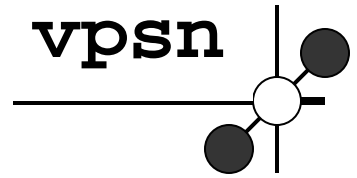


Billboard Information Sheet



There will be two public meetings this week pertaining to the Squamish Nation's proposal to install billboards along side the Burrard, Lions Gate and Second Narrows bridges. This is a good opportunity to learn more and to speak up. There are some regrettably limited (though still important) opportunities to express your opinion.

The meetings take place on the following dates:

- **Wednesday August 23, 4:00pm-8:00pm, Canadian Centre for Peace, 1825 West 16th Avenue, Vancouver**
- **Thursday August 24, 4:00pm-8:00pm, Squamish Nation Recreation Centre, 100 Capilano Road, via North Vancouver**

The Vancouver Public Space Network had hoped that there would be some better opportunities for meaningful community input into this process. Apparently, however, this is unlikely to be the case. Squamish Nation representatives indicated that the public would have a chance to "fill out comment cards" but that the meetings were structured more as open houses. A quote in last week's Vancouver Courier by Toby Baker, project manager, suggest that the input will have little impact one way or the other: "'It's not a consultation-it's not, 'What do you think?' This is what we want changed or whatever. We're sharing the technical components of the signs and the locations and just informing them of what the plan we have is."

The proposed billboards - five on a parcel owned by the Squamish at the south end of Burrard Bridge in Kitsilano and eight more on the North Shore - are subject to an Environmental Assessment process (actually four separate ones, for each of the different plots of land affected). The process, however, is fairly limited in scope - covering technical, health and safety components of the sign, rather than their significant aesthetic and visual impact.

The Squamish Nation has indicated that part of the reasons that they plan to install the billboards is to generate revenue for their community. This is a legitimate concern; however it is not clear what alternative sources of social enterprise have been investigated by the band, and whether this represents the most effective mitigation of their concerns. Certainly, the proposal has a number of other important considerations that do not appear to have been addressed - such as the impact of the billboards on the local view-shed, the potential to distract drivers and cyclists at a three high-volume transit pinch-points, and the injection of corporate advertising into what are quintessential features in the Vancouver urban environment. Among other things, the three bridges are key public spaces... and the billboards in question will form a blight on the local landscape.

There has been an active back-and-forth in the letters-to-the-editor pages of local papers. While the development has incensed a number of people, there are other folks who seem to suggest that opposing the billboards represents some sort of double standard - wherein the proposed Squamish billboards are seen as problematic while other billboards are not. The VPSN believes that this is a misleading position to take and that all billboard proposals of this magnitude represent a problem that equally warrant community concern.

...turn overleaf to find out what you can do>>

What you can do >>

The following points cover a few possibilities for action:

- * Take a look at the on-line information about the billboards. There are good articles to be found, as well as information on the Government of Canada's Environmental Registry (visit http://www.ceaa-acee.gc.ca/050/index_e.cfm and enter the CEAR numbers listed below.) Have a look at the Squamish Nation's website at www.squamish.net for info on the community.
- * Plan to visit one of the open-house discussions this week. Be prepared to make your opinion on the issue known to any representatives of the Squamish that might be present. Remember to be courteous and open to discussion - but be sure you are able to state your position firmly and clearly
- * Fill out a comment card as well - and if you have questions or concerns be sure to ask for a response. Don't forget to include your contact details.
- * Better yet, write a letter to the Squamish First Nation (address below) and bring a copy with you. It's sometimes easier to think your position through in advance... and if it still holds after the meeting, you'll be able to leave the letter in the comment box as well.
- * Be sure to quote the respective Environmental Assessment numbers clearly - in the subject line of the letter. These numbers are CEAR 04-01-8868, 04-1-8870, 04-01-8872 and 04-01-8874.
- * Send a copy of your letter to the Environmental Assessment office (address below) and clearly request that they include your letter in the **Environmental Registry**. This is important, because the EA office tracks this feedback and it has the potential to make a difference.
- * **What to put in your letter.** Note any concerns you have about the impact of the billboards on the local view-shed, potential impact on vehicular traffic and any other points that you wish to raise.
- * Also important - though the EA review process will receive concerns pertaining to the aesthetic and visual concerns posed by the billboard, the actual mandate of the review is much narrower. Remember to use the "health and safety" framing of the EA requirement as a component of your letter.
- * Suggest that this sort of development is worthy of more meaningful public consultation. Again, remember to include the CEAR numbers. Also, if you have questions or concerns - ask for a response! Don't forget to include your contact details.
- * Be sure to let other people know about the open-houses and opportunity to comment. This is an important issue, but the open-houses have not been widely advertised and many people do not know that they're happening. Pass this email along to your friends!

Letters can be sent to Toby Baker, Project Manager, Squamish Nation, P.O. Box 86131, North Vancouver, BC, V7L 4J5.

Copy your letter to Dagmar Lynch, Environmental Specialist, Environmental Assessment Office, Suite 600, 1138 Melville Street, Vancouver, BC, V6E 4S3.

For more information >> In addition to the resources suggested above, there are a number of articles available on line on the subject. A recent piece in the Courier gives an overview of things to date:

<http://www.vancourier.com/issues06/083106/news/083106nn2.html>

Other articles are referenced in the August VPSN **espace** newsletter.