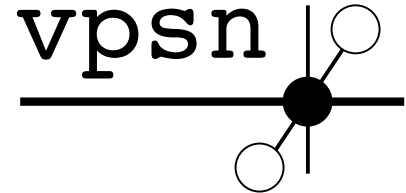


October 16, 2006



## NEWS

- Live within 60 metres of a billboard and don't like it? Let Council know. They might be able to take it down for you.
- Homelessness Awareness Week ... and the daily concern of affordable shelter
- Three Items on Housing and Homelessness: (1) TODAY City Council Debates a Moratorium on Rooming House Conversions; (2) TODAY Affordability By Design - Lecture at SFU; (3) Housing Squat: occupying an as-yet-unidentified building

## EVENTS

- Saturday October 22 at 11:00am - Guerrilla Tree Planting in Cedar Cottage
- Tuesday October 24 at 7:30pm - Privatizing Health Care - The Disease or the Cure?
- Wednesday October 25 - November 5 - 3rd Annual Downtown Eastside Heart of the City Festival
- Friday October 27 - Monthly Critical Mass Ride
- November 2, 7-8:30 pm - A talk with Brent Toderian—the City of Vancouver's new Director of Planning
- Tuesday November 14 at 7:30pm - Does Public Space Really Belong to Everyone?
- **Tuesday November 28 at 7:30 - Privatization and the Public Good**

Live within 60 metres of a billboard and don't like it? Let Council know. They might be able to take it down for you.

This past Tuesday at City Council a motion was introduced that would see the removal of all billboards within 60 metres of residences. A hopeful sign, pardon the pun, for all those who have to fall asleep next to the flood-lit glow of one of these outdoor advertising behemoths.

Introduced by Councillor David Cadman, the motion was an attempt to push the City to start enforcing its own sign by-law. The bylaw, created six years ago by a unanimous decision, prohibits signage within the 60 metre distance of peoples homes. However, the City was required to grandparent this decision into place, and wasn't allowed to act on it for five years. Cadman's motion was, essentially, a reminder to Council to adhere to their previous decision.

Regrettably - though perhaps prudently - a number of Councillors expressed concern about passing the motion. With a long-standing billboard-related battle with the owner of the Lee Building (Main and Broadway) still on-going, there was some reluctance to commit the City to a blanket removal of offending billboards. In this case, one of the key issues revolves around the question of who should pay for the

removal of the billboard. A subsequent motion by Raymond Louie requested that the issue of blanket bylaw enforcement be referred to staff so that they could report on the various legal considerations and other options.

What Councillors did seem to agree on, however, was that the City should work to try and get the most troublesome billboards removed as quickly as possible - suggesting that a case-by-case removal of non-compliant signage was a more palatable route. Councillor Peter Ladner closed the discussion by suggesting that "people who are being bothered by [these billboards] should let us know so we can focus on the worst ones and try to deal with it in as simple and expeditious fashion as possible."

**What you can do >>** Is there a bothersome billboard within 60 metres of your residence? Write Council and let them know. Write to Mayor and Council at Vancouver City Hall, 453 West 12th Avenue, Vancouver, B.C. V5Y 1V4, or send them a blanket email at [mayorandcouncil@vancouver.ca](mailto:mayorandcouncil@vancouver.ca). Be sure to copy Councillor Cadman with all your correspondence so that he has a record of it. He can be reached by mail at the aforementioned address, and by email at [clrcadman@vancouver.ca](mailto:clrcadman@vancouver.ca). Be sure to ask for a response.

**For more information >>** To read the motion that Councillor Cadman introduced, or the minutes of the Council meeting:

<http://vancouver.ca/ctyclerk/cclerk/20061017/ag20061017.htm>

## Homelessness Awareness Week ... and the daily concern of affordable shelter

Between 2002 and 2005 the number of homeless individuals increased from 663 to 1291 an increase of over 100 percent. Homelessness is an issue that has implications on a number of levels. It speaks to the growing gap between the rich and poor, the perversely unaffordable nature of housing and rental accommodation, the overcrowding of unsafe and unhealthy shelters, and the inability of three levels of government to collaborate to find solutions. It is a social issue, a moral issue and an issue of justice. And when the homeless are forced onto our streets, it is also a public space issue.

A few housing events are taking place this week - coincident, it seems, with Homelessness Awareness Week.

## City Council Debates a Moratorium on Rooming House Conversions

First, this Thursday (**October 19**), Vancouver City Council will be debating a motion to stop the conversions of single-room accommodation (SRA) in hotels and rooming houses. The motion was put forward by Counsellor Tim Stevenson in response to both the increase in homelessness, and the loss of substantial numbers of existing SRA stock to conversions. The existing SRA bylaw requires developers to pay \$5000 per

unit they convert into the City's Housing Fund - but with new units costing as much as 40 times that amount, the bylaw is turning into both a bad bluff and a dead-end. With the clamour to gentrify the downtown core, this sort of financial disincentive lacks the teeth to do the job. The proposed motion would put a moratorium on conversions so that the City can assess the impact of this housing stock and determine what sort of changes need to take place to the existing bylaw.

**What you can do** >> make a deputation to Council in support of Councillor Stevenson's motion. The Council meeting takes place at 2:00pm, and you can view the agenda, as well as the motion in question at the following website: <http://vancouver.ca/ctyclerk/cclerk/20061019/pe20061019.htm>. To get on the speakers list you have to register with Meeting Coordinator Diane Claremont - either by email at [diane.claremont@vancouver.ca](mailto:diane.claremont@vancouver.ca), or by phone, 604.871.6371.

If you can't make the Council meeting but still want to let them know about your concerns, send them an email at [mayorandcouncil@vancouver.ca](mailto:mayorandcouncil@vancouver.ca). Be sure to ask for a response.

**For more information** >> The City's Housing Department webpages contain various resources, including SRA related materials, and the existing by-law. See <http://vancouver.ca/commsvcs/housing/sra/index.htm>.

The 2005 Greater Vancouver Homeless Count *On Our Streets and In Our Shelters* provides an overview of changes in homelessness, as well as a profile of the different demographic communities that comprise Vancouver's homeless population. It can be found at: [www.gvrd.bc.ca/homelessness/pdfs/HomelessCount2005Final.pdf](http://www.gvrd.bc.ca/homelessness/pdfs/HomelessCount2005Final.pdf).

Pivot Legal Services produced an excellent report late last month entitled *Cracks in the Foundation: Solving the Housing Crisis in Canada's Poorest Neighbourhood*. The report discussed the net loss of housing for low-income individuals and projected that "if no new low-cost housing is built and the current stock of low cost housing continues to close and deteriorate at its present rate, visitors to Vancouver in 2010 will see nearly three times as many homeless people living on the streets of Vancouver as they see today." And while the City is actually building housing units for low-income singles, it is doing it at a rate that is vastly outpaced by demand. View the report at [www.pivotlegal.org](http://www.pivotlegal.org).

### **Affordability By Design - Lecture at SFU**

From the SFU City Program Website:

It doesn't get much more American than this: **Karrie Jacobs** went on the road, looking for happiness in a thousand square feet. She went in search of "The Perfect \$100,000 House." After traversing 14,000 miles, meeting with dozens of architects and builders, she wrote a book about it...

[Jacobs] will explore how the idea of home has been upended by the intensity of the current real-estate boom, how the populist spirit that once drove the Modernist movement has been eclipsed by the current obsession with excess, and how that populism re-emerges.

Her talk will combine a whirlwind version of the roadtrip and an argument for a more pragmatic and modest approach to homebuilding.”

The event takes place on Thursday October 19 at 7 pm at SFU Harbour Centre. Admission is free but reservations are required. To get your name on the list call 604-291-5100 or e-mail [cs\\_hc@sfu.ca](mailto:cs_hc@sfu.ca).

### **Housing Squat: occupying an as-yet-unidentified building**

The third housing event mentioned here is for those a little more inclined towards civil disobedience. The Anti-Poverty Committee is holding an event this **Sunday October 22 at 4:00pm** in which they are asking people to support a squat. In particular, their website exhorts people to “come out and use your presence to defend those inside [the squat] who are fighting for the right to sleep in peace.”

Other events on their website suggest that they will be planning actions at the Board of Trade and City Hall over the next few weeks.

For more information >> <http://apc.resist.ca/>

## **OTHER UPCOMING EVENTS**

### **Saturday October 22 at 11:00am - Guerrilla Tree Planting in Cedar Cottage**

Join members of the Vancouver Public Space Network on **Saturday October 21st** and support the 1000 Cedars in Cedar Cottage initiative. We'll be meeting in the north parking lot @ Trout Lake Community Centre (3350 Victoria Drive, Victoria@17th) at **11am**, rain or shine.

We have started planting small Western Redcedar seedlings and request your help in reaching our goal! Please bring a spade, trowels and other tree planting tools to help create Vancouver's newest urban forest. For more information contact Adam at [aav@telus.net](mailto:aav@telus.net).

### **Tuesday October 24 at 7:30pm - Privatizing Health Care - The Disease or the Cure?**

Part of the VPL's "Speak Up" Series. Healthcare services are essential to our well being at every stage of our life. Join us as Speak Up examines issues associated with

our health care system. Is universal health care important? What constitutes universal health care? Can it be better provided through a single government-controlled model, a totally privatized model or a mix? What is the experience in other countries? How does Canada's health care system compare to others? With panelists Margaret McGregor, Robert G. Evans, and Don Copeman. The event is free and takes place at the Library's Central Branch, 350 Georgia Street. A replay of the discussion happens one (**November 2**) week later at the Oakridge Branch (#191-650 West 41<sup>st</sup> Street).

For more information >> <http://www.vpl.ca/speakup/privatizing-health-care.html>

## **Wednesday October 25 - November 5 - 3rd Annual Downtown Eastside Heart of the City Festival**

12 days of arts, music, workshops and more... For more information visit [www.heartofthecityfestival.com](http://www.heartofthecityfestival.com) or call 604.254.6911.

## **Friday October 27 - Monthly Critical Mass Ride**

Critical Mass is a grassroots reclamation of public space -- a bike ride and skate -- held the last Friday of every month. You are invited to enjoy the safety and comfort in the car-free space that we create by simply riding together! Bicycles, skateboards, rollerskates, self propelled couches, and any other form of human powered locomotion are all welcomed! Meet between 5:00-5:30 at the Vancouver Art Gallery (Georgia Street Side).

For more information >> <http://www.bikesexual.org/cm/home.htm>.

## **November 2, 7-8:30 pm - A talk with Brent Toderian—the City of Vancouver's new Director of Planning**

Come hear what the new head of Planning has in mind for the city. And maybe a chance for you to drop in a word or two about the importance of public space. The free event takes place at SFU, 515 West Hastings Street. You'll need to register by sending an email to [cs\\_hc@sfu.ca](mailto:cs_hc@sfu.ca) or calling 604.291.5100.

## **Tuesday November 14 at 7:30pm - Does Public Space Really Belong to Everyone?**

Great cities are renowned for their public spaces. Vancouver is described as one of the most beautiful and best-planned cities in the world.

This evening's panel discussion "explores the nature of our public spaces and their relationship to democracy. Are our public spaces increasing or decreasing? What are the important public spaces in Vancouver? Are the private spaces of shopping malls now our most popular gathering spaces? Do public spaces always have to be public

squares? What are the trends in public space development in Vancouver and world-wide? What is the impact of "naming opportunities" for our public spaces? What is the relationship between public spaces and democracy?" The panel discussion features urban designer Bruce Haden, architect Bing Thom and VPSN co-founder Andrew Pask. The event takes place at the Central Library (350 Georgia Street). A second panel discussion takes place a week later (**November 22**) at the Hastings Branch, 2674 East Hastings.

For more information >> <http://www.vpl.ca/speakup/public-space.html>

### **Tuesday November 28 at 7:30 - Privatization and the Public Good**

The final "Speak Up" night at the library. "The 2006 *Speak Up* series on Privatization and the Public Good wraps up with an evening of public dialogue. Representatives of the various sessions held during the fall will be providing some introductory comments and the evening will be given over to public participation." This event takes place at the Central Library.

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[www.vancouverpublicspace.ca](http://www.vancouverpublicspace.ca)

[info@vancouverpublicspace.ca](mailto:info@vancouverpublicspace.ca)