



Welcome to the second edition of the VPSN's [€-space](#) newsletter.

[€-space](#) is sent out every few week or so... currently with a definite emphasis on 'so.' What can we say? - we're getting started and up to speed with lots of projects. There's lots going on, and this bulletin aims to provide updates and information on topical public space items in the city of Vancouver and its environs.

We hope you like the publication. It's short and sweet - though maybe little text-heavy in places. (That will all change once we take that VSB course in copper-plate etching).

We hope this little folio helps you to connect to some of the great public spaces and places and issues in the city. Please, let us know what you think.

Better still, after you're done reading [€-space](#), please feel to leave it a public space for others to discover. Or, circulate it to your friends, colleagues and loved ones. Press forward. Hit resend. While you're at

it, print a copy and slip it to those two kids from down the street that keep trying to sell you chocolate almonds. The sidewalk is their highway! And given their daily involvement in public space, they are more than likely, (you can almost take our word on it), to trade one of those boxes of chocolates just for a copy of this publication. Go on, try it!

If you've got a relevant project or event that other people should know about, please let us know. If you'd like to contribute, then please do! Similarly, to get your name on our mailing list, please send an email to the above address with your pertinent contact details. Website in development. (Ideas? Send them to [info@vancouverpublicspace.ca](mailto:info@vancouverpublicspace.ca)).

Yours sincerely,

The Vancouver Public Space Network

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## I. [VPSN News](#)

### August Monthly Meeting - Brainstorming Big Brother

The VPSN's August monthly meeting will focus on issues of surveillance. With the recent proposal by Vancouver Police Chief Jamie Graham to install cameras in areas of "civil unrest," the presence of closed-circuit television (CCTV) is once again in the news. And yet surveillance devices have already become near-ubiquitous in certain parts of the city - above doorways and storeways, in alleyways and alongside traffic intersections. What exactly are the implications of this?

There are questions of understanding and of activity: What impact does increased surveillance have on civil liberties and quality of life? And what can be done to highlight these issues and challenge the push to monitor citizens the second they step out of their door in the morning? Is there a creative response that we at the Vancouver Public Space Network can take on these matters?

The next VPSN meeting will workshop these issues and look at a few creative ventures through which members can creatively engage with glass eyes, surveillance-brokers and any other operatives that are plugging the securitization of our urban spaces.

For more information >> Please email [info@vancouverpublicspace.ca](mailto:info@vancouverpublicspace.ca); Stay tuned for date and location information.

## Guerrilla Gardening Workshop and Seedball Making Project

The VPSN's July meeting featured an excellent guerrilla-gardening tools workshop facilitated by Catherine B. The evening session walked a dozen folks through the very process of making seedballs - a simple, yet very effective means of re-greening urban spaces.

Seedballs are little clusters of seeds, soil and clay which, when mixed together, produce a fun and effective way to populate the abandoned spaces of the city with wild-flowers, edible landscaping, berry patches and any of a number of other great, green plants. The seeds are protected by the clay, which, in combination with the soil, provides a good growing medium in which the seeds can germinate. Seedballs, once dried, can be broadcast in brownfields and laneways, and other places that need plants.

Instructions for this will be available on our website in the near future. We hope to have other seedball making workshops in the next few months.

For more information on seedballs, or to find out about future workshops >> email Catherine at [info@vancouverpublicspace.ca](mailto:info@vancouverpublicspace.ca)

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## 1000 Cedars for Cedar Cottage - Guerrilla Forestry!

The Vancouver Public Space Network is looking for volunteers and gardening/tree-planting equipment to help plant 1000 cedar seedlings in Cedar Cottage. We're hoping to organize this so that we can put the seedlings in the ground during the late summer/fall when the trees will be less likely to be crisped by the sun. If you can lend a hand, please send an email to [info@vancouverpublicspace.ca](mailto:info@vancouverpublicspace.ca). Call this Act One in VPSN's Urban Forestry Initiative... to played out on scenes all across a fine East Vancouver neighbourhood.

The truth is Cedar Cottage was picked because of its name. But that being said, it's also a good neighbourhood on which to focus attention. The historical community lies within an almost triangular boundary linking Kingsway, Broadway and Nanaimo streets, with a short jog between Clark and Knight Streets thrown in for good measure. At one time, the towering cedars would have been abundant here as elsewhere in Vancouver but then they were mostly all cut down. There are still some good examples (like Clark Park) and there's always the opportunity for a few more.

We thought 'a catchy challenge like '1000 cedars for Cedar Cottage' seemed to have resonance. If you can't be part of the mass plant, but could still take a few cedars for your own back yard, give us a call.

The seedlings were provided by gardener extraordinaire Justin Tilson, who was able to rescue them from the mulcher at a Fraser Valley nursery. The subject of a recent

piece by the Globe and Mail, Justin recently acquired a total of 10,000 of the western red cedar (*Thuja plicata*) seedlings and is eager to find them homes. The VPSN decided a little guerrilla tree-planting was in order!

Consider planting a seedling in your back yard. If you leave a little donation, you'll also help to fund the work Justin is doing with his own community garden project.

For more information on Justin's cedar project >> [www.savethecedars.com](http://www.savethecedars.com)

To help with the VPSN's urban forestry initiative, email Adam at >> [info@vancouverpublicspace.ca](mailto:info@vancouverpublicspace.ca)

For information on Kensington Cedar Cottage >> [http://vancouver.ca/community\\_profiles/kensington-cedar/history.htm](http://vancouver.ca/community_profiles/kensington-cedar/history.htm)

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## VPSN Deputation to Vancouver Public Library: Beer Company Shotguns popular public space with 30 foot Kokanee Can!

The VPL's central library building was the site of an interesting corporate branding event in late May of this year when a 30-foot, flood-lit Kokanee can was installed in the north plaza. The can was part of the corporate wrapping of a night-time display of mountain-bike riding. Every 1/2 hour or so, on the evening of May 15, a couple of riders would take a run at a dirt ramp, do some flips and pedal away. In between rides an MC bleated.

Kokanee wrap and ribbon was dispersed throughout the plaza and a sharp beer-logo'd 4x4 was parked prominently for all to see. Though Kokanee would probably claim otherwise, the riders ended up being adornments to the corporate branding exercise that took place. Which is too bad, because without all the beer paraphernalia, the event actually might have been cool.

What made this event so interesting is the fact that, for at least a year now, the VPL actually had a strong policy in place designed to protect its public space from this very sort of advertising endeavour. The Library's Public Space



Policy specifically prohibits for-profit uses of its popular north and south plaza areas. Non-profits can rent the space, but not regular old, profit driven corporations. The policy is a bit of an oasis in a downtown area that is increasingly seeing advertising splashed on any available space.

What seems to have happened in this case - though the specific details haven't been confirmed - was that Kokanee approached a non-profit organization and got them to rent the space. The NPO, presumably for some sort of donation, then re-let the plaza to the beer company.

The VPSN, which supports the intent and spirit of the Library's Public Space policy, was dismayed by the actions of the brewery. In June 2006, we took the opportunity to make a deputation to the Library Board to express our concerns about the loop-hole in the policy.

The good news is that Board members were quite supportive of the VPSN's presentation. Many of them appeared to share our concerns over the use of the space, and the means through which Kokanee had accessed it. Immediately following our presentation, library staff introduced an amendment to the existing policy that would prohibit NPOs from flipping public space to for-profit corporations. This is a very positive step, for which VPL staff and Board members are to be congratulated.

More information: to see the VPL's Public Space Policy >>  
<http://www.vpl.ca/general/PubSpacePolicy.html>

For a copy of the VPSN deputation, send us an email >>  
[info@vancouverpublicspace.ca](mailto:info@vancouverpublicspace.ca)

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## Website development

The VPSN website is currently in development. Thank you to everyone who submitted ideas and suggestions on its design and content. A lot of folks submitted suggestions, all of which were compiled into a draft content map (available upon request). These, in turn, were turned over to our volunteer web designer who has now busied himself with the task of translating them into our on-line visage. Some rough layout ideas have been prepared and look good. Expect the entry page to be up during the week of July 24.

If you have any photos or images that you'd like to submit, please send them our way. Also, if you have a hankering to do some writing on public space, let us know. We're looking for volunteers to help with copy-writing, editing and undertaking other public space literary ventures.

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# **Vancouver Public Space Obversion activity: elevator poetry**

What's an obversion? It's your chance to create a public space *situation* and then watch people's reaction. Part subversion, part observation, the purpose of an obversion is to encourage people to critically think about places in daily life that are usually lacking art, culture, imagination, or poetry.

It sounds formal, but really it's dead easy. And fun. You create a little art piece and put it in a public place. People discover it as they walk by, or when they are waiting for the bus, or next to the water cooler. The piece is a bit self-referential, and so they might stop. Or look away. Or shake their head.

Watching how people react to items in public space will bring out the urban anthropologist in you.

'Nuff said. This month's project is elevator poetry - details overleaf. Thanks to animator Katie for putting this together.

Let us know what you think. Send us your obversion stories, and maybe the odd picture or two if you can manage it. We'll post the best of the lot on the VPSN website

# An Urban Obsession

Toolkit #1

## Elevator Poetry

Sometimes we get caught up in the speed and flow of our city. Sidewalks become people-freeways. Street corners are intersections...but no one really intersects. The city is so often programmed to be a place of motion and movement, but why can't it also be a place of dwelling and poetry? **And so emerges our challenge to you...**

### Purpose:

To encourage people to critically think about places in daily life that are usually lacking art, culture, imagination, or poetry.

### Instructions:

1. Choose a given day and watch yourself completing your daily activities in the city.
2. Find one "place" or "space" that you occupy that is, in your mind, most bereft of art or creativity (a street corner, an elevator, a Tim Horton's line, a stop light...be creative.
3. Fill the blanks of the following post-modern poem with the name of the space you have chosen.

\_\_\_\_\_ Poetry.

It's quite strange  
To read poetry  
In/on a \_\_\_\_\_ .  
It's even more strange,  
To read poetry,  
about a/the \_\_\_\_\_ ,  
In/on a/the \_\_\_\_\_ .

E.g./ (to be pasted in an elevator you ride everyday)

### ***Elevator Poetry***

*It's quite strange  
To read poetry  
In an elevator.  
It's even more strange,  
To read poetry  
About an elevator  
In an elevator.*

4. Print out a copy (or many copies) of the poem and tape it somewhere reasonably visible (or not) within the space you have chosen to decorate.
5. Stand back and watch people really "intersect" with your poetic intervention.

An obsession by the Vancouver Public Space

## II. CURRENT ISSUES

A round-up of things that we're keeping our eyes on. There's work to be done in each and every one of these areas. If you'd like to lend a hand in any of these areas please let us know.

### Vancouver Police Department - Surveillance Cameras Downtown

At the May 17 meeting of the police board, Chief Jamie Graham was given the green light by the Police Board to develop a business plan for the installation of surveillance cameras in a number of downtown neighbourhoods. The cameras cost about \$20,000 each, excluding the cost of lost civil liberties. Graham suggested that the cameras would be good as a counter-terrorism measure, and could be a "benefit in areas where there was a high rate of civil unrest."



Graham was able to win the go-ahead for his Closed Circuit Television (CCTV) plan, despite the fact that similar proposals had been turned down twice before in the last seven years.

It seems we are inching closer to Orwell's dystopia. An editorial in the Province a few days later (May 23) quoted Richard Rosenberg, professor emeritus at the University of B.C. and a board member of the B.C. Civil Liberties

Association Cameras, who argued that the cameras are "a serious erosion of a citizen's right to appear in public spaces without being monitored." There's that and the questionable evidence as to the efficacy of closed circuit television for reducing various types of crime. Research from various spots around the globe (particularly the US and UK) are consistently inconclusive when it comes to assessing the impact of CCTV on crime rates and crime prevention.

For the minutes of the May 17, 2006 Police Board Meeting >>  
<http://vancouver.ca/police/policeboard/Meetings.htm>

For more information on the VPD's previous attempts to install cameras >> see the British Columbia Civil Liberties Association (BCCLA) website:  
<http://www.bccla.org/pressreleases/02cctv.html>

What you can do: If you're concerned about the possibility of VPD cameras being installed, write a letter saying as much. Send it to Shona McGlashan, Executive Director, Vancouver Police Board, c/o 312 Main Street, Vancouver BC V6A 2T2. Send a copy to Board Chair, Sam Sullivan as well. In fact, copy the whole board. They can be reached via Ms. McGlashan at Fax: 604-257-3878, or email: [office@vancouverpoliceboard.ca](mailto:office@vancouverpoliceboard.ca)

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## City of Vancouver Fires its Board of Variance - so much for decent process!

It's always a treat to read that you've been fired in the newspapers - even before your boss hands you your pink-slip. That, however, is exactly what happened to the members of the City's Board of Variance - each of whom was unceremoniously canned in mid-July by the City.

The BoV acts as a civilian review committee that looks at urban planning decisions made by the City's Planning Department. It has the authority to override the Department in critical areas, a power that it has used on a number of occasions.

The ostensible reason for the firings - at least according to comments made by City officials and NPA councillors - were that they were the result of financial mismanagement by the Committee. However, no details of this mismanagement have been made available. Several dismissed Board members say that this was the first that they had heard of any such fiduciary concerns. Other cynics have suggested that the NPA dominated Council worked in concert with the senior Planning Department officials to engineer the ousting as payback for previous decisions the Board had made.

Whatever the explanation, both sides have opted to go legal. The former Board members appealed to the BC Supreme Court, and the court released its decision in support of the City on July 25. The City had previously opened the door for new applicants for the Board, and will be proceeding with establishing the new body in the next few weeks.

Regardless of the outcome of the court case, the process around this firing has been wholly unsavoury and all-together too back-room in nature. The details of the incident - particularly as they relate to the previous Board's performance, need to be made publicly available, so that citizens have an opportunity to examine Council's decision. Citizen bodies, such as the Board, play a significant role in shaping the way planning and development occurs in Vancouver. The integrity of this body - and the necessary sense of autonomy that they need to have in order to function credibly - have been compromised by this event.

What you can do >> write Mayor Sam Sullivan and let him know that you're not happy with the way this process has unfolded. Request a complete disclosure of the facts surrounding the case. Mayor Sam Sullivan; Vancouver City Hall; 453 West 12th Avenue; Vancouver, BC V5Y 1V4

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## Insite Safe Injection Site Renewal and the Federal Conservatives: Will they or Won't They?

The Insite facility - the first supervised safe injection site in Canada - is under threat. The site, which has been operating for almost three years in the Downtown Eastside (DTES), is able to open its doors through an exemption to Federal drug laws.

Without the exemption, which was granted by Health Canada, the facility would be considered illegal, ineligible for funding, and forced to shut its doors. In addition to improving the situation for heroin addicts, the site has helped to make the public spaces of the DTES a little safer for everyone.

The facility been effective in providing interventions to several hundred over-doses, saving lives and has playing a role in preventing the transmission of diseases through needle-sharing and other practices connected with intravenous drug use. The facility has been examined in a number of peer-reviewed journals and is considered a model for substance-misuse harm-reduction strategies. Most recently, the Mayor of Victoria was quoted as saying that he was looking at starting a similar facility in the province's capital city. Locally, as a testament to its effectiveness, the facility enjoys the political support of all three elected municipal political parties.

Sadly, a front page story in Metro News on Friday July 21, 2006, quoted MP Stephen Fletcher, Parliamentary Secretary to Health Minister Tony Clement, saying that the facility "will be allowed to close" in September before any decision is made on its future. Naturally, this caused a bit of a furore. A few days later a spokesperson for Clement, suggested that Fletcher was "speaking of his own accord" and that no decision had been made. The cynics among us wonder if Fletcher may have inadvertently spilled the beans. Let's hope that this isn't the case.

What you can do >> write to Health Minister Tony Clement and Prime Minister Stephen Harper. Tell them that it's important that they renew the Health Canada exemption for the Insite Facility. While you're at it, copy the letter to David Emerson who will doubtless be looking for a campaign that might actually endure him to the city's residents and boost his local credibility. *(Actually, this last sentence must have been foreshadowing on our part: the day after we originally wrote this piece there was an article in the Globe and Mail in which Mr. Emerson called the work at Insite "positive" and suggested he would press Minister Clement to keep the facility open.)*

- Hon. Tony Clement, Minister of Health; House of Commons; Ottawa, Ontario; K1A 0A6 Telephone: (613) 944-7740; Fax: (613) 992-5092; E-Mail: Clement.T@parl.gc.ca
- Right Hon. Stephen Harper, Prime Minister, House of Commons; Ottawa, Ontario; K1A 0A6; Telephone: (613) 992-4211; Fax: (613) 941-6900; E-Mail: Harper.S@parl.gc.ca
- Hon. David Emerson, House of Commons; Ottawa, Ontario; K1A 0A6; Telephone: (613) 943-0267; Fax: (613) 943-0219; E-Mail: Emerson.D@parl.gc.ca

Copy your letters to the two MPs most directly involved with the community in question:

- Hon. Libby Davies, MP Vancouver East; 2412 Main Street; Vancouver, British Columbia; V5T 3E2; Telephone: (604) 775-5800; Fax: (604) 775-5811

- Hon. Hedy Fry, MP Vancouver Centre, 106 - 1030 Denman Street; Vancouver, British Columbia; V6G 2M6; Telephone: (604) 666-0135; Fax: (604) 666-0114

For more information on Insite and the situation at hand, see the following websites: Insite Community web-pages >> [www.communityinsite.ca](http://www.communityinsite.ca)  
Insite page at Vancouver Coastal Health >> [www.vch.ca/sis](http://www.vch.ca/sis)  
Metro News article, and other related media pieces >>  
<http://www.communityinsite.ca/news.html>

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### BC Parks Looking to Build Hotels in 12 Protected Areas:

A late-July press release from BC's Ministry of the Environment - which oversees BC Parks - reveals that the Ministry is seeking proposals to build hotels in a dozen of the province's provincial parks. Among those listed are Golden Ears, Silver Star and Wells Gray.

Sadly, this seems to take the notion of parks management back fifty years. Even though a small number of parks currently have lodges and accommodations in them, these were typically built many years ago when the emphasis on maintaining the ecological integrity of our protected areas was far less important.



Environment Minister Barry Penner is quoted as saying "not everyone wants to sleep in a tent when visiting a park." But presumably this is why they have hotels and other such accommodations in the areas near park borders. Furthermore, one might hope that the point to having the protected areas in the first place is to ensure that they are safe from the sort of development related incursions faced by other areas of the province. There's nothing wrong with encouraging people to visit the parks, but there is a way to do this in a fashion that doesn't impose additional duress onto the Park.

Further Information >> View the Ministry of the Environment webpage at [www.gov.bc.ca](http://www.gov.bc.ca)

What you can do >> Check the Ministry of the Environment webpage for information on upcoming Public Consultations on the proposed accommodation development. And/or: write to Environment Minister Barry Penner, P.O. Box 9047, Station Prov Govt, Room 112, Parliament Buildings, Victoria, BC, V8W 9E2

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## 15 New Billboards for Burrard, Lions Gate and Ironworkers Memorial Bridges

All-Vision Canada, an outdoor advertising firm, has won a contract to install a series of billboards at the approaches to the three bridges in Vancouver, North Vancouver and West Vancouver. It is expected that the billboards will be in place by early next year.



The billboards are on land owned by the Squamish First Nation - exempting the plan from any municipal signage regulations in the three municipalities. The deal between the Squamish nation and the advertiser is believed to be worth about \$9 million dollars over thirty years. Toby Baker, manager of the project for the Squamish, said that the funds would be used for housing, training and social programs.

Though exempt from municipal by-laws, the proposed billboards still have to be subjected to an Environmental Assessment process. As part of this process, public meetings will be held on August 23 (in a to-be-determined Vancouver location) and August 24 (at the Squamish Nation Community Centre on Capilano Road).

What you can do >> plan to attend one of these meetings to present your concerns. Alternately, write a letter detailing your concerns to Mr. Toby Baker, Project Manager, Squamish Nation, P.O. Box 86131, North Vancouver, BC, V7L 4J5

Further information >> The Globe and Mail, CBC and Vancouver Sun Websites all have stories on the plan.

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## Vancouver Aquarium - The Whale Container in Hot Water?

The Aquarium has been having a hard time of it late - first the process around the decision to expand was flagged as being problematic - and the Aquarium Board voted to retract an early decision to hold a plebiscite on the subject. Then there's the issue around the aquarium itself, and the ethics of animals in captivity. After that, there's the potential conflict-of interest challenge that keeps cropping up for Parks Board chair Heather Holden, who also happens to be a senior employee of the Aquarium. If that isn't enough to give pause we now hear media reports that they've been accused of circumventing Parks Board decisions and buying animals that they weren't supposed to.

There's a range of archived media reports from the past two months. For a sampling of the reportage, as well as additional information, visit the websites of the

Vancouver Sun ([www.vancouver.sun.com](http://www.vancouver.sun.com)) or the Vancouver Courier ([www.vancourier.com](http://www.vancourier.com)).

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## Advertising in that most intimate of spaces - Sponsoring new public bathrooms

The City is currently negotiating a deal with American firm CBS Decaux to secure eight self-cleaning public toilets in the downtown core. The commodes are equipped with technology that sanitizes the toilet after every use.

While the addition of new public facilities in the downtown core is long overdue, there's one catch: they're going to be advertising funded. Like the Zoom Media ad displays that (so the frames say) "are donated" to bar, club and restaurant washrooms across the City, the prurient eyes of Madison Avenue will now be peeking at you in the public can as well.

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## UPDATE - City of Vancouver - Naming Rights Policy

The City of Vancouver's Naming Rights policy continues to be developed. Release of the policy is a little behind schedule and the document will likely be presented when Council sits down again after their summer hiatus. A draft of the proposed policy is currently being reviewed by Steering Committee members.

The policy will cover the issues of Naming Rights for municipally owned buildings and facilities - structures that were built with taxpayer funds. Of concern here is the possibility that corporations or other private individuals or interests will be able to pay money to put their logo on City owned buildings, in essence using civic structures as advertising platforms.

While the extent of the policy has not yet been defined, it would have the potential to apply to City buildings, arts facilities, recreation areas, childcare centres and building space that the City leases to non-profits.

What you can do. Until the Draft Policy is released it's hard to know where the City will go with the policy. Until then, stay tuned. In the interim, if you want to put your name on the City's contact list to stay informed of the process try contacting Christina Medland, Associate Director, Office of Cultural Affairs, City of Vancouver, 453 West 12<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Vancouver, BC, V5Y 1V4; Fax: 604.871.6005, or email [christina.medland@vancouver.ca](mailto:christina.medland@vancouver.ca).

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## UPDATE - Public Interest Takes a Hit - Province's Bill 30 and Freedom of Information Act changes pulled.

Good news! On May 10 of this year Mike de Jong announced that the BC government was deferring its controversial Bill 30 "indefinitely."

The Bill had come under much scrutiny since being introduced in April. Introduced as a "Miscellaneous Statutes Amendment Act." The purpose of the Bill was ostensibly to pass a number of 'minor' amendments to various statutes all at once, rather than through separate process. The problem was that some of the amendments weren't so minor after all. One of them modifies the Personal Information Protection Act so that third party personal information (your details) can be collected and disclosed for medical, legal or counselling services without your consent. Another would have allowed government to take its dealings with private contractors out of the scope of the Freedom of Information Act, meaning that information on contracts, transactions and even wholesale privatization initiatives would become out of reach to the public.

Further Information: Read up on Bill 30 and the FOI components at the Commissioner's website (<http://www.oipcbc.org/>). Check out the Civil Liberties Association concerns at [www.bccla.org](http://www.bccla.org).

### III. PUBLIC SPACE PROJECTS OF NOTE:

Cool people doing cool things.

#### [murmur]

From their website: "[murmur] is an archival audio project that has collected stories set in specific locations throughout Vancouver's Chinatown. At each of these locations, a [murmur] sign marks the availability of a story with a telephone number and location code. By using a mobile phone, people can listen to the story of that place while engaging in the full physical experience of being there. Some stories suggest that the listener walk around, following a certain path through a place, while others allow a person to wander with both their feet and their gaze. Stories will be available in both English and Chinese." Check it out: <http://murmurvancouver.ca/about.php>



#### Bubbles

Occupying public space with soap and water! On July 2 2006, six massive bubble battles took place across the continent. They featured an array of bubble weaponry and several buckets worth of foamy ammunition. They were coordinated by duo Lori

Kufner and Kevin Bracken who's newmindspace group creates "interactive public art, creative cultural interventions and urban bliss dissemination."

Vancouver's showdown took place at the Art Gallery, where a plucky group gathered, bubble technology in hand. Luckily the World Peace Forum was all wrapped up at this point.

For pictures of the Vancouver event - see sabocracy's flickr slide show at: <http://www.flickr.com/photos/43186566@N00/sets/72157594185166932/>

For details on the bubble battles that took place in Montreal, Toronto, Edmonton, Pittsburg and Philadelphia, see the website at <http://www.newmindspace.com/bubblebattle.php#vancouver>

And for a fun look at other ways to occupy public space, check out newmindspace main page at: <http://www.newmindspace.com>.

Time for a pillowfight anyone?

## Vancouver Area Cycling Coalition

The As the VACC Values statement notes: "the VACC advocates for better conditions for cyclists and the removal of barriers to cycling. We achieve our objectives by meeting with governing agencies at all levels, writing well researched, proactive letters and reports, working constructively with the media, and encouraging more people to cycle more often. For more information [www.vacc.bc.ca](http://www.vacc.bc.ca).

## Momentum

Vancouver-based publication Momentum bills itself as "the magazine for self-propelled people." It's a fantastic resource, filled with pedal-friendly local content, advocacy work and general information. And best of all, it's free and can be found in various spots around town. It can also be online at <http://www.momentumplanet.ca/?q=node/43>, though their website doesn't have all of the content that the print version does.

## UPDATE - Spaces Between - Commercial Drive

Remember the *Spaces Between* demonstration project on Commercial Drive that we mentioned in the last [€-space](#) newsletter? It sought to transform a number of "neglected residual spaces" on The Drive into enhancements of the public realm - aesthetically, socially and ecologically. In practical terms, this has included revitalizing an alley way and temporarily turning an open air auto garage



into a movie theatre (two of a few projects that were undertaken).

All of the events and transformations associated with *Spaces Between* were a success, but one in particular is aiming for posterity.

Located between 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Street, a once dark and gravel-strewn alley has been transformed by the addition of colourful murals, interlocking pave-stones, and a 'country-lane' design that has laid a line of greenery where once there was none.

Folks were undertaking a petition to try and ensure that this excellent installation doesn't get removed by the City. But apparently that's not going to happen (we certainly hope not). For more information, or to find out how you can help, contact Adam Vasilevich at 604.646.4110 or email aav@telus.net.

## IV. PUBLIC SPACES MEDIA:

From the Aquarium to Community Gardens, to surveillance cameras to street issues, there's actually been a fair number of articles on public space issues - a bunch are listed here, with a few excerpts included.

The Province has taken a keen interest in the streets of Vancouver lately, running a series entitled "Safe Street," complete with an campaign that asks readers "How safe are your streets? And asks for people to email their issues and concerns.

The complete series can be viewed at:

<http://www.canada.com/theprovince/features/safestreets/index.html>

The first story opens with the dramatic headline: "BC streets under street crime siege," illustrated with a tasteful shot of a street-involved individual pushing a shopping cart. You can see both picture and article here:

<http://www.canada.com/theprovince/features/safestreets/story.html?id=52144d92-d85c-441c-ae3c-878c8cf4d783&k=67636>

Of note are the four pieces on Commercial Drive, as well as a piece on Chilliwack and Waterloo, and some other pieces on restorative justice. The ones on The Drive pretty much mirror the following excerpt in tone:

060626 - Life on The Drive not so laid back: People here are 'fed up' with property theft and drugs. By Elaine O'Connor.

"Inside the Wandering Yogi Studio off Commercial Drive, yoga teacher Rhonda 'Radhasri' Fogel has been leading students on a path to enlightenment for the past seven years.

But enlightenment is becoming harder to attain. Classes are disturbed by the din of drunks fighting or the crazed chatter of addicts smoking crack outside the studio. Students get trapped by homeless people blocking the door. Teachers clear needles, pipes and garbage before opening..."

For the complete story, see:

<http://www.canada.com/theprovince/features/safestreets/story.html?id=8eed5839-8730-45e9-a817-6c71daaacb99&k=40681>

### *Other media:*

060630 - The Tye: Time to Upset Our Best Laid Plans: Vancouver's two planning gurus are out, and we need a new vision. By Helena Grdadolnik

"There are signs in Gastown stating "The End Is Near." Such proclamations used to be the domain of zealots announcing the imminence of Armageddon, but this message is being used to sell the Terminus condominium development. Nonetheless, in Vancouver the end is near.

We are coming to the end of an era of planning in Vancouver. We do not have many more parcels of downtown industrial land available for large-scale construction. This means that development interests will shift elsewhere in the city or in the region. Furthermore, on Friday, June 30, both co-directors of planning, Dr. Ann McAfee and Larry Beasley, are leaving the positions they have held since 1994. The city is looking for a single person to replace them both..."

For the whole story: <http://thetyee.ca/Views/2006/06/30/BestLaidPlans/index.html>

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060706 - The Province - Pamphlet gives tips for dumpster dining: A support organization offers advice to bidders on how to find the best meal. By Elaine O'Connor and Peter Severinson

"A support organization for the homeless is giving out tips on how to dumpster-dive for food.

Dumpster-diving is an 'important way for people to access food in Grandview-Woodlands,' the Grandview-Woodlands Food Connection coalition says in a pamphlet funded in part by the Vancouver Coastal Health Authority.

James Brooks agrees.

He gets most of his meals out of the garbage and says it's better than the free food at most shelters.

The sheer number of bidders is the biggest challenge, Brooks said.

'There are just so many other bidders that are out there,' he said.

'You can turn around and have 10 people going down an alley.'

Yesterday morning he got lucky, spotting a store worker throwing out a bag of day-old doughnuts. He also found a box of Pop-Tarts past their expiry date and two yogurt cups."

For the whole story:

<http://www.canada.com/theprovince/news/story.html?id=171336cf-4601-4fe2-a025-efcfe79bcebd&k=43864>

The article prompted a response from Lorne Mayencourt:

That even prompted Lorne Mayencourt to respond. In an op-ed he called the article a 'disservice to the agencies that help the homeless.' Mayencourt pointed out that the binning information was one, rather small component of the whole brochure, and was intended as a preventative piece. He then mentioned that there were a lot of good agencies feeding the homeless.

For this story:

(<http://www.canada.com/theprovince/news/editorial/story.html?id=0d6d00cc-7a92-4800-ba2d-7ad79a0a9e02>).

## V. CURRENT AND UPCOMING EVENTS:

June 10 - August 6 - Territory - art and urban civic space.

From the Presentation House Gallery website which, in collaboration with a number of other venues and organizations, is hosting an intriguing collection of public space related works. The following comes from their website:

"TERRITORY is a visual art project concerned with mapping urban experience, civic space and contested terrains. The project includes installations at Artspeak and Presentation House Gallery as well as in public sites around Vancouver, guided walks, lectures, a film series, and publication.

The works in TERRITORY involve navigating real and imagined territories - geographic, political, economic and social. The exhibition expands on earlier articulations of the notion of *derive*, or wandering, as a way to investigate urban environments. Cities are understood as essentially unreadable cartographies, fragmented and unstable. This project points to the spatial



collisions of urban life, such as those resulting from rapid urban development and increased privatization of public space. The works in TERRITORY reveal how cultural mythologies, both local and global, are scripted into built environments and determine human interactions. The social impact of the often invisible boundaries delineated by political conflict, gentrification, security, and communication systems becomes apparent as the artists call attention to the intersections of psychological, social and physical space.

For more information >> [www.presentationhousegall.com](http://www.presentationhousegall.com)

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### Friday July 28 - Critical Mass Pride Ride

Last month's June CM was a biggy, with all sorts of pedal-power showing up to wheel about in the big summer ride. This month's adventure, which will coincide with Pride Week, is waiting to unfold. What is it exactly? "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!" All that, and it's lots of fun too!

For more information >> [www.bikesequal.org](http://www.bikesequal.org)

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### Saturday, July 29 - Illuminares Lantern Festival

A festival of lights! The annual Illuminares Lantern Procession takes place between 7:00 and 11:00 pm in Trout Lake Park (15<sup>th</sup> and Victoria). It's a gorgeous spectacle. Bring a lantern, or make it a late evening picnic.

For more information >> [www.publicdreams.org](http://www.publicdreams.org)

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### Saturday, July 29 - The Underground Orchestra

Heddy Honigmann's classic film is a joy for the ears as well as the eyes, as she sets out to document the story of street musicians in Paris. We encounter a Peruvian harp player, an Argentinean piano player, a violinist from Sarajevo, a Malian singer, all eking out a living busking in the Paris Métro... Director: Heddy Honigmann // The Netherlands 1998 // 105 minutes // Beta SP // In French and Spanish with English subtitles. At the Vancouver International Film Centre/Vancity Theatre, 1181 Seymour Street.

For more information >> [www.vifc.org](http://www.vifc.org)

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## Saturday, July 29 – Storyscapes Chinatown Exhibition

Come and see the rich collection of stories gathered by the Storyscapes Chinatown project, a story gathering project that recognizes the important place of Aboriginal and Chinese residents in Vancouver, and the relations between both communities. The Storyscapes team interviewed a total of 23 people and have created a series of richly illustrated storyboards that are built around excerpts from these conversations. A collaboration with [murmur] Vancouver has also created a sound montage that further brings to life the stories of Chinatown.

For more information >> email [kamala.todd@vancouver.ca](mailto:kamala.todd@vancouver.ca)

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## Tuesday, August 8 – Western Canadian Indie Film Festival

A film about two street-involved individuals in Calgary. “Featuring powerful and compelling performances from Gary Farmer and Stephen Ouimette, Heater follows two homeless men and their struggles to survive on a cold winter day in Winnipeg. On the streets after the closure of a psychiatric half-way house, The Man (Ouimette) wakes in an ATM shelter and makes his way along Portage Avenue, trying to sell or trade for cigarettes his sole possession—a brand new baseboard heater. With precedents in neorealism and inspired by the new Iranian cinema represented by Abbas Kiarostami, Terrance Odette’s feature debut is a worthy addition to the canon of minimalist cinema.” (<http://www.viff.org/tixSYS/vifc/filmguide/event.php?EventNumber=1183>)

For more information >> [www.vifc.org](http://www.vifc.org)

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## Wednesday August 9 and August 30 – Wednesday Nooners at Nat Bailey Stadium

Get 2 for 1 tickets to see the Vancouver Canadians play baseball, when you ride your bike or take transit to Nat Bailey on the above-listed dates. Better Environmentally Sound Transportation' (BEST) has teamed up with the Vancouver Canadians Baseball Team to offer the public a two-for-one entrance ticket for the day's game if people ride their bikes or take public transit to Nat Bailey Stadium. BEST will be providing free secure Valet Bicycle Parking at Wednesday Canadians Games throughout the summer. Show your bike valet ticket or your bus ticket and receive 2 for 1 tickets to the day's game. All games start at 1:05pm.

For more information >> phone 604-669-2860

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## August 18 – Cinema in the Park (Spanish Banks)

Come to Spanish Banks West for a movie under the stars. A 20 by 30 foot movie screen will be set up by the waters edge with the city glowing in the distance and the North Shore Mountains in the background. Cinema in the Park is a free, outdoor event open to the community with an expected audience of between 750-1000 people.

Audience members are encouraged to make a minimum \$5 cash or two-item food donation to benefit the Greater Vancouver Food Bank Society.

We like short shorts! In addition to the feature presentation, Cinema in the Park is proud to present the inaugural Independent Short Film Competition. The event starts at dusk, approximately 9:00pm.

For more information >> [www.lotusevents.ca](http://www.lotusevents.ca)

## VI. RELATED CAMPAIGNS:



Public Post Office - [www.publicpostoffice.ca](http://www.publicpostoffice.ca)  
(Excerpt from their website and factsheet) - A campaign to stop closures, privatization and deregulation at Canada Post. "Governments around the world are deregulating their post offices at an alarming rate. A few are also privatizing.

To date, Canada's federal government has not privatized or deregulated its post office. Nevertheless, it has undermined the public nature of the post office over the last decade and a half with its insistence on profits and dividends.

In order to make profits, Canada Post has focused on commercial objectives rather than public interest objectives. The pursuit of these objectives has led the corporation to make cuts and close post offices, outlets and plants. Canada Post has also eroded its connection with the public - the people who own the post office - and its sense of public accountability is not what it once was."

For more information visit the campaign website at [www.publicpostoffice.ca](http://www.publicpostoffice.ca)

## VII. OTHER RESOURCES:

VPSN contributor Matt B. pointed us to a great website covering on the art, culture and politics of public space (and much more). Assembled by Nicholas Senn, the Critical Spatial Practice Blog provides a brilliant assemblage of stories, manuals, projects and links... along with Senn's sharp analysis and a wry style of editing and penmanship. Not only does it do a fantastic job of assembling space-related references and materials from across the web and around the world, but it leaves you charged up by all the exciting initiatives that are in play.

Among the many intriguing pieces posted this month (such as the seasonally seditious "Tactical Ice Cream Unit") is news of parking space activism by the rebar group from San Francisco:

“One of the more critical issues facing outdoor urban human habitat is the increasing paucity of space for humans to rest, relax, or just do nothing.

For example, more than 70% of San Francisco's downtown outdoor space is dedicated to the private vehicle, while only a fraction of that space is allocated to the public realm.

Feeding the meter of a parking space enables one to rent precious downtown real estate, typically on a 1/2 hour to 2 hour basis. What is the range of possible occupancy activities for this short-term lease?

PARK(ing) is an investigation into reprogramming a typical unit of private vehicular space by leasing a metered parking spot for public recreational activity.”

For more information on Rebar >> <http://www.rebargroup.org>

To view Matt Senn's blog >> <http://criticalspatialpractice.blogspot.com>

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*The Vancouver Public Space Network (VPSN) is a grassroots collective that engages in projects of advocacy, outreach and education connected with public space in Vancouver and the surrounding region. To find out more about the VPSN, please send an email to [info@vancouverpublicspace.ca](mailto:info@vancouverpublicspace.ca), or visit our website at [www.vancouverpublicspace.ca](http://www.vancouverpublicspace.ca).*