Vancouver’s Year of Truth and Reconciliation, What If Apple Designed Community Plans, “Don’t Walk Alone?”, Higher Aspirations: Skylines and Sight Lines, The Right to Accessible Transit, Moving the Future, and more...
SCARP Director’s Report
DR. PENNY GURSTEIN, DIRECTOR, UBC SCARP

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ALEXANDRA LESNIKOWSKI, MAP CANDIDATE

PIBC Student Social
ROBERT WHITE, MSCP CANDIDATE

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The Right to Accessible Transit
ELIANA CHIA, MAP CANDIDATE

What if Apple Designed Community Plans
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APA WA Conference: Wicked Problems, Smart Solutions
GABI ESSER, MAP CANDIDATE & ERIN RENNIE, MAP CANDIDATE

LoHA Housing Tour: Exploring Housing Alternatives in Vancouver
ROBERT WHITE, MSCP CANDIDATE

Vancouver’s Year of Truth and Reconciliation
SARAH THOMAS, MSCP CANDIDATE

John Friedmann: Fall 2013 Lunchtime Lectures
ROBERT WHITE, MSCP CANDIDATE

Moving the Future: A New Conversation on Transportation and the Economy
MATTHEW SHIELDS, MAP CANDIDATE
I am pleased to be back as SCARP’s Director after a very productive and stimulating study leave last year. There is a lot happening at SCARP and I look forward to working with all of you on these various initiatives.

The major development is the restructuring of our Master’s Program into two degree programs, the professional accredited degree, Master of Community and Regional Planning (MCRP) and the research degree, MA/MSc in Planning Studies (MPS). Given the approval process at UBC and with the Provincial Government we are anticipating that the MCRP will be commencing in 2015-16 and the MPS in 2016-17. Planning for these degrees we recognize the urgency in obtaining physical space to accommodate these students. The latest UBC plan for SCARP is that after we vacate WMA, which is to be used for academic units and housing, we will be consolidating all of our school in the Lasserre building. This is a very exciting prospect for us as it will mean that we will finally be in one space and we will have the opportunity to renovate a modern heritage building reflecting our philosophical approach to sustainability. You will be hearing more about this as we move forward in the planning.

The Indigenous Community Planning (ICP) specialization is in its second year under the capable hands of Leonie Sandercock, ICP Chair and Jeff Cook, Practicum instructor and is garnering a lot of attention. We have partnered with Musqueam band on the delivery of the program and the new Dean of Applied Science, Marc Palange, has provided funding starting in 2014-15 for three years to support part of the expenses for this program.

We are in the initial stages of organizing a mentorship program for our students with PIBC (Planning Institute of BC) which will provide an opportunity for students to be mentored by professional planners during their time at SCARP and while they are going through the membership requirements. We recognize that this will be an important support for our students and graduates.

One of the highlights of the SCARP year has become the annual student organized symposium. The February 7, 2014 event, “Embracing ComplexCity” will be the sixth annual symposium and from all reports looks to be a wonderful event. I encourage all of you to attend. I also encourage you to attend a SCARP Research Celebration which we will be organizing in March 2014 to celebrate faculty members who have made significant research contributions in the last few years.

SCARP, I believe, is stronger than ever and is poised to become even stronger as we develop new initiatives and contemplate growing our enrollment.

I look forward to working with the SCARP community on this.
This year marks the twenty-fifth anniversary of Horst Rittel and Melvin’s Webber’s seminal publication that framed the challenges confronting planners as “wicked problems.” This coincides with an expanding debate about how we should respond to major challenges of the twenty-first century like climate change, demographic shifts, and structural changes in the economy. Improving the resilience of our towns, cities, and regions to these changes and accommodating uncertainty is a critical issue for the next generation of planners.

Wicked problems are inherently hard to define and therefore difficult to address. They constantly evolve, and encompass many interacting systems. In the context of urban and regional planning, addressing these wicked problems requires an understanding of the urban space as a complex series of interactions between social, ecological, and economic systems.

Understanding cities as complex systems has tremendous implications for planning, but ambiguity remains around how this framing can be translated into practice. At the 2014 SCARP Student Symposium, Embracing ComplexCity taking place on February 7, 2014, we will be exploring the following question: What tools and strategies do we need in our practice to embrace complexity, thereby better preparing us to respond to wicked problems?

We are very excited to welcome Dr. Andrew Weaver and Dr. John Friedmann as keynote speakers. Dr. Weaver is a Lansdowne Professor in the School of Earth and Ocean Sciences at the University of Victoria. He was a lead author on the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change’s 2007 report Climate Change 2007: The Physical Science Basis. Dr. Friedmann is an Honorary Professor at SCARP, and has led a distinguished academic career in planning. He has authored 15 books and over 150 chapters, articles, and reviews.

This year we’ve partnered with the Planning Institute of BC and the Yukon to offer 7.75 Organized/Structured CPD Learning Units to PIBC members.

EARLY-BIRD REGISTRATION IS NOW OPEN!

www.scarpsymposium.ca
facebook.com/ubcscarp | @UBCscarp | #CmplxCity
PIBC STUDENT SOCIAL

By Robert White

Nearly 80 students and planning practitioners packed the Hastings room at Oceanic Centre on October 23rd for the UBC/SFU PIBC Student Social - an annual event co-organized by representatives from SCARP and SFU’s School of Resource and Environmental Management. Potluck Catering, a social enterprise on Vancouver’s Downtown Eastside provided light snacks and beverages as attendees began to fill up the room. PIBC’s Dave Crossley and Ryan Noakes kicked off the evening followed by a warm welcome from PIBC President Andrew Young.

We welcomed panelists Christopher Atkins, Planner at City of Surrey, Keltie Craig, Sustainability Specialist at City of Vancouver and former Planner at HB Lanarc Consultants, Daniella Fergusson, Community Planning and Digital Engagement Specialist at Golder Associates, Kira Gerwing, Manager, Community Investment at Vancity Credit Union and former Planner at City of Vancouver, and Alex Taylor, Community Planner at Dillon Consulting.

Students submitted questions online, and each panelist provided thoughtful reflections on how to define and approach sustainability in his or her work within the context of long-term planning. Themes of lifestyle, communication, education, and implementation surfaced through the discussion, which lead into further questions regarding tools young planners should be equipped with. Business development, translation, negotiating, and storytelling skills proved to be the most emphasized. The evening continued with desserts and more mingling before wrapping up with a Q&A period and a final question regarding the most exciting part about being a planner.

On behalf of Maxwell Sykes and myself, we’d like to again thank each of the panelists, everyone who attended, and PIBC for providing the funding and support to make this event happen. Ties between REM, SCARP, and SFU Urban Studies students were further solidified at an informal meetup after the event, which resulted in the formation of a new BC Planning Students Network facebook group to support ongoing connections between students attending the local masters-level planning/urban studies programs.

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FALL 2013 MASTERS GRADUATES

KRISTIE BABALOS, MAP
Comprehensive Community Planning: Learning from Practice with the Haida Village of Skidegate
Project Committee: Jeff Cook & Haida Village of Skidegate

ZACHARY BENNETT, MAP
Value, Aspiration, and Policy: How (and why) Tomorrow’s Middle Class China Moves
Project Committee: Jinhua Zhao, Michael Leaf

SEAN BOHLE, MAP
Making Space for Families: Municipal Policy Options to Create High Density Housing for Families with Children
Project Committee: Larry Frank, Cameron Gray

LESLEY CAMPBELL, MAP
A Learning Journey in Indigenous Community Planning with the Gitksan Government Commissions
Project Committee: Jeff Cook, Sandra Harris (Gitksan Government Commission)

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In response to the recent sexual assaults against women on the UBC campus, and concerned about how the University has responded, SCARP students organized a panel discussion, entitled “Don’t walk alone at night? A discussion on women’s rights to the public space at UBC campus” on November 7th 2013. The event attracted students and staff from across the UBC campus, and filled the room to capacity.

Three speakers started the debate: Dr. Louise Johnson, a feminist geographer from Deakin University in Australia, currently a Visiting Scholar at SCARP, exposed how spaces are gendered and shaped by power dynamics. Gendered spaces are also found on the UBC campus, where young women, an elder woman, a young man and an elder man experience them differently. She argued that after 40 years of feminist revolution, women still do not have the right to the space at night. She problematized that the message given from the university “Don’t walk alone” places the burden on women, and not men.

The second speaker, Professor and SCARP Director Penny Gurstein, emphasized that the focus has been giving individual responsibility for your own safety and not a collective responsibility. “There needs to be systemic addressing to these issues”. She manifested her concern about some of the solutions proposed outside this discussion, such as installing more security cameras. This would not solve the issue and reduce the places of privacy we have. She proposed thinking again on the planning ideas developed about the differences between spaces: private, semi-private, semi-public, public; and engaged a bottom-up process with the UBC community to address safety issues without using security technologies.

Nora Angeles, Professor at SCARP and the Institute of GRSJ emphasized to include an intersectional approach to safety, to not exclude people because of their gender, sexual orientation, race or ethnicity.

“I am bothered by the messaging around campus that reinforces the culture of paranoia”

Ani Mottahed, from Sexual Assault Support Center (SASC) explained the services and programs they offered and started a debate with the audience about our meaning of a Cultural Safety, ways of Supporting the community, the use of language and dialogue and how we can change language to avoid the perpetuation
of stereotypes, and how we can create a culture of change. Women in the audience expressed frustration that their mobility had been reduced on campus since the administration began the “Don’t walk alone at night” campaign.

“I am bothered by the messaging around the campus that reinforces the culture of paranoia. I know there are good intentions but they put the responsibilities back to the individual. It is almost insulting.”

“I feel embarrassed to having to ask someone to escort me to the bus. And you see the sign everywhere with the message ‘don’t have to walk alone’; if something happens to you it will be your fault.”

They expressed concerns of how things have been dealt by the campus administration as well as willingness to contribute to improve safety through a feminist community-based response.

“With the journey was transformative,” said Babalos. “We were escorted to the neighborhoods most vulnerable to the impacts of climate change. We listened to the community members’ stories of strength and resilience in the face of poverty and marginalization and to their needs for adapting to climate change in the future.”

The studio-style course also gave the students practical, hands-on experience.

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Sky.

When I talk with Edmontonians-away-from-home about what we miss most about the city, the answer is almost always the same: the sky. The Northern Lights. Thunderstorms. Fiery sunsets. It is one of the things that makes this city liveable, and unites across our many differences. And with our long winters, sunshine is a valuable, renewable, and free public asset.

But as this city grows and changes, how do we ensure that everyone gets a piece of the sky?

I am proud to call myself an Edmontonian, but I am not thrilled about sharing that identity with a 71-storey condominium. “The Edmontonian Sky Garden Tower” proposed by BCM Developments would be located next to the new Arena District at 10525 101st St. “This beautiful and elegant tower will forever change the Edmonton skyline”, reads BCM’s website, “[it] will be the tallest building in Edmonton and one of the tallest residential buildings in western Canada. On the proposed 30th floor you’ll enjoy a sky garden with an unparalleled view of the city’s core.”

With the recent closure of the City Centre Airport, height restrictions have been lifted, and downtown towers can now go as high as 200 metres. The City’s Downtown Plan wants to encourage more development, with taller, sleeker towers. This could bring more life to downtown, which we need, in this sprawling city. However, if this city is set to reach higher and higher, do we understand all the implications of what more tall buildings will mean? Will a view of the sky be something reserved only for condominium owners? Can we identify and preserve iconic Edmonton views? And how do we make these views accessible from eye-level, from street-level?

Danish architect Jan Gehl, in his book Cities for People, says we must consider: “life, space, buildings – and in that order.” He says that we must start from the human-scale, from the 5 km/h scale, and scale up from there to the birds-eye view, rather than the reverse. The idea of protecting views is big in Vancouver, where there are 27 protected view corridors, established by the City to protect the view of the North Shore mountains, the Downtown skyline, and the surrounding water, to “ensure that Vancouver maintains its connection to nature while the city expands.” The City of Vancouver has had View Protection Guidelines in place since 1989,
in order to protect selected, threatened public views, called “view cones.” The protected view corridors help determine the site location and design of new buildings, resulting in the retention of panoramic and narrow views downtown. Montreal has thought carefully about how to make Mount Royal, the gem of the city, visible from all directions. The Montreal Master Plan identifies a need to preserve views of Mount Royal from various parts of the City.

As Edmonton changes, as cities are wont to do, we need to mourn the views already lost. The Strathcona Railway Station is one of these. Due to an oversight by both planners and community members, the vista was lost in 2012 to the four-storey Fuzion on Whyte condo and commercial development, also by BCM. People didn’t realize the visual implications of losing a line of sight until after a development permit was approved at a 2007 subdivision and development appeal board hearing. “It wasn’t on anybody’s radar,” said Councillor Ben Henderson, in the Edmonton Journal (May 2, 2012). Edmonton’s Historian Laureate, Shirley Lowe wrote for Spacing Edmonton (June 10, 2013): “We didn’t anticipate the loss and didn’t work to protect the view early enough to make a difference. The plan for the area did not include an inventory of its important views so we were caught unaware. The developer couldn’t or wouldn’t change the plan to leave a public view of a historic site”.

What if we could avoid these mistakes in the future? What if we could inventory the views that Edmontonians value, and enshrine these views in city plans, so that the visual implications of developments are on the radar. So that proposed developments must consider the views they will frame or block, so that the public knows which sight lines are valued, so that the City can stand firm at the bargaining table with developers, if need be.

“Oh yeah, we wanted to beat Calgary,” said Sherwood Park architect Terry Hartwig, whose firm first designed The Edmontonian as a 41-storey tower, about six years ago (Edmonton Journal, Nov.1, 2013). The bragging rights to having “one of the tallest buildings in Western Canada” inevitably only last until someone else builds a bigger building. Could we aim for a more thoughtful legacy?

Could we ask that urban development be guided so that there is deliberateness, intention and elegance to how this city unfolds? Imagine if one day the world will know Edmonton as a city of sky and grace, not a city of big things. That would make me proud to call myself an Edmontonian.

What do you think?

What views say “Edmontonian” to you? The Legislature? The High Level Bridge? The Harbin Gate? The refineries that ring the city? The ribbon of green that runs through it all?

Kathryn’s article originally appeared on Spacing.ca/Edmonton

PHOTO: KATHRYN GWAN-NYEEN LENNON

“HIGHER ASPIRATIONS” FROM PAGE 7

The City of Vancouver False Creek View Cones
SOURCE: CITY OF VANCOUVER

VIEW PROTECTION GUIDELINES
Enforced View Locations Map 1

The City of Vancouver False Creek View Cones
SOURCE: CITY OF VANCOUVER
WHISTLER ORIENTATION

By Jenna Dunsby

Another new year, another SCARP Whistler Orientation Trip! Just over 50 of us made the trek by big yellow school bus (and automobile) up to the beautiful UBC Lodge in Whistler, B.C., where we spent about 34 hours getting to know one another and seeing the sights. Upon our arrival, we headed to the Squamish Lil’wat Cultural Centre, where we took part in a fascinating roundtable discussion on indigenous community planning with two representatives from the Lil’wat Nation - Kerry Mehaffey, Director of Economic Development and Lil’wat Business, and David Dorrans, Director of Land, Resources & Infrastructure. From there we enjoyed a student-led walking tour of Whistler Village, spent time at the nearby lakes, had a few good meals and good times at the lodge, took the obligatory 1st-years “Steps” picture, got on the bus and headed back to Vancouver – ready to start class!

Thanks Whistler, see you next year – and many thanks to the 2nd-year students Peer-Daniel Krause, Wilson Mendes, Sarah Thomas and Mel Harding for helping to make it a success! 🌟
Navigating through Metro Vancouver using the TransLink system has its bumps and challenges for the average commuter. This can be verified by anyone who has been passed by multiple 99 B-Line buses during rush hour. Now imagine attempting to board that same crowded bus, navigating around construction obstacles at bus stops, or finding alternative routes when bus services are modified—as a person with a disability.

A focus on accessible public transportation in Metro Vancouver is crucial considering our aging population. By 2036 in British Columbia, 1 in 4 residents will be 65 or older, and with increasing age comes the added probability of a mobility disability.

While TransLink has made strides in developing transit accessibility in the past few decades, there are still notable existing barriers. Although 100% of the buses in the city are accessible, some routes currently have only 60% to 70% of their bus stops accessible. As a result, eligible passengers with disabilities have turned to the HandyDART shuttle system, which provides door-to-door service at a lower fare than buses and skytrains. However, HandyDART creates another set of issues: reservations must be made 7 days in advance, there are frequent refusals due to over-booking, and riders bear with extensive waiting time at transfer points for cross-zone trips. Tom Parker, an accessible transit advocate on the board of the Richmond Centre for Disability, commented that “several women who have had to come down to UBC for medical treatment have to leave first thing in the morning and they are not home until after 4. And the appointment may only be for half an hour but still it takes up the whole day.”

In response to these constraints, TransLink initiated the Taxi Pilot project in April 2013. The project takes about 10,000 hours of HandyDART service usually delivered by HandyDART vehicles and replaces them with accessible taxis. The accessible taxis are still booked through the HandyDART system and riders pay the same reduced fare. The Taxi Pilot project lowers the rate of rejected requests by providing about 7,000 more customer trips. Even though the project is commendable in remaining affordable and increasing availability, there are still accessibility concerns that need to be addressed.

One issue is that persons with disabilities often use HandyDART for their medical appointments, but converted taxis do not have the space for medical equipment or attendants. Another drawback is that HandyDART drivers are trained in assisting riders with disabilities in and out of their homes, and taxi drivers often do not provide the same standard of service. Parker described a situation when “a woman who is blind…had an occasion where in the last minute, her [HandyDART] bus didn’t come, and the taxi that she got dropped her off on the wrong side of the street and a block away from home, and she had a heck of a time finding her way.” Clearly, the inaccessibility of public transit pushes persons with disabilities to make transportation choices that put their personal safety at risk.

The need to ensure that our public transit system is fully accessible is a matter of human rights. Disability is not just an individual condition; it is also the consequence of social and political decisions. Parker brings to light that “a medical diagnosis may identify a disability, but a person is handicapped when community services fail to meet their needs”. As planners and as community members, we have the collective responsibility to build an environment that does not situate a group as second-class citizens.
WHAT IF Apple Designed Community Plans?

By Daniella Ferguson

The Local Government Act defines what an Official Community Plan (OCP) must address (for more, see a video we made for District of Sparwood). However, local governments have flexibility in designing the process and product for their OCPs. In other words, the functions of an OCP (guide future development, be used by staff and developers, protect hazard areas, etc.) are relatively fixed but the form or design are open to innovation.

THE BIG QUESTION

In July, about 30 people tackled, “How can the planning profession innovate to create inclusive, accessible, and intuitive community plans?” as part of an ongoing dialogue hosted by CivicMeetVancouver. During this two-hour event, we met each other, found inspiration in innovative technology, collaboratively developed an agenda for small groups work, dove deeply into five different topics, and reflected on our “deepest learning” of the day.

THE BIG IDEAS

Five big ideas emerged during our time together:

1. **Community-Driven Storytelling:**
   Use community-driven process to find common ground and a vision for the future.

2. **Blow Up the Plan:**
   Create leaner and more rational plans based on economic trade-offs and the lifespan of infrastructure and buildings to be developed.

3. **How Technology can Improve Planning Processes:**
   Use 3D models, density models, videos, and other tools to show the plan in a way people can understand.

4. **Radical Visuals:**
   Make the plan a dynamic, 3-D experience that can be updated over time and experienced as if you were walking through a community.

5. **Radical Experiences & Communication:**
   Use storytelling and narrative in an on-going way to explain the plan, and write the plan in a format that meets the level of detail required by the reader.

LESSONS LEARNED

Thirty people are smarter than just one, so many great ideas arose for making better plans:

- **Be realistic:** The plan needs to reflect (and communicate!) economic realities, including the long-term impact on taxpayers of road/infrastructure form. Trade-offs between community amenities and density are real and need to be communicated effectively, and people need real-time feedback on whether their ideas would pass a pro-forma.

- **Scale matters:** The plan needs to address different scales of time and geography in different ways. Buildings can last decades; whereas, roads and infrastructure can have an impact for centuries.

- **Variety of learning styles:** People learn by listening, seeing, and doing things for themselves. Use videos, interactive physical models,
**APA WA CONFERENCE**

**WICKED PROBLEMS: SMART SOLUTIONS**

*By Erin Rennie & Gabi Esser*

On October 2nd and 3rd, SCARP 2nd year students Gabi Esser and Erin Rennie attended the Washington APA Conference in Bellevue Washington State. The theme of the conference was “Wicked Problems: Smart Solutions” and featured many interesting speakers on a wide variety of topics ranging from climate mitigation in coastal cities, to the challenge of building a transit station on a lot that is cut in half by two municipalities. One of the most popular sessions was about the recent legalization of marijuana in the State of Washington and the complex zoning problem planners are now scrambling to deal with.

Many conference goers were appreciative to have representatives from Vancouver and unique perspectives from SCARP. The conference was a great opportunity to engage with American planners whose culture is so similar and yet so different from Vancouver and BC. Driving Seattle’s expansive and baffling highway network was a major point of contrast and had the students feeling even more appreciative for Vancouver’s compact, highway-free, downtown.

Overall it was great to be reminded that planners everywhere share many things including an interest in sustainability and the public good. But there was one thing that had Erin and Gabi rethinking their aptitude to become city planners… they got lost. So lost on the Washington highway system! Hopefully a natural sense of direction isn’t a dealbreaker when it comes to the planning job market!

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**SOMETHING COMPLETELY DIFFERENT**

This event presented some fundamental and intriguing questions.

*Can a plan be more than a written report?* Can it be an interactive 3D model, superimposed onto reality that is fluid and constantly updated?

Stretched to its limit, *what would the Local Government Act allow, and do we need to stretch that limit further?*

*What do you think?*
LOHA HOUSING TOUR: EXPLORING HOUSING ALTERNATIVES IN VANCOUVER

By Robert White

On September 13th, I joined a group of 40 or so young architects, planners, developers, and other community members on a tour exploring unique forms of housing in Vancouver’s Strathcona and Railtown neighbourhoods. The tour was put on by LoHA, the Laboratory of Housing Alternatives, which is a local non-profit focused on exploring and building housing alternatives for creative and emerging professionals (i.e. me, and probably a bunch of you as well).

We started off at the Schoolhouse building at E Georgia and Princess, where Mark and Leslie Shieh of Take Root Properties explained how the project was inspired by traditional Chinese family courtyard housing and showed off some of the neat adaptive

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“FALL GRADUATES” FROM PAGE 9

ANNIE MERRITT, MAP
Toward a Brighter Fishing Future: Social and Economic Indicators to Measure Outcomes of the T’aqq-wiihak Fisheries
Project Committee: Tim McDaniels, Don Hall (the Nuu-chah-nulth Tribal Council)

MAYSA PHARES, MAP
A Case for Public Interest Design in Vancouver’s Downtown Eastside
Project Committee: Maged Senbel, Scot Hein (City of Vancouver)

GORDON REDMOND, MAP
An Evaluation of Disaster Mitigation Planning for B.C. First Nations: An Assessment of Five Comprehensive Community Plans (CCP)
Project Committee: Mark Stevens, Jeff Cook

JESSICA STUART, MAP
Democracy in a Digital World: Integrated Media for Youth Urban Design Engagement
Project Committee: Maged Senbel, Chris Selvig (Engineering & Development Services, City of Revelstoke)

JOSH TAYLOR, MAP
The Christchurch Earthquake Sequence: Government Decision-Making and Confidence in the Face of Uncertainty
Thesis Committee: Stephanie Chang, Ken Elwood (UBC, Civil Engineering), Tim McDaniels

JESSICA WILLIAMS, MAP
Comprehensive Community Planning: Learning from Practice with the Haida Village of Skidegate
Project Committee: Jeff Cook & Haida Village of Skidegate

FALL 2013 PHD GRADUATES

DR. SARAH CHURCH
Urban Dwellers and Neighborhood Nature: Exploring the impacts of urban nature, sustainable stormwater infrastructure, and stewardship on urban residents’ connection to place, community, and environment
Advisor: Maged Senbel

DR. AFTAB ERFAN
An Experiment in Therapeutic Planning: Learning with the Gwa’sala’-Nakwaxda’xw First Nations
Advisor: Leonie Sandercock

DR. JENNIE MOORE
Getting Serious About Sustainability: Exploring the Potential for One Planet Living in Vancouver
Advisor: William Rees

DR. DILNOOR PANJWANI
The Effects of Resettlement on Community Recovery: An Analysis of Post-Tsunami Aceh, Indonesia
Advisor: Stephanie Chang
spaces they designed into the units. Need more office space? Just move the wall! Take Root emphasized the intent on bringing the heritage value forward, rather than simply restoring the 1940s schoolhouse to its original state. Strathcona is changing and this project was intended to be a case study of how new, multi-generational housing could be sensitively and beautifully constructed in established communities. The project also features a ground-floor community space which was built to accommodate a huge range of uses including a restaurant or a café and has already been used as a daycare, yoga studio, art workshop, and pop-up restaurant, to name a few.

Next we wandered around the corner and down an alley to find one of the oldest existing laneway homes in the city – a quaint laneway cottage from the 1890s most recently renovated in 2006. Over 1049 laneway home permits have been approved since the City’s EcoDensity program began in 2008 but it’s great to see examples from previous generations receive the love and attention they deserve.

Jake Fry, Smallworks Studios, prompted the tour participants to consider the size of the home (400 sq ft), and then consider how much space we use on a daily basis. Small, compact rooms aren’t a compromise as long as they’re designed well – cozy spaces emphasizing quality and comfort can easily end up being more enjoyable than larger, poorly designed spaces.

From there we headed off to Japantown to take a look at the shipping container housing project recently completed by Atira Women’s Resource Society at Powell and Jackson – the first of its kind in Canada. Atira, a not-for-profit organization committed to the work of ending violence against women, operates the adjacent heritage building and the newly added homes in the 12 shipping containers.

Janice Abott, Atira, took us through the process of realizing the project – from finding the containers, to putting in the finishing touches. A few benefits of using shipping containers as the frame in which to create a home included the low cost (around $83,000 per unit), quick construction time, and durability of the containers. These things carry cargo across the roughest seas in the world in stacks of up to 8 containers – there are few safer places I’d rather be in an earthquake. Thanks to the low construction costs and work of Atira, the surprisingly comfortable 280 sq ft units go for as low as $600/month, dependent on income.

More than simply container housing, this project creates safe space for women who call the Downtown Eastside home – and women who have an invested interest in mentoring the young women next door in the Imouto Housing for Young Women through Atira’s Intergenerational Mentorship program.

The final stop on our tour was The Edge building at Gore and Alexander. Khang Nguyen, Architrix Studio and resident of The Edge, invited us into his 3rd-floor loft before revealing the wonderful diversity of activities going on in the building. It’s a live/work building with a range of different units and a jaw-dropping 7,000 sq ft of amenity space which includes a gym, metal shop, woodworking shop, pottery studio, darkroom and large format printer, recording studio, etc.

The tour was an insightful and an eye-opening experience for a Vancouverite who thought he’d seen everything to see in this fine city. I encourage everyone to learn more about upcoming LoHA events and initiatives by visiting www.LohaVancouver.org.

Robert’s article originally appeared on VancouverIsAwesome.com.
Companionship, walking together, witnessing. This is how the TRC event was presented. An invitation for all to come, listen to stories of aboriginal residential school survivors, and be a part of change in the making as we, as Canada, work towards a more just, loving, and compassionate country where aboriginal people and values are at the forefront of our being. One of seven national events of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, TRC Vancouver was the BC event and showcased vibrant aboriginal culture amidst the harsh stories of residential school. Wednesday to Friday was witnessing stories, Saturday featured a big birthday party for residential school survivors in honour of all of the birthdays that were missed during residential school.

To close the week 70 000 people filled the streets to walk together side-by-side, shoulder-to-shoulder for reconciliation. It was a very powerful experience walking together, aboriginal, non-aboriginal, young and old, new Canadians and people who have been here for centuries. A hearty West Coast rain enlivened the spirit throughout the streets of Vancouver, over the viaducts to Main Street and down past Chinatown.

At the start of the week, each of the host Nations had given symbols of their territories over to honorary witnesses of the Truth and Reconciliation for the duration of the events from September 18-22. At the close of the walk on that wondrous, wet, Sunday morning, Andrea Reiner spoke on behalf of Mayor Gregor Robertson in returning the symbol he had received, a glass canoe paddle, back to the Tsleil-Waututh First Nation honouring and thanking them for the experiences and opportunities of the past week and recognizing the role of the Tsleil-Waututh on this land.

As reconciliation week falls into the past the question remains, how will we take these learnings and experience and apply them to our daily lives? Echoing Andrea Reimer’s sentiments as she spoke at the closing ceremonies that day, we will retain much of the strength gained from conversation and insights from reflections on stories shared.

Each of us holds a responsibility for future collaboration and strengthened relations between aboriginal and non-aboriginal alike. We owe it to ourselves, our elders, and the generations to come to continue these conversations and find more opportunities to share together this wonderful Canada and the place we all call home.

Leonie Sandercock & SCARP students at the Walk for Reconciliation.
WMAX 150 filled up to the brim on Wednesday in anticipation of John Friedmann sharing his thoughts on Planning: The Long View for the 3rd Lunchtime Lecture of the FALL 2013 term. Friedmann, who will be retiring at the end of this academic year, posed the question, “What sort of place is Metro Vancouver going to be after an increase of 1 million people in 35-40 years, and what are the challenges to planning given continued immigration? How has the area changed in the past 35-40 years?” He pointed out how 35-40 years ago computers barely existed, globalization wasn’t yet a concept, China was just beginning to rise onto the global stage, and sustainability and resilience were unheard of. Today we’re in a world of global terrorism and online social networks. In Vancouver, we’re living in a pluricentric regional city with a number of suburban municipalities growing into full-fledged urban centres. Pressure will increase to develop the ALR and other open spaces not only for housing, but also for recreation, transportation, solid waste disposal, or corporate research campuses.

Friedmann asked if these changes and challenges implied a need for a change of governance for the regional city. We’ve seen how it turned out in Toronto, but he left the question for us to ponder. We were also left wondering where the new jobs might be located 40 years from now, and what will the nature of those jobs be? Will social inequality continue to grow? Do we as planners have a specific responsibility to the poorest 40% of the population, who are receiving only 20% of all income payments? What implications will the decreasing level of cross-cultural integration, and rising resource investments from Asia have on the economic, social, and cultural life of the region? What about the social impacts of technological changes like high-speed rail or the increasingly ubiquitous nature of online communication?

He encouraged us to find ways to have an open conversation with everyone, not just planners, about the future of the region. Through the following discussion, an acknowledgement that we have a very active civil society in the region, but we need the data and research to support an ongoing conversation and gain confidence in decisions. When responding to a question on whether or not the internet is making us worse citizens, Friedmann proposed a balance: Internet for information, social media for immediate action, and personal face-to-face contact for conversation. The lecture and subsequent discussion covered a diverse range of topics, with a big helping of questions without answers. Like a good student, this left me inspired and optimistic - the best problems are the ones without an easy path to a solution.

Friedmann’s lecture came on the heels of 2 earlier Lunchtime Lectures, featuring Jonathan Frantz, Ear to the Ground Planning, and Gordon Price, SFU City Program. Additional Lunchtime Lecturers include David Hulchanski, Aseem Inam, Richard White, and David Eby. We look forward to hearing more from John Friedmann in the spring, when he’ll be a keynote speaker at the 2014 SCARP Student Symposium, “Embracing ComplexCity”.

John Friedmann at the October 23, 2013 Lunchtime Lecture.

PHOTO: GABI ESSEI
Below the waterfront, where the Vancouver Convention Centre uses stilts to straddle the boundary of glacial till and tidewater, trucks and tour buses serve the basement entries of big hotels. Workers in the nearby offices keep their cars behind spotlit metal fences or arrive on the trains which shunt and squeal in the twilight where metal ends. From ship or ferry the city can be viewed in section: dull jade buildings thrown up above celadon harbour – two halves of a palette separated by this concrete plinth and its suggestive interior shadows.

If you arrive at the Convention Centre on foot, at so-called “ground” level, you will step across the rubber-veined plazas and streets. These veins are in fact expansion joints designed to prolong the life of the superstructure on which you stand, ten metres above sea level. It is an object at no point wholly visible, and its users may fail to see it as an integrative system which serves the needs of people other than themselves…

Inside the Convention Centre ballroom at Moving the Future: a New Conversation on Transportation and the Economy, Mayor Gregor Robertson of Vancouver and Mayor Dianne Watts of Surrey made the opening remarks to an audience which included a few SCARP students. Representatives of TransLink, Metro Vancouver, the universities, the business community, and the general public were present, but the list of panellists and keynote speakers lacked any of the provincial or federal officials who, as one panellist noted, will control both purse-strings and the jurisdictional authority for many important transportation projects. As such, and in the headlights of the mysterious referendum on new transit funding proposed by the Clark administration, the event’s objective was to assert a specifically regional consensus on transport in the face of competing agendas.

Mayors Robertson and Watts, if their remarks can be taken in tandem, presented two sides of just such a strategy: the region must be made more walkable, accessible, sustainable (Robertson) even as it lacks the resources and jurisdiction to make itself so (Watts). Their comments suggest that any vision of the transportation system must be urban, form-based, and politically savvy.

During Ken Peacock’s keynote I found myself imagining the rails and roads below the waterfront reaching out along the inlets and rivers, the topographic points of least resistance, into this city’s “functional economic area”. The concept of access has leveraged vast stretches of land across multiple municipalities into a region...
of landed potentials. The transportation system is so much more than its material infrastructure and operations – to be planned adequately it must be considered in turn with the opportunities it enables and the alternative futures it rejects. These opportunities are kinetic and economic as well as broadly social, environmental, and political. They must also be imageable, or visionary.

The new conversation, then, has much to do with the construction of a coherent vision of metropolitan life in the Lower Mainland, which can convince the various government skeptics and skeptics of government and command the political capital and moral suasion required for this life to be acknowledged. Early in the day, Stephen Toope, President and Vice-Chancellor of UBC, described this problem as one of building the social license for change – a point reiterated in abstract by keynote speakers Gil Peñalosa of 8-80 Cities, Tom Prendergast of the Metropolitan Transit Authority (New York), and Art Leahy of Metro (Los Angeles).

Anne McMullin, of the Urban Development Institute, appropriately asked her panel (and the room) how and why an integrative transportation strategy would be taken up by the “average citizen”. Inevitably, political capital is not merely something held by provincial or municipal governments (or seized by the developers of subdivisions and builders of highways) but something given. It rises out of an inculcated feeling of citizenship and belonging projected by many across a geographic scale. If the new conversation results in a coherent regional vision of transportation in the Lower Mainland, it will be because many people were compelled by its faint recollection of their own lives to identify themselves as regional citizens, even in the absence of a new political structure which would qualify that claim. The immediate answer is outreach: the conversation must be as open, wide-ranging and continuous as the region it represents, but ultimately it must demonstrate a structural unity if it is to have any staying power in the halls of its legislative babysitters.

This unity should be drawn around the core principles of a sustainable region in the Lower Mainland, where the transportation system is designed to sequence the greatest number of opportunities at the minimum environmental cost.

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“PHILIPPINE PLANNING STUDIO” FROM PAGE 6

“The studio contributed to my toolkit of hard skills that will benefit my planning career,” Iwama said. “Working directly with local governments operating under extreme resource constraints and with highly vulnerable populations challenged us to be not only strategic problem solvers, but also empathetic professionals.”

“It also gave me a chance to put theory into action,” added Thomas. “The importance of participatory engagement, of being clear of your role in the place, of adapting to the flow of the local culture and of being open to share experiences all stood out as key learnings.”

The students examined a wide array of priority areas such as water sufficiency, natural resource management, land use and climate-smart industry, identifying some of the major local challenges as air pollution, depleting water supplies and the changing ecology of the region due to contamination and climate change.

“Participating in the course allowed me to develop my understanding of the interconnectedness of multiple planning issues,” Brown said. “Climate change is a global issue, but with very specific local impacts. Other factors such as globalization, urbanization and population growth all influence the way communities develop and affect their capacity to adapt to climate-related changes. The experiential leaning helped me understand these connections more deeply.”

The innovative course allowed the students to present their research to the Municipal Governments of Bulacan, as well as in the “New Directions in Applied Research” international conference hosted by Bulacan State University and De La Salle University-Manila.

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