

Vancouver: Developing a World City

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Introduction

Purpose of research:

- Provide a discussion of Vancouver, B.C. in relation to its status and development as a world city.

Seeks to answer four questions:

1. How has Vancouver's historical development helped shape its current status in the world today as a world city?
2. What are some broad development trends that have occurred in Vancouver?
3. What are the current planning efforts, infrastructure, economy and social and cultural environment factors that have affected Vancouver's status as a world city?
4. How does the city of Vancouver compare to Toronto and Montreal?

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Structure of Presentation:

- Background: Defining World Cities
 - Section 1: Historical Development and Planning
 - Section 2: Infrastructure Investment and Mega Projects
 - Section 3: Current Planning and Future Opportunities
 - Section 4: Vancouver, Toronto and Montreal: A Brief Comparison
 - Conclusion
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Defining World Cities

Vancouver's current status:

- Global leader in terms of liveability
- Leader in planning processes
- Increased economic opportunities in the near future

Beaverstock, Smith & Taylor (1999)

"...the central facet of the world city literature has been to *rank* cities according to their disproportionate geo-economic power in the world system" (p.446)

Tomas Hutton (1998) describes city growth to include;

"new dynamics such as amenities, entrepreneurship, human capital, immigration, information technologies and systems, opportunities in niche markets and local governance factors"

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Historical Development and Planning

Brief History (pre-WWII)

- Location for First Nations fishing, hunting and trading. Rich forestry industry with first mill in 1862.
- Incorporated as the City of Vancouver on April 6, 1886.
- Arrival of railway and first cargo shipment to the Port of Vancouver

Historical Development (post WWII)

- Early economic foundation created by the natural resource sector.
 - 1970's – increased connection with Pacific Rim
 - 1980's – development boom due to increased immigration (concentrated outside Vancouver).
 - 1990's – focus on bringing people back to the core
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Historical Development and Planning

Regional Municipal Growth/Amalgamation

- Expansion limited by the mountains and ocean.
- Greater Vancouver Regional District formed in 1967.

Historical Planning

- 1928 – Bartholomew Plan
 - 1970's and 1980's citizens wanted input into planning.
 - 1980 – Goals for Vancouver.
 - Included over 5000 citizen participants.
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Historical Development and Planning

Historical Planning Cont'd

- 1986 – *The Vancouver Plan: The City's strategy for managing change*

 - 1987-1990 *Capital Plan*

 - **Social Planning – Impact on Residential Planning**
 - Trevor Boddy (2005) – “Social Bonus Zoning” and “Vancouverism”
 - Link development to the creation of public amenities.
 - High density housing to attract individuals to downtown core.
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Infrastructure Investment and Mega Projects

Port of Vancouver

- Developed spurred by natural resources, CPR in 1887, gold rush between 1881-1911, grain in 1917, WWII.
 - Largest Port in Canada.
 - First in North America for foreign exports.
 - Managed by the Vancouver Fraser Port Authority
 - Amalgamation on January 1, 2008 (Fraser, North Fraser and Vancouver Port authorities).
 - Part of *Asia-Pacific Gateway and Corridor Initiative*
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Infrastructure Investment and Mega Projects

Vancouver International Airport

- Created in 1930 with large expansion during WWII
 - Became one the first four airports to be transferred from federal government to non-profit organization.
 - High global ranking in terms of service;
 - Record numbers last year with continued expansion planned.
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Infrastructure Investment and Mega Projects

Expo 86 and Legacy Projects

- Last world exposition held in North America
 - Theme: *Transportation and Communications: World in Motion – World in Touch*
 - 54 countries with more than 20 million visitors
 - Important infrastructure legacies
 - Downtown development (False Creek)
 - Canada Place
 - SkyTrain
 - Science Centre
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Current Planning and Future Opportunities

Vancouver City Plan: Directions for Vancouver

- Strong citizen participation
 - Enhances historical planning;
 - Housing variety.
 - Job closer to residence to cut back on travel.
 - Community based policies.
 - Integrated service teams.
 - Emphasis on environmental conservation and sustainability.
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Current Planning and Future Opportunities

Environmental/Sustainability Projects

- Ensure development and enhancement projects meet environmental standards
- Eco-Density project

Vancouver Transportation Plan

- Created in 1996 to increase walking, cycling and use of public transit.
 - Canada Line to connect Richmond and airport to downtown.
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Current Planning and Future Opportunities

Economic Development Planning

- Vancouver Economic Development Corporation (VEDC)
 - Created in 1996 to develop long terms plans
 - Current planning using *Guiding Principles: Economic Development in the City of Vancouver*.
 - Seeks to develop competitive business climate.
 - World class industry clusters

 - Vancouver Board of Trade
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Current Planning and Future Opportunities

Economic Development Planning

- Vancouver Fraser Port Authority
 - Focus on increasing ties with Asia-Pacific Gateway

 - Metro Vancouver
 - *Livable Region Strategic Plan*
 - Currently developing Regional Growth Strategy
 - *Sustainable Region Initiative*
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Current Planning and Future Opportunities

Asia-Pacific Gateway

- Important opportunity for increased city growth.
- Trade opportunities will utilize existing Port, Airport and communications infrastructure.

2010 Olympic Games

- Paper focuses on planned legacies.
 - Sustainability is the focus within three areas
 - Social
 - Economic
 - Environmental
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Vancouver, Toronto and Montreal

Similar Development Pressures

- Ray Tomalty (1997) outline reactions:
 - Vancouver – environment, land use, housing supply and affordability
 - Montreal – fiscal, regional economic development, sprawl control
 - Toronto – focus on environment in the 80's but economic development and sprawl during the 90's
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Vancouver, Toronto and Montreal

Current Word Status

- Toronto and Montreal rank higher due to economic strengths.
- Global region strength, national and international headquarters, merged stock exchanges.

Non-economic comparison

- Mercer Consulting Quality of Life Survey
 - Vancouver, Toronto, and Montreal
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Vancouver, Toronto and Montreal

Current Socio-economic Conditions

- All three cities experiencing population growth during last census period.
 - Toronto experiencing sprawl while Vancouver's downtown expands.
 - Toronto population now 44% immigrants
 - Montreal immigrant source countries unlike Vancouver and Toronto
 - Vancouver experiencing fastest growing labour market.
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Conclusion

- Vancouver has experienced strong economic growth but focused on liveability in planning.
 - Vancouver is globally unique in terms of “Social Bonus Zoning”
 - Control urban sprawl
 - Vancouver has made important infrastructure investments.
 - Now focusing on economy but with sustainability as strict criteria for development.
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Conclusion

World City Status

- Liveability and sustainability currently do not have a lot of weight in the definition of a world city.
 - Perhaps it is with increased attention on the environment, cities like Vancouver who focus on sustainability should be rewarded with higher ranking?
 - Vancouver still has economic opportunities to develop without a definition shift (Asia-Pacific Gateway and 2010 Olympics).
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