan with a fixed timetable
 - harvest the crops that grow, sow the seeds for next season; focus on results
- Distracting media events (Provincial actions, transportation crises, governance)
 - treat as sustainability issues

Broad Approach

- raise profile - constellation of events
- engage partners - partnership conferences
- bring the streams of discussion together and harvest results in mid-2002; develop interim vision and principles
- engage public at more local and concrete level; focus on specific themes, e.g. jobs, growth, transportation, air, recreation
- validate vision and principles, develop specific plans (e.g. new LRSP, STP, AQMP etc.)

The story so far

- Establish new direction, Spring 2001
- GVRD Board resolution July 27
- Council of Councils, September 22
- Are We on the Right Track? January 17
- Formed partners committee, January 17
- Series of conferences, presentations, tv shows

Next Steps

- Ongoing presentations to Councils etc., April 15
 - Direction for local community involvement
- Liberal GVRD MLA caucus briefing, May 9
- Partners conferences
 - May 23, SRI (Environment) - Smartgrowth
 - June 6, SRI (Social) - United Way
 - June 13, SRI (Economic) - Business Council of B.C.
- Council of Councils - May 25
- GVRD committee/board reports - July

Targets and Goals

- Immediate (Summer 2002)
 - Board endorsed direction, vision, principles
- Short term (1 to 5 years)
 - working partnership & engaged public
 - set of integrated regional plans
 - aligned business practices and working culture
- Long term (5 to 100 years)
 - broad aligned urban regime
 - a sustainable region in a better world

Working towards

A sustainable region

in

A better world