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**BUILDING THE VISION OF A CITY FOR EVERYONE:
PLANNING IN THE CONTEXT OF MULTICULTURALISM IN
VANCOUVER**

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ABSTRACT

This paper focuses on the Vancouver CityPlan process which began in November 1992 leading to an approved plan in June 1995. Using City Plan as a window, the paper explores some of the complexities of multiculturalism for those planners making decisions about space and neighbourhood. It uncovers the richness of the participative practice and how the idea of multiculturalism worked for this.

While the Vancouver planning system is different from the UK, British planners can learn valuable lessons from the hearts and mind commitment to a citizen centred approach.

BUILDING THE VISION OF A CITY FOR EVERYONE: PLANNING IN THE CONTEXT OF
MULTICULTURALISM IN VANCOUVER

ROSE GILROY

INTRODUCTION

This paper reports on research undertaken in Vancouver. The aim of this research¹ was to compare construction of anti racism in Canada and Britain. My perspective on this project was of a white, female, able bodied academic working in a Town Planning department in a British University who had through her teaching and research endeavoured to raise awareness of social justice issues among planners and would be planners. I was also attempting to give guidance on how to use opportunities within the planning system for redressing inequity through increasing the involvement of minority ethnic communities (and women, older men and women and disabled men and women) in the **process** of planning what is often shared and contested space.

Through the Internet, I became fascinated with the Vancouver CityPlan which was evolving through extraordinarily rich participative processes to be a document setting out a citizens' vision of a city. In a country pledged to multiculturalism and a city experiencing continual waves of immigrants, the planning process offered what might be termed a "critical incident" in which the reality of multiculturalism and anti-racism could be explored. Vancouver and its CityPlan became the focus, therefore, of an exploration of how process and policy content might be effective tools of building a more equal society and might present opportunities for building a more responsive and responsible planning community.

Once in Vancouver² it quickly became clear from interviews with planners, educators and trainers³ in the field of equality/diversity that anti racism was a new term. When it was voiced, respondents had to pause to think what this meant and what it meant in the context of their work. It became clear that the key word for those in Vancouver

¹ This research set out to examine the development and implementation of anti racist initiatives in public sector education and training in Canada and the United Kingdom. Work was undertaken by other colleagues on the training of school teachers and the education of children in Toronto and Vancouver. The author is grateful to the Canadian Studies Program for their financial support.

² Research was carried out in the second half of September 1995

³ The author is grateful to those who generously gave their time to reflect upon their work

was "multiculturalism". All interviewees were comfortable with this term though some commented

For years we have had this multicultural policy without perhaps knowing what it meant (planning academic)

The research objective altered, therefore, to explore interviewees perceptions of multiculturalism and how the term was evolving in the face of considerable demographic change and economic change. The first question this paper addresses is therefore what do we understand by "multiculturalism"?

1. A DELICATE BALANCE: PERCEPTIONS OF MULTICULTURALISM

Susan Smith notes that by the early 1970s Canada and Britain "perceived themselves to be moving along different paths to nation building" (Smith, 1993, page 57). The policy arena where this was most marked was immigration. British immigration policy was incrementally changed to restrict entry to non whites (Wrench and Solomos, 1993). Conversely, Canada which had pursued an explicitly racialized, immigration policy, with, for example, the infamous Chinese "head tax" and the virtual suspension of Chinese immigration between 1923 and 1947, now with the 1967 Immigration Act scrapped national quotas. In their place came a points system for education, skills, family relations and, lately, refugee status and proven financial competence, as the criteria for immigration to Canada (Qadeer, 1993). Under Pierre Trudeau, changes in immigration policy ushered in the current phase of multiculturalism and enshrined within law the long held concept (Gibbon, 1938) of Canada as a mosaic: clearly a different concept of national identity from the American "melting pot" or from the increasingly overtly racialized and homogenized concept of Britishness.

The 1971 Canadian Policy of multiculturalism set out four aims:

- to assist all cultural groups in their efforts to develop and to contribute to society as a whole.
- to help these groups overcome any cultural barriers to mainstream participation
- to promote "creative encounters" among groups
- to assist immigrants to learn at least one of the two official languages of Canada

There was no commitment to helping people retain their mother tongue or to help pass this on to the next generation and this omission has been the focus of considerable criticism. How cultural heritage may be maintained without retaining language is a vexed question. Caterina Pizani (1992) comments that

multiculturalism as practised is doomed ... because it asks the newcomers to forget their past, to lose their identity through the loss of their language (page 92),

One interviewee commented, when discussing the position of First Nation (aboriginal) people, that the most pressing expressed need was the desire to learn their own languages. However this demand leads to friction. The province demands that those who teach have a teaching qualification. Those who have the knowledge to teach these mother tongues are community elders who do not hold the necessary qualifications.

The subordinate view of what are termed "heritage languages" (mother tongues) to English and French was overturned somewhat in the 1988 Canadian Multicultural Act. This called for the maintenance of other languages but, confusingly, also for a strengthening of the status and use of the official languages and promotion of multiculturalism in harmony with the national commitment to the official language (Edwards, 1992, page 29). It would seem that official pronouncements are shot through with unresolved ambiguities. The same confusion is exhibited by citizens. A national survey undertaken in 1979-80 revealed that three quarters of respondents felt that a multicultural policy was a good thing per se - immigrants should not be forced to assimilate. They also felt, however, that the latter should not retain their own ways and that financial support should not be provided for linguistic and cultural preservation efforts (Edwards, 1992). As exploration of CityPlan issues will show later, demands for cultural preservation figure highly in the aspirations of citizens.

There is a tension then between the ideal of multiculturalism and what it might mean for Canadians and who should pay. Quoting a newspaper editorial, Edwards highlights the gap perceived in the rhetoric between the ideal of multiculturalism and the reality faced by new Canadians.

multiculturalism is a highly ambiguous concept. At one level it affirms the legitimacy of all the world's cultures ... At another, it encourages immigrants and their descendants to perpetuate original

values and customs. It is often said that only by nourishing their differences can immigrants hope for equality within Canada, a thesis hardly confirmed by experience (Globe and Mail, 1985).

In the period that I was in Vancouver there was a letter to the local paper talking of an Indo Canadian man's sadness at the racist abuse his son suffered at the hands of his schoolmates. The focus for abuse was the boy's long hair and turban and the family had decided to cut the boy's hair because of the level of distress that he was suffering. This in turn caused great pain to the family who felt that they had cut their son away from his heritage.

One interviewee employed as an equal opportunities trainer exposed the tensions that exist and a confusion in her discussion:

when people, no matter where they are from, have been here a while and have assimilated a little and interacted they are accepted, they are Canadians. Where there is racism it is against every new group of migrants who are seen to stick together and are resented for this. There may be graffiti. This is directed at new people. I also see that we have a kind of shyness about other cultures. If I see a Sikh couple walking along the road - the man is in a turban and his wife in a sari - I think will I interact with them in the same way that I would if the Indo Canadian couple were dressed in western clothes. I don't think this is racism.

Are you saying that multiculturalism is about accepting people when they have become more like "us"?

No and I think that much is lost when people throw away this other self. Canada's strength is in valuing different perspectives. The more diverse our schools, and shopping areas, our workplaces become, the more you see people as people. I think this has happened in Vancouver. Each new group has tried to isolate itself and has been isolated to a degree but through children going to school mixing with a range of children we break down these barriers.. One of the criticisms of Vancouver and multiculturalism is that we are diluting everything till there is no meaning. I don't think so. Each new group has given something- there is so much to do - the city is more vibrant (City Council official. Interviewer voice in italics)

So what does "valuing other perspectives" mean? There is a commitment, to the vision but a confusion over the detail. This might suggest lip service commitment or hypocrisy but it seemed that what was being exposed was a very human struggle: to make the connection between the ideal and everyday life.

So what does multiculturalism mean? Is it as Moore (1979) and Bullivant (1981) have argued a smoke screen: a vociferous promotion of cultural manifestations covering a lip service tackling of real problems of a socio, economic and political nature? Is it an over emphasis on "folk dance, costume, cuisine, music, `brotherhood rhetoric` and other such manifestations, many of them trivial or trivializing?" (Edwards, 1992, page 24). Is it as Pizianis suggests a safe means for giving public platforms to "the other"

.... it allows them to participate only marginally on ceremonial occasions for the benefit of the established groups and in ways that are both politically safe and easily appropriated - via food, dance, music, handicrafts. (Pizianis, 1992, page 92)

Is it a positive policy for "us", it gives "us" more varied ways of spending leisure but it effectively freezes "the other" into a cultural box fastened in a time warp?

If so is it, therefore, comparable to the generally despised British multicultural movement which has concerned itself with samosas, saris and steel bands while ignoring structural racism (Mullard, 1985)? In Britain there is considerable inequality on race/ethnicity lines with a weight of evidence indicting the changes to school curricula; education of school children; the allocation of council housing; access to employment; access to higher education; treatment by the police and the criminal justice system. In addition to which some groups have entered Britain to take an initial place on the lowest rung but have been unable to climb up and still occupy the poorest positions in terms of educational achievement, employment or housing ladders (Jones, 1993).

What may be different in the Canadian context and particularly the Vancouver setting is the economic position of minority ethnic communities and the perceived lack of institutional racism. When interviewed, a Chinese-Canadian planning officer in Vancouver was clear that systemic racism was not a feature of Vancouver society:

I would measure racism on the basis of how groups have made progress collectively and whether they have been impeded in those efforts by the system. On those grounds I would find it hard to think of any group that has been impeded. On the other hand there are still very entrenched views which we might call racism against some groups such as aboriginal peoples. These have also come a long way in fighting back and establishing themselves but at the community grass roots level they do experience racism.

However in the CityPlan Ideas Book (discussed more fully later in the paper) which is a rich collection of fine grain perspectives from citizens about their lives and aspirations, there is this statement from a Black citizens group which jars with the general picture of a racism free city:

Black people have resided in the Province of British Columbia since 1858. They have made, and continue to make, a huge contribution to Vancouver and the Province as a whole. However this has been largely ignored when historical facts are quoted. If Canadians are to have a positive image of Black people, our history must be recognized. Vancouver is either "home" or "workplace" to thousands of Black people, who for the most part see no visible evidence of their presence, in schools, public facilities, or neighbourhoods. They come from all corners of the world and many parts of Canada, bringing with them a rich cultural heritage, a strong sense of family, and a desire to secure a future in their chosen place of residence.

To secure this future, a strong commitment is necessary. Self esteem is essential. **Despite many obstacles, such as discrimination in the areas of housing and employment.** Black people have survived at a level that is of benefit to the entire community. We have not been "ghettoized", a fact that has served as the reason to ignore or categorize our contribution as either insignificant or non-existent. [We ask that]

- that there be an education program for the police force designed to combat harassment
- that Black people are hired on a more equitable basis in areas under the City's control

{Ideas Book, submission 0098, British Columbia Black Action Coalition] my emphasis.

Vietnamese seniors (older people) also called attention to their perceptions of vulnerability

safety seems to be a strong issue among group members. Seniors do not feel safe on the streets and are easy targets. Ethnic seniors are all the more vulnerable due to their visibility (problem of discrimination) and lack of English in order to get proper assistance (Ideas Book, submission 0081, Multicultural Family Centre, Vietnamese Seniors Group)

while another seniors group were asking for their expectations to be fulfilled:

we are thankful to the CityPlan for inviting ideas and suggestions to make Vancouver a liveable and beautiful place. We expect so much and we expect Vancouver to be:... race and discrimination free zone city so that we may laugh in the same language irrespective of caste, colour, creed and religion. (Ideas Book, submission 0463, O.A.S.I.S. City Circle)

It would seem that the question of whether there is racism in Vancouver depends on an individual's or a group's position on what Porter (1965) called the "vertical mosaic". The issues raised by the Black Coalition are not simply of a newly adjusting group being confronted by a short lived volley of abuse. It is a very sensitive point but it may be that for some groups it is easier to become accepted because they are perceived as not so different from us. A number of interviewees acknowledged that there is a varying degree of tolerance which may be governed by the degree of difference.

Interviewees and CityPlan contributors commented that the concept of multiculturalism equalling what they saw as racial harmony was a fragile one:

we fear a future Vancouver of wealthy ghettos, a backlash of racism against targetable newcomers, and the big-city problems of poverty, violence and declining standards for the majority of citizens (Ideas book, submission 0175 from a Kitsilano resident)

People are far more willing to share, to tolerate modest policies of distribution so that equity is something you can talk about and get elected over. When things begin to tighten up, those in positions of wealth and power will do anything in their power to maintain their position. This would suggest that in Canada the issue of race has been relatively dormant because Canada has been and still is a prosperous country with an image of being a great compromiser, a people who are willing to accept diversity and our policy of multiculturalism but it is all a product of our relative wealth and expansionism on the grounds that nobody feels threatened by other people emerging. Now as circumstances change, the differences become reasons for scapegoating and I think we may be seeing that there is now resentment at workers who are racially different (planning academic).

What is being revealed is the delicate balancing act that multiculturalism is in practice. The achievement of unity within diversity must in practice mean a degree of assimilation but how much is demanded and at what cost? It also demands, as far as some interviewees were concerned a fluid sense of identity, so that new ways of thinking can be absorbed not so that they might be neutralised but that they might become part of a process of creating something different. For one interviewee, there was a clear and positive statement of how ideas were moving on.

I think that up to about ten years ago it [multiculturalism] was a very useful approach, let's look at multiculturalism as a more inclusive language and a way of respecting people's differences. That is a whole debate and that is how they would like to be recognised and legitimised. It has recognised and respected culture. But I think that multiculturalism has focused on differences rather than coming together. **It becomes a real challenge to ask how do we recognise difference but work towards a common goal.** The debate has to move up one level and particularly when the minority community has reached critical mass, we're not talking about ten per cent but nearly forty per cent of non French and non English backgrounds. **We are beyond the level of trying to legitimise people's stake in society but how to build strong communities who can have a stake in rebuilding the city.** What we are trying to

say is "let's not just plan for the needs of communities but let's build a vision for everyone where multi racial and multi ethnic communities do work and live in harmony together". When multiculturalism was devised here it may also have been seen in the same way [as it is in Britain] but gradually it has become a political discourse looking at the place of groups in our society reaching a second level and the mainstream have begun to look at how they relate to each other. How do we allocate resources; how do we talk to each other; there is a willingness to talk it out (Chinese-Canadian planner, my emphasis).

It would seem then that from the multiculturalism discourse planners see the growth of what we might term "transculturalism" The concept of multiculturalism is a nebulous one but one to which many feel passionately committed.. The paper now moves on to consider how urban planners have responded to these complex concepts.

3. THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN "RACE", ETHNICITY AND PLANNING

I have already raised the issue of the construction of Britishness. What does this mean in terms of place and space? What does it mean for planners who unlike other civic professionals must concern themselves with the management of space rather than the delivery of services?

In the last few years changes to British legislation (the Criminal Justice Act 1995) have brought into sharp focus the construction of the singular and homogenized view of English **rural** society: The county set in their hunting pinkies chasing the fox against a background of thatched cottages. Such a vision is by definition exclusionary (Sibley, 1995). This monolithic construction then serves as a powerful instrument to deny others a place in the countryside. Julian Ageyman (1993) discusses the potency of the image of the Black person in the quintessential English countryside.

The Criminal Justice Act 1995 has denied a place in the countryside and in society to groups such as the New Age Travellers. The construction of place as purified and possessing only one identity serves to effectively highlight all others seen as discrepant. They are literally "out of place". The Criminal Justice Act has been the most extreme flowering of this xenophobia but milder (more insidious) views permeate the thinking of planners about the countryside. Huw Thomas (1994) describes the focus of British planning on urban containment and rural conservation

as "unwittingly bolstering a view of Englishness which is inherently racist" (page 354).

Griffiths and Amooquaye (1989) discuss the organic nature of town planning which is sustained by the national political culture and as such has "race" as one of its central concerns. Not only has planning contributed to and exacerbated the oppression of race but it also has the power to reduce such inequity:

The oppression of "race" is, in fact, one which has particular relevance for town planners because of the fact that the racial structuring of social life has a very marked locality aspect. The operation of discrimination in housing and job markets coupled with the need for mutual support within ethnic communities faced with a dominant culture that is hostile and racist, has led to distinct areas of black settlement (1989, page 5)

In spite of the proven connection and responsibility on town planners, there remains a paucity of material examining the relationship between planning and minority ethnic communities. Most published material has examined the relationship from the service provider perspective with evidence of good and poor practice. The most comprehensive of these have been based on nation-wide surveys of local authorities (RTPI/CRE, 1983 and Krishnarayan and Thomas, 1993). The first of these highlighted the ways in which the bureaucratic processes of planning might serve to perpetuate inequality and called for the introduction of monitoring to test the impact of processes. The second report, ten years later, uncovered many examples of good practice; though many authorities still working to a "colour blind" policy which the earlier report had criticised as deepening inequalities; and a poor spread of authorities which undertook ethnic monitoring. In a later paper (Thomas and Krishnarayan, 1994a) the authors develop the view that while planning officers may promote the needs of different citizen groups, there needs to be a corporate recognition of planning as a vehicle for anti racism for progress to be made on policy development, monitoring and review of objectives. In many local authorities equality strategies have been dismantled after the onslaught of neo liberal scorn coupled with Audit Commission demands for economy, efficiency and effectiveness and financial cut backs.

Between these major studies there has been a thin trickle of papers most from planning practitioners bringing good practice into the public domain while some of

the most thoughtful have come from black practitioners writing from a sense of frustration. Dexter du Boulay (1989) discusses the failed attempts of Coventry to consult with the black community because of a reluctance to let citizens set the agenda. However from this failure came awareness and a realisation that black people could be consulted because they were citizens, users of services in fact, not ethnic minorities who were disaffected by the process. Reddy Nallamili (1989), employed through a positive action training scheme with Leicester talks of the need to do more than involve black people by bringing them into the planning workforce. What is needed, Nallamili argues, is the recognition of black perspectives and the development of self advocacy within black communities facilitated by planners. Both of these stances can be seen in the Vancouver CityPlan process discussed later in the paper.

That sensitivity to racial inequality is a mainstream issue for planners is clear and some might say now beyond dispute (Thomas, 1994). In British planning documents we see clear statements of vision such as this one written by the city of Nottingham in their Local Plan.

Nottingham is a multi racial city. Any presentation of planning policies and proposals, which impinge so closely on people's lives demands some recognition of this fact. Town planning is all about fulfilling people's needs. By recognising that different communities within our society have different cultures, values and aspirations this Plan can help to reflect those needs and by implementing its policies and proposals in a positive way the City Council can contribute to the elimination of racial discrimination, the promotion of equality of opportunity and the improvement of race relations for the benefit of all Nottingham City Council (1988)

However, in spite of these acknowledgements, many planners have a deep unease and uncertainty about how they may contribute to these greater goals. How might they fulfil the code of practice laid upon them by the Royal Town Planning Institute (RTPI)? Like multiculturalism in Canada, many feel strong commitment but are uncertain as to **how** to play their part. The nub of the British problem is that planners with a commitment to secure social justice, a position backed by the RTPI, find themselves frustrated by the conservative roots of planning.

Town planning ... was not introduced and has not been maintained in order to create some kind of new society or radical social reform... in practice, the administration of British planning has tended to focus on legal and technical aspects of land use and development and has not involved persistent and wide ranging debates about the social purposes and goals of planning (Thomas and Krishnarayan, 1994b, page 1893)

Planning academics in Vancouver felt rather that they had lost sight of their roots, substituting immersion in technical detail for the wider vision.

One of my colleagues retired recently and, at his farewell party, he talked of the visionary spirit that started our planning school in 1953 and at that time people had a real sense of planning as providing leadership in terms of creating a vision of how society might be founded on principles of equity and so on. His argument was that over time and particularly in the Thatcher/ Reagan era, planning has become nothing more than the policeman of the development industry applying the rules perhaps in an equitable fashion but the big questions are no longer on the table and we are content to hunker down and do business. We have lost our leadership role in the public debate in where society is going and how. Even in our own faculty some of us are trying to be more visionary and others are uncertain about getting involved in political debates about material equity (planning academic).

Here again there is uncertainty as to whether these issues are proper concerns for planners while others look for guidance in how in turn to make their vision into something real. What that vision might look like is captured by Iris Marion Young:

Our political ideal is the unoppressive city. In sketching this ideal, I assume some material premises. We will assume a productivity level in the society that can meet everyone's needs and a physical urban environment that is cleaned up and renovated. We will assume, too, that everyone who can work has meaningful work and those who cannot are provided for with dignity. In sketching this ideal of city life, I am concerned to describe the city as a *kind of*

relationship of people to one another, to their own history and one another's history (Young, 1990, page 317-8)

How planners in Vancouver have tried to translate this into a reality is discussed in the next section. First a brief description of the planning system in Vancouver and then an examination of the CityPlan process and the implications of this for multicultural planning..

3. PLANNING VANCOUVER

3.1 The context

Planning in Canada is a matter for provincial not national jurisdiction. Within British Columbia, the Municipal Act sets out the scope of the municipal plan which will set out the goals and policies for development and directions for area development. It also gives the provincial Ministry of Municipal Affairs the power to approve or amend plans. However Vancouver has a special charter which gives it the freedom to have any kind of plan it chooses, structured in any way that seems appropriate using any process. What seems like a more fluid system becomes, at the implementation stage, one which has less discretion than the British and is more legalistic in that if a development falls within the prescribed policies of the plan it may go ahead as of right. (Qadeer, 1993).

3.2 CityPlan Process

In 1992 Vancouver City Council were concerned that the existing policies which had been developed to deal with controversial issues such as rezoning were not finding broad agreement with individuals or citizen groups. The way forward seemed to be to take a fresh look at the issues facing Vancouver and build a consensus vision as to how the city should develop. In June 1992 the City Council approved

That the City prepare a CityPlan reflecting a shared vision for the future of Vancouver; and that the CityPlan program inform citizens about the issues facing the City and present policies, and create, from their advice, a shared sense of direction for the City and its

place in the Region. (CityPlan, directions for Vancouver, 1995 , page 5)

These objectives became the underlying philosophy for the four stages of the CityPlan process (McAfee, 1995).

Stage 1. November 1992 - April 1993

The council determined that the best way to inform itself of the views of citizens was to form small discussion groups, which were termed City Circles. Initially many were groups which formed to talk with city officers but officers then realised that there were other groups who might also want to participate.

This was part of an education process in here [City Hall] too. We realised that people are more likely to be involved if they don't have to go to an extra meeting; also these people were already part of a group and we should broaden out our view of what groups are and make contact with them. We asked them if they wanted to be a City Circle and that meant contacting multi cultural groups in various languages. So that was what we decided - tons of people are part of some kind of groups, if we could reach these groups and offer some kind of resources - the tool kit, the services of a facilitator if they wanted one, we trained volunteers, we offered them meeting space.(CityPlan officer)

In fact over 300 circles were facilitated by volunteers who included City Council officers. To help people focus on the issues the CityPlan team prepared a *Tool Kit*. a ring binder of information about the services provided in the city, and more importantly helped circles consider essential questions.

Under the section *People and Lifestyles* the *Tool Kit* offers two pages of information grouped under four issues helping older citizens consider issues which affect them as well as helping others understand the implications of the ageing society. It sets out key questions that might could be a focus:

Housing and Work : How can we meet people's desire to "age in place"? What changes will we need to make to adapt to an ageing workforce?

Health and Safety: What changes in the city are needed to help bring health care "closer to home"? How can we increase the safety of our neighbourhoods?

Learning and culture: Should educational and cultural activities be offered in neighbourhood facilities? What kinds of partnerships will it take to achieve this?

Getting along together: Are there more opportunities available that will allow us to cross generation boundaries and capitalize on all our people?

It also suggested activities to help groups think about issues which they might never have focused on before and encouraged circles to express themselves in whatever ways felt comfortable to them. The *Tool Kit* ensured that every circle (and every individual who wanted to participate on a single basis) has equal access to information. In addition a five person resource centre provided information in English, French, Cantonese, Mandarin, Punjabi, Hindi, Vietnamese, Spanish, large print, audio tapes and through the Internet. At the end of this period 400 submissions had been made with a further 700 through the schools and Youth groups to the CityPlan Youthview programme. All the ideas received were published in the *Ideas Book* which amounted to 477 pages. All 3,000 people who contributed to the ideas received a copy. This might seem a huge expense but it was a means of valuing the contribution made by citizens.

stage 2. April - June 1993

Following the initial collection of ideas, the city held a three day Ideas Fair which attracted 10,000 people to see and discuss the ideas. City circle groups made presentations, while other ideas were expressed through street theatre, models, and videos. In the previous month CityPlan had held ten co-design workshops in which city circle participants had worked with an artist who recorded their ideas. Altogether 35 artists worked with 440 people in these workshops. These were subsequently published with graphic contributions from other circles as the *Ideas Book Illustrated*. Those who attended the Fair completed "cheque books" identifying ideas which needed further deliberation.

stage 3. February - August 1994

After the Ideas Fair officers began to evaluate the ideas received and to group them into the twelve emerging themes:

- where people will live
- where people will work

- the look and feel of the city
- neighbourhood and community spirit
- maintaining the infrastructure
- moving people and goods
- quality of the environment
- arts and culture
- safety and security
- community services
- finance
- decision making

This was also a period of considerable interaction with city circles

going back to the public and saying are you really sure this is what you are agreeing to, are you sure it can work or if not, would you rather go to this position which has been suggested by another groups of people (Social planner)

The emphasis was not on moving to a position held only by planning professionals but one suggested by another group. Four Saturday workshops were held and late evening advice sessions gave citizens access to staff to answer questions about the process.

The initial stages had presented four possible directions for Vancouver and through this third stage citizens were asked to consider and vote for their preferred future direction by completing a questionnaire. These four futures differed on directions for housing, neighbourhood character, jobs, community services and decision making. The 12 themes and the way they contributed to the four futures were published as a 40 page *Making Choices* workbook which was distributed to 6,000 people as well as being available through libraries and community centres in 6 languages

stage 4. February -June 1995

Between stages three and four, the choices made by citizens were reviewed by CityPlan staff and from these, the draft CityPlan was created. The draft was then displayed at venues throughout Vancouver where citizens discussed it with their councillors. The final version of the plan was approved in July 1995.

After this, of course, comes the most difficult stage of all. Citizens looked at ideas and cross cutting issues and pushed them upwards till a vision that most people could sign up to was reached. The next task is for those ideas to come back down to neighbourhoods and for local people to determine what they will do to contribute to the vision.

The CityPlan team have worked very hard and done many different things but how do you make all this into a substantive kind of planning approach. that is the challenge. At the end of the day there are really hard decisions to be made, for example, about traffic, if we are really committed to what we hear in CityPlan [encourage transit use, promote walking and cycling, discourage car use], stay away from the car and use the transit (Social Planner)

The planning process has been the subject of criticism from planning academics among others

two of my colleagues are adamant and opposed now to the degree to which participatory planning activities have come to prevail because, they argue, it leads to paralysis. We have so many competing interests and values which now have a vehicle in which to be expressed, nothing gets done (Planning academic)

CityPlan officers feel that such criticism is unjustified

people who say that have a profoundly patronising view of the public. They see that people have an inability to see the common good. The notion of poll takers does not describe what we did. We put people through a great deal of process, whatever their initial reaction might have been, they've changed a lot as they talked with others and read - people change through dialogue...planning is not primarily about knowledge, it is about educating and facilitating (CityPlan officer)

Planners feel that they have not only educated the public about their city but built capacity

People have learned to be powerful. When council members go into their neighbourhoods they are meeting people who are used to having a say (community planner)

This overturns the traditional view of the planner as representative or advocate in favour of one who "gives voice to the people themselves" (Leavitt, 1994). One city circle wanted an extension to this and saw it as fundamental to the pursuit of multiculturalism

create neighbourhood councils

- includes meetings at community halls open to neighbourhood participation
- encourages community interaction and unity
- smoothens neighbourhood relations
- creates a more responsive community. and community awareness and closeness
- encourages cross-cultural understanding and inter-generation interaction

(Ideas Book submission 0328, Committee on multiculturalism and Canadian Unity city circle)

3.3 Planning issues

This section of the paper examines the detailed responses in the City Plan. From the wealth of material presented it explores three issues which reveal the complexity of the multiculturalism debate on the ground: the demand for cultural maintenance; the need for recognition and the question of neighbourhood identity.

3.3.1 Maintenance of culture

Earlier in the paper we explored the contradictions in the mind of the average Canadian citizen about multiculturalism. It was agreed to be "a good thing" but tax dollars should not be spent on maintaining culture and language. Through the Vancouver CityPlan, many groups who describe themselves by ethnic identity are asking for spaces where they can come together as a discrete community:

Community Centre (Indo-Canadians). this will enable many seniors to use the facility which they might not use at main stream

community centres. Due to lack of language and cultural barriers. another major factor is that many programs are not catering to the interests of seniors. Time is also restricted to centre program schedule as well as staff doesn't understand the issues of immigrant seniors. There is a need for more culturally sensitive staff reflecting the users and the neighbourhood of the Community Centre (Ideas Book, submission 0343, Mosaic Seniors City Circle)

to create a multicultural centre to be shared by many small ethnic groups such as Vietnamese, Cambodian, Laotians, Thai, Phillipinos, etc. those groups that lack the logistics to run the activities on their own.

Pros:

- one stop place for comprehensive services
- multicultural setting
- assurance in funding/ management skills
- avoid ethnic isolation
- preserve culture of ethnic minorities
- share power/responsibilities
- promote cross-cultural sensitivity
- in accord with the Canadian Multicultural policy
- stronger voice for the Asian community
- support system provided to small ethnic groups

(Ideas Book submission 0462, Vietnamese Community Leaders)

The minority ethnic groups are asking for spaces which are unique to their group where community members can come together and relax knowing they are safe with others who share their language and culture. This is not the same as a desire to make a cultural (in the sense of arts) contribution to the city and to open these out to others. This view is expressed by another group whose ethnicity is uncertain:

Unity in diversity is the essence of multiculturalism. Highlighting the different cultural backgrounds of the people who make up Vancouver will help everyone feel they are an integral part of the city. Through positive exposure and education an atmosphere of mutual acceptance and co-operation can be fostered. To work towards that end we suggest **creating cultural halls in the different ethnic communities** or centralizing them in Gastown.

These would be places where a taste of each culture can be experienced and the history of each group in Vancouver and its contribution to the building of this beautiful city can be presented. Multicultural art festivals can be yearly events which attract tourists (Ideas Book, submission 0375, Public Education Forum, my emphasis)

In the *Making Choices* workbook it is these last ideas which predominate:

- people can participate in a greater range of art and cultural activities
- cultural programs and facilities are spread throughout the city
- art and cultural activities fully reflect the city's cultural diversity

While in the approved plan the choice is to:

make Vancouver a city where creativity is valued and contributes to our cultural, social and economic development; and expand partnerships between arts organizations, civic institutions, and the private sector that reflect neighbourhood needs, cultural diversity and the artist's role. To achieve this, Vancouver will:

- broaden art and culture activity at the neighbourhood level to provide opportunities for resident participation;
- respect our diverse cultural heritage while recognizing our shared responsibility for creating Vancouver's collective identity(CityPlan: Directions for Vancouver, 1995)

Again we need to reflect on whose need and ability to flourish is being served?

3.3.2 The need for recognition

Some groups were looking for festivals and carnivals as a means of celebrating their contribution and one of the fullest discussions is from the Black Coalition who set out a number of ideas embracing education and the "arts":

- that there be formal recognition of black history month in February of every year

- that there be municipality sponsored events focusing on Black History duly publicized
 - that black history be part of the school curriculum from grade 1 through university
 - that dialogue between the black community and the decision makers at City Hall be opened by 1994 regarding land acquisition and available funding for an urgently needed Black Cultural Centre
 - that public libraries have available books chronicling Black History and the Black experience
 - that artistic works (paintings and sculpture, etc.) by Black artists have a visible presence in public buildings
- {Ideas Book, submission 0098, British Columbia Black Action Coalition]

But there is another element to their demands which psychoanalysts would term "the need for recognition".

Today there is a new awareness. It is important to know the past to fully understand and challenge the future. Our community would like to see **physical evidence of our presence** and acknowledgement of our contributions. Our hope is to be part of the **visible positive elements of Vancouver.**

- that a landmark be dedicated to Black female community worker and activist from the 1930s Dorothy Nealy.

Festivals help acknowledge presence and contribution. Ceri Peach (1996) also suggest that they are a means of creating, in space, a reversal of power relations for those who perceive themselves marginalised. It may be when the Black community demands festivals it may be expressing this idea. However with carnival and festival, at the end of a given time, the signs are bundled away. This still leaves the need for permanent recognition, a sign on the street, in the city centre, in your neighbourhood that a group is there and there to stay. In Britain these needs have been responded to in part. Many major British cities have a China Town area of restaurants and have celebrations for Chinese New Year. None of these areas have statues to celebrate any British Chinese people. Is China Town only about economic issues, is it for the Chinese or is it for "us"? These questions are difficult to disentangle because through restaurants minority communities do build wealth and help establish their own position in a new place. Conversely while many major British cities have an Asian community who also

build capital through restauranting, no British city has an Asian quarter which is comparable to a China Town with distinctive restaurant design and street signage. Why should there be this different response? Is this because the Asian community do not wish to draw attention to themselves in this way, in short an expression of insecurity in Britain? Or is it that the idea is resisted by civic officials?

In considering the contribution of public art it is significant that the Greater London Council (GLC) raised statues to international Black figures such as Nelson Mandela and renamed streets and public parks after Black activists including Black British citizens. I am not aware of any study investigating the psychological impact for the Black community of these public avowals of citizenship and worth.

Many Vancouver groups, it seemed, were content to see themselves celebrated in transitory forms such as festivals but significantly the Black community was looking for a deeper sense of security. This may be because of their perception that they are less tolerated than others and that their position has had to be battled for in the face of institutional discrimination. These can only be tentative hypotheses but evidence from the CityPlan suggests that in this respect their history in Vancouver may be unique.

3.3.3. Neighbourhood identity

Allied to celebration of difference is the issue of whether neighbourhoods should indicate the ethnicity of its inhabitants. This was an important issue for plan participants. The Cedar Cottage group (predominantly Korean) saw concepts of multiculturalism spilling over into the design of place.

Input from various cultures desired to balance perspective of issues affecting the community as a whole and to include multi cultural influences in creative visioning for the neighbourhoods [Ideas Book, submission 0341, Cedar Cottage group]

as did others:

Built structure are more easily recognized as having heritage merit, but as important are atmospheric characteristics. Neighbourhoods are as distinctive and important as great buildings. Cultural and

ethnic diversity, tied in great extent to neighbourhood(s), yield a rich urban fabric.

(Ideas Book, submission 0336, City circle, Vancouver)

Some participants felt that this added richness to the city scape and was a form of valuing diversity:

Historical, cultural and social diversity - Provide opportunities for neighbourhoods to educate the public re the significance of the history and peoples inhabiting the area. It is important to **retain the uniqueness of our neighbourhoods: i.e. Commercial Drive (Italian influences), and Main (Indo- Canadian)** . Public art should reflect the historical and cultural nuances of the specific areas to nurture the sense of belonging and understanding of various people groups. **Commercial districts creating their unique identities will enhance the community**, and provide a focal point for the neighbourhood. (Ideas book submission 0213, Eastside Lifestyles, my emphasis.)

Some groups put forward a range of solutions which neighbourhoods could adopt to call attention to their special character.

encourage the ethnic flavour of distinct neighbourhoods with special lamps, street poles, benches etc. (Ideas book submission 0025 Purdy Pavilion City Circle University Hospital)

Foster neighbourhood identity:

Use distinctive signage, street signage, street banners, special plantings, cultural history, unique architecture, etc. to make each neighbourhood different and there by strengthen neighbourhood identity.

(Ideas Book submission 0144, Towards a more caring, inclusive, stable environment, Mount Pleasant).

Others were concerned that moves in this direction could de stabilise into forms of *de facto* segregation:

encourage cultural and ethnic mix in all neighbourhoods (residential and commercial)
 avoid ghettoization
 (Ideas Book submission 0152, City Circle on People and Housing)

Ceri Peach (1996) talks of "segregation [being] one of the key methods of accommodating difference" and goes on to suggest that "a great deal of the difficulty lies in failing to distinguish between the positive and the negative" (page 137). An interviewee saw the issue of separation as another delicate balancing act with a heavy dependence on continuing economic prosperity:

in a society of equal opportunity with sufficiently shared values where people are able to work together in the same kind of institutions it would benefit from diverse neighbourhoods. On the other hand where there is a vast disparity in economic wealth between different groups as a result of discrimination and racist attitudes in a society it becomes an indicator of unhealth. You can have segregation, not in an official sense, but because people want to live with others like them in neighbourhoods in a society where people are equal and this would be a fine and healthy expression of multiculturalism. On the other hand as in North America, segregated neighbourhoods have shown how starkly economically different these neighbourhoods are. (planning academic)

Planners everywhere have struggled with this issue. In Britain, economic forces driven by racism mean that these solutions would be difficult to implement with any real hope of creating a place of positive association. In CityPlan the final decision was to leave it to for each neighbourhood to determine.

Even with growth, Vancouver will keep much of what gives its neighbourhoods their look and feel - trees and greenery, heritage buildings and areas, distinctive area identities, and generally low scale buildings outside the central area...Around the centres, the existing character of the neighbourhood will be retained or a new character will develop depending on neighbourhood preferences.
 (Vancouver CityPlan: Directions for Vancouver, 1995)

which conforms to the desire for government made small and decision at the grass roots level.

Neighbourhoods need to encourage a sense of commitment and involvement on the part of their residents. Solutions to problems associated with the growth of the city should be locally based and reflect the goals and values of each neighbourhood. CityPlan should not result in one solution created and imposed on neighbourhoods by the city (Ideas Book submission 0215 West Side coalition)

On this issue in particular it may be the best solution is for neighbourhoods to decide whether to celebrate difference and how this should be done. This may create neighbourhoods which have physical signs which local people feel appropriate as opposed to those which outsiders associate with a particular ethnic group. The neighbourhood becomes a place for "them" rather than simply as a curiosity for "us". There is the ever present danger that economic change will leave these neighbourhoods exposed as places where certain groups associated with no work or low paid work live. There is also the complexity of those neighbourhoods where several groups live together. How might they reflect their intra neighbourhood diversity? These are dynamic issues.

4. BUILDING VALUES

Discussion with planning academics revealed that planning students are not asked to consider the implications of working in a multiracial nation nor of working in one pledged to multiculturalism. This contrast with the position of US planning schools (Friedman and Kuester, 1994) which are increasingly concerned with how they can prepare would be planners to deal with changes in the national /local condition, particularly the need to address:

- the rising intensity of racial, ethnic and gender conflicts in the metropolitan USA
- the increasing polarization of power and wealth in the USA (increasing wealth for a few, with a decline in living conditions for many)

These may be issues which are particularly pressing in the USA. However as this paper has demonstrated, Vancouver is not quite the unoppressive city it would like to believe it is. One of the problems is that we rarely can experience the life worlds of others. This was acknowledged by Planning academics who reported that their

cohorts of students were predominantly white with European ancestry. There was therefore little opportunity through interaction to share perspectives.

Where students are challenged is in considering their own value and knowledge base:

Where do values come from? I have a very controversial three week course on epistemology in our western culture and our basic premise is to tell students that we don't really know anything in the sense that knowledge is belief with certainty and we go through a whole series of exercises around thought experiences and where our knowledge comes from. The problem is our values are inculcated and we acquire them over time. I would be misleading you if I said we were teaching anything explicitly about racism and how to deal with multiculturalism. (Planning academic)

The greatest challenges were coming once planners were in practice, partly through their exposure to the interactive CityPlan process and partly through organised training packages. In 1989 the Vancouver City Council set up Hastings Institute as a vehicle to deliver training programmes around diversity in the workplace. The City had shown a great deal of leadership in providing training around equality, cross cultural relations and building around diversity for its own staff and the setting up of the Institute was in response to the outside organisations who began to ask for similar training to work more effectively with their diversifying employee and customer base. Within the city the Director of Hastings Institute saw training as part of a culture change within the organisation:

Hastings has done a lot of pioneering work in delivering training and that follows the kind of philosophy the city has adopted. Moving from being a bureaucratic, white, male dominated, tradition bound, protecting the status quo - moving from that response and way of doing business to a different kind of organisation which is open, acceptable, welcoming, open with people, challenging rules that might have worked once but don't anymore, looking at what language we use, what formats we use for communication, what information we give out (Hastings director)

The training style used by Hastings is experiential and one of their best regarded programmes (Kingswood, which originated in Toronto) takes a groups of professionals on a weekend retreat:

we have people experience things or we create hypothetical situations (but taken from reality) where individuals are getting the responsibility of sorting it out; or to do something about it. This is done to help the officer consider the feelings of someone suffering from harassment say or of a special interest group who have been trying and trying to break through and make themselves heard. How can we help them. We create a sense of ownership. So often as bureaucrats we hide behind the image of being a cog in a machine. Training tells people that they are not just cogs in a machine, everyone can make a difference (Director of Hastings)

The CityPlan process and the proactive and flexible approach taken by officers to empowering citizens is a fine example of this new style of organisation which does not see itself as a fount of knowledge but as a group of skilful people able to create effective networks, to negotiate, mediate and work in partnership with a range of people - other professionals and citizens. John Friedman and Carol Kuester (1994) writing in the US context talk of the need for planners to "develop innovative coalition-building and grassroots-organizing skills and apply them to trenchant urban issues". This mode of working must expose planners to different life worlds and help these groups find their own voice.

5. Conclusions

The CityPlan process has provided windows into the lives of many different citizen groups and an opportunity to determine how groups have responded to the process of the Plan and had their ideas carried through.

The framework for planning in Canada is very different from that of the UK with a very different end product. However in the style of working; the commitment to a citizen centred process, there is much that UK planners with their techno-legal focus (Booth and Gilroy, 1996) could learn. Many of the issues that preoccupy minority ethnic groups are similar to the UK though some of the solutions available could not be contemplated in the downsizing economy of Britain. While British planning is still struggling with effective means of acknowledging our multiracial society, in

Vancouver, planners are willing to talk about how to make an ideal of unity within diversity into a practical reality.

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