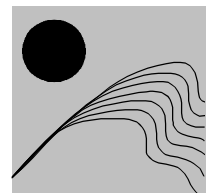


INQUIRIES For a Sustainable Future

*A Decision-making Approach
to the Study of Selected Canadian Issues*

SUSTAINABLE CITIES

Reflections on Today's Urban Environment



Learning for a
Sustainable Future

SUSTAINABLE CITIES

THE ISSUE IN PERSPECTIVE

The greatest challenge of our time is to ensure the preservation of our environment and the well being of people. To achieve this, we need a common vision and commitment to appropriate change. Above all, we need a sense of community, a recognition of a shared place, values, and purpose. We are a global community now, and rapidly becoming a global urbanized community. The paths to a sustainable future increasingly lie in the ways in which we live together in cities, how we re-define their importance to us, and how we cooperatively act to ensure their sustainable growth and development.

Phyllis Lambert, 1997
Director of Canadian Centre for Architecture, Montréal

Cities have flourished and perished for thousands of years, evolving in a myriad different forms in response to such factors as local geography, climate, trade, conflict and social patterns. Advances in technology, particularly involving transportation and heating, have significantly contributed to changes in the form and function of cities over the last two centuries. With the improved standard of living offered by these new settlements has come increasing population pressures . . . For the first time in the history of civilization, roughly half the world's population . . . will live in urban regions by the year 2000.

Over the last half-century, the environmental community has focussed most of its attention on protecting wilderness areas that lie far from the unsustainable development of urban regions. Nature and the city were often considered to be antithetical, with the latter being unworthy of our attention and frequently subjected to outright neglect. Within the last five years, however, it has been increasingly recognized that global environmental challenges, such as climate change, ozone depletion, land, water and air pollution, and resource depletion are all inextricably linked to the form and function of our expanding urban regions. The large quantity of pollutants generated within urban regions places growing stress on the global ecosystem — the ecosphere. Furthermore, urban regions are the primary markets which fuel resource exploitation, even in remote areas of the world.

The combined effects of these developments on a global scale seriously threaten to undermine the quality of life for current and future generations in the developed world and already pose tremendous challenges for developing nations. In order to make substantial progress toward sustainable development, we must begin to re-focus much of our efforts on the form and function of urban settlements — to literally bring sustainable development home to all facets of our urbanized lifestyles.

The Ecological City: Canada's Overview
Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, 1995

REFLECTING ON TODAY'S URBAN ENVIRONMENT

1. A city can be defined as:
 - a large human community made up of a conglomerate of neighbourhoods centred on a “down-town core” that gives the whole its identity and reason for being;
 - the economic centre and driving force of a region;
 - an ecosystem.

Explain the implications of each definition and develop your own.
 2. What is your idea of a “great” city? List some of its characteristics.
 3. Why is urbanization now an urgent global issue? Describe the major environmental and social problems found in many of the world’s modern super-cities, and assess to what extent, if at all, they appear in Canadian cities. Are Canadian cities becoming unsustainable? Give reasons to support your opinion.
 4. “Currently, the most pressing threat to the quality of the urban environment in Canadian cities is suburban sprawl” (reading 5).
 - what is the “threat”?
 - what are the factors that contribute to urban sprawl? What changes are needed to prevent or control it?
 5. One of the important elements of a sustainable city is the willingness and ability of citizens to contribute to and affect decisions. If you were a member of a concerned advisory group on municipal affairs, how would you:
 - draw up a set of principles designed to maintain the viability of the downtown core; healthy and safe neighbourhoods; and sustainable future development of the city as a whole?
 - help to develop a neighbourhood improvement plan to protect social diversity; safety; health; the integrated, unique and attractive mixture of housing and business; the beauty of natural features; the “walkability” of streets and roads; and encourage community interaction?
-

BACKGROUND FOR THIS INQUIRY

Readings:

- | | |
|-----------|---|
| 1 | What is a City? |
| 2 | Global Issues of the Environment are Issues of Urban Sustainability |
| 3 | Cities of the Past |
| 4 | Cities of the Present |
| 5 | Urban Sprawl |
| 6 and 7 | Maintaining the City Core |
| 8 and 9 | The City as Ecosystem |
| 10 | Key Characteristics of an Ecological City |
| 11 | Summarizing Urban Sustainability |
| 12 | A Vision of a Sustainable City |
| 13 and 14 | Reflections on the Future |
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WHAT IS A CITY?

A place inhabited by a large, permanent, organized community . . . in earlier times a central, walled place used by the dwellers in a district as a market, a place of worship and festivals, and a refuge.

Funk & Wagnalls Standard College Dictionary
Canadian Edition, 1973

Cities were invented to facilitate exchange of information, friendship, material goods, culture, knowledge, insight, skills, and also the exchange of emotional, psychological and spiritual support. This exchange is more difficult if people are scattered all over the countryside and do not have access to these exchange opportunities. This is why we build cities. Cities are a concentration of people and structures that enable mutual exchange to take place while minimizing the travel needed. People desire access to this rich diversity of exchange opportunities for their survival and for their growth as human beings. Cities are a recognition that, if we are to grow into our fullest potential, we need what other people can give us.

The city is therefore an ecosystem created by people for mutual enrichment. In an eco-system, such as a rain forest, everything is interrelated and interdependent. Each organism provides something which is essential for the life of other organisms and, in return, receives from other organisms those things essential for their own survival and well-being. Take any of these organisms away from the context of their eco-system and their growth will be stunted or their survival jeopardized. Similarly, the city is an eco-system where, through mutual exchange, we mature and are nurtured . . .

Cities are not just units of economic production . . . Cities are for people; or to be more correct, cities are people; or to be even more precise, cities are a concentration of people interrelating. The city is a family which inhabits a house and, by its presence, the family makes the house a home. That family modifies the house as time proceeds to enhance their quality of life and the quality of their relationships to each other. People may employ architects to help them, but it is their needs as human beings they are seeking to satisfy. So it is in a neighbourhood and a city.

Reclaiming Our Cities and Towns,
by David Engwicht,
New Society Publishers, 1993

GLOBAL ISSUES OF THE ENVIRONMENT ARE ISSUES OF URBAN SUSTAINABILITY

GLOBAL ISSUES	URBAN ISSUES
ENERGY	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - climate change - air/water/land pollution - competing uses - diminishing resources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - soft energy paths <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * renewable decentralized supply systems - energy efficient urban planning <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * buildings * inter/intra-urban transportation - residential energy efficiency per capita <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * floor space/person
WATER	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - pollution and consumption - climate change - competing uses - diminishing resources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - adequacy of municipal waterworks and wastewater systems <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * urban runoff, wastewater, sewage * government financing * user-pay principle
LAND	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - land degradation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * deforestation * loss of fertility * toxic and municipal waste * contaminated land - land use change <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * agricultural to urban * wilderness to recreation - climate change - competing uses - diminishing resources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - urban sprawl - urban intensification <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * in-fill housing, granny flats, etc. * accessory apartments, home-sharing, etc. - urban growth areas <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * demographics * satellite cities * growth centres

CITIES OF THE PAST

When any of us travels to Europe, the Middle East, or other places with pre-modern settlements, certain important qualities become immediately obvious to us. These are often summarized by the word “organic”, which brings together not only their human and green texture, but also the processes that allowed them to arise from within the community rather than from above through imposition. These qualities are as follows:

- the buildings are non-uniform, but part of a pattern; they appear to grow out of the landscape, and in many places are hard to distinguish from it;
- the streets are filled with people walking and all major local destinations are within a short walk. The keys to this are density and mixed land use, which grow from the need to have sufficient people living nearby and sufficient work, shops, schools, etc., within walking distance. Each combination of land use is a living and evolving part of the city’s peculiar history and culture, but all have the qualities of a pedestrian place;
- nature is not lost in this city. Water and trees can be central to its streets and public spaces. Waste is recycled. Resources are used frugally. And most of all, there are productive rural land uses immediately adjacent to the city that are integrated closely into its functioning.

These are the “urban villages” of history, and although some of their characteristics can be found in modern cities, they have largely been obliterated. It is romantic to suggest that they can just be copied to replace our modern suburbs, but we can learn from these principles to see how our current technology and urban processes can help us to green future urban development.

Eco-City Dimensions,
Mark Roseland (ed.),
New Society Publishers, 1997

CITIES OF THE PRESENT

Circle over London, Buenos Aires, Chicago, Sydney, in an airplane or view the cities schematically by means of an urban map and block plan. What is the shape of the city and how does it define itself? The original container has completely disappeared: the sharp division between city and country no longer exists. As the eye stretches toward the hazy periphery, one can pick out no definite shapes except those formed by nature: one beholds rather a continuous shapeless mass, here bulging or ridged with buildings, there broken by a patch of green or an unwinding ribbon of concrete. The shapelessness of the whole is reflected in the individual part, and the nearer the centre, the less as a rule can the smaller parts be distinguished . . .

Here the city has absorbed villages and towns, reducing them to place names, like Manhattanville and Harlem in New York; there it has, more happily, left the organs of local government and the vestiges of an independent life, even assisted their revival, as in Chelsea and Kensington in London; but it has nevertheless enveloped those urban areas in its physical organization and built up the open land that once served to ensure their identity and integrity. Sometimes the expanding street system forms an orderly pattern, sometimes it produces only a crazy network that does not even serve traffic; but the difference between one type of order and another is merely a difference in the degree of sprawl, confusion, de-building.

As one moves away from the centre, the urban growth becomes ever more aimless and discontinuous, more diffuse and unfocussed, except where some surviving town has left the original imprint of a more orderly life. Old neighbourhoods and precincts, the social cells of the city, still maintaining some measure of the village pattern, become vestigial. No human eye can take in this metropolitan mass at a glance. No single gathering place except the totality of its streets can hold all its citizens. No human mind can comprehend more than a fragment of the complex and minutely specialized activities of its citizens. The loss of form, the loss of autonomy, the constant frustration and harassment of daily activities, to say nothing of gigantic breakdowns and stoppages — all these become normal attributes of the metropolitan regime.

The City in History,
by Lewis Mumford,
Harcourt Brace & Co., 1961, 1989

URBAN SPRAWL

The Costs to the Environment

Perhaps one of the greatest threats to the viability of cities is suburban growth. The effect on the environment is often accompanied by decline in the city core.

Suburban development does more than just cut down the forest. Its changes go deep. Water mains, power cables, sewers — building codes require the best infrastructure money can buy. Surface grading makes rainfall run off quickly. Culverts carry away streams. Engineering takes apart the way a place works naturally . . .

The fact that suburbs exist in the first place is because of the cheapness of fossil fuels in the late 1940s through the middle 1970s. Because there was fossil fuel, developers could cut into what formerly had been cow pastures and move people out into them. Of course, now the inner city has grown all the way out to the suburbs and the suburbs continue being layered on the outside of the circle. Everything is pushed aside as the city spreads, converting fertile land into subdivisions designed around the car. This kind of housing uses up a lot of land. Planning codes encourage low densities, and detached houses on large lots, with double or triple garages, are everywhere. All those cars are the consequence of the planning codes as well. Residential areas are separated from shops and businesses, and low densities make public transport impractical. An average family makes many car trips every day through the maze, at great cost to their budget and to their environment.

Farmland paved, watershed taken apart — those costs are hard to get hold of. But in simple dollar terms, the pipes and cables and roads, the infrastructure which makes suburbia possible, are now beyond our collective purse. The freeway, the great symbol of modern life, turns out to be anything but free. There is hardly anything more expensive than building highways. If you knew the costs per mile of highway, you would be horrified. It is many schools per mile . . . The fact that we were able to build as many highways as we did comes from a period of unnatural affluence which is no longer with us. And we can no longer afford to build highways. What we can afford is to be more intelligent. The only thing we can afford now is to go back to the older system and that is, of course, to build villages and neighbourhoods again, and not highways to connect them.

The Living City: The Nature of Things,
CBC Show #13, 1993/94

MAINTAINING THE CITY CORE (1)

Streets and Neighbourhoods

Streets in cities serve many purposes besides carrying vehicles, and city sidewalks — the pedestrian parts of the streets — serve many purposes besides carrying pedestrians. These uses are bound up with circulation but are not identical with it and in their own right they are at least as basic as circulation to the proper workings of cities. A city sidewalk by itself is nothing. It is an abstraction. It means something only in conjunction with the buildings and other uses that border it, or border other sidewalks very near it. The same might be said of streets, in the sense that they serve other purposes besides carrying wheeled traffic in their middles. Streets and their sidewalks, the main public places of a city, are its most vital organs. Think of a city, and what comes to mind? Its streets. If a city's streets look interesting, the city looks interesting; if they look dull, the city looks dull. More than that, . . . if a city's streets are safe from barbarism and fear, the city is thereby tolerably safe from barbarism and fear. When people say that a city, or a part of it, is dangerous or is a jungle, what they mean primarily is that they do not feel safe on the sidewalks.

But sidewalks and those who use them are not passive beneficiaries of safety or helpless victims of danger. Sidewalks, their bordering uses, and their users, are active participants in the drama of civilization versus barbarism in cities . . .

The Death And Life of Great American Cities,
by Jane Jacobs,
Vantage Press, 1960

MAINTAINING THE CITY CORE (2)

Increasing the Density

However we design the living space, the fact is most cities are growing rapidly right now. Toronto planners expect 50 per cent more people over the next 30 years and we have to find a place for them to live . . .

What we are going to have to do is obviously make do with the existing infrastructure and use it to accommodate more people. So that is going to be one of the real pushes toward some form of intensification. I think environmentally as well, people are beginning to think that [urban] spread simply does not solve the problem. It creates the problem. People have seen that not only in terms of the disappearance of green space of various kinds of natural features — but also in terms of air quality and automobiles. They are trying to say, “how can we get urban forms that do not rely so much on day-to-day use of automobiles?”.

High-rise housing is one way we have tried in the past to increase density. But it has disadvantages. Building high-rises often means destroying existing neighbourhoods, without creating new ones, and many people want to live closer to the ground.

Downtown shopping streets in many cities have hidden possibilities. These stores already have apartments over them. Add two or three more storeys and you would get vibrant main-street communities like those in European cities.

There are many models. Row housing built a hundred years ago provides high densities along with privacy, gardens and a sense of place. But returning to this is not quite as easy as it sounds.

One cannot just declare that I want to build a traditional neighbourhood or a village and just expect to design it and get it permitted, because over the years, essentially since the Second World War, the codes and rules have been changed incrementally. Each little change with a perfectly good intention — let us make the streets a little bit wider, let us separate commercial from residential, let us prevent alleys. Incrementally, one bit at a time, they have made traditional neighbourhoods illegal. The codes are not neutral. The codes have suburbia in mind. That which you see surrounding Toronto — the shopping centres, the office parks, the housing subdivisions, all that asphalt — that is not *laissez-faire*. That is by intention. That is what the planners have in mind, that is what happens. Codes are very powerful instruments. You can code suburbia. By the same token if, let us say, a province or a section or a city would want to change itself, by changing the codes you could change the model. And within a very short time you would be having neighbourhoods and villages again.

THE CITY AS ECOSYSTEM (1)

First of all, it [the ecosystem approach] starts off with the principle that everything is connected to everything else. Secondly, it says that human beings are part of nature and not separate from it. And thirdly, it says that therefore we have an obligation to ourselves, to other generations, to other species. Now, those are the fundamentals, fundamental principles of the ecosystem approach. I can apply it to cities, I can apply it to Baffin Island, I can apply it to a village, I can apply it to a creek. Anywhere human beings are is where you find the necessity of the ecosystem approach.

The general idea of urban dwellers is that they live in some sort of disconnected space ship that is hovering above the Earth. You get this when you ask city dwellers where their water comes from and they say “the faucet”, or where the garbage goes and they say “out”, or where the food come from and they say “the grocery store”. That is the comment of a person who thinks of himself as a component of a system. We are the warm part that plugs into the system, whereas in fact, cities are all on the terrain of some bio-region or other: “bio-region” meaning “a place that is alive”.

Nature is fundamental to cities — cities are a part of nature. They are not separate from it. They are like all human beings, they are a part of nature . . . I think most people who are city lovers — when they walk through a city, they see trees and they see the terrain and they see little animals and they see birds, they see fish and wildlife habitat, they see creeks and rivers — they are parts of cities . . .

The Living City, The Nature of Things,
CBC Show #13, 1993/94

THE CITY AS ECOSYSTEM (2)

Ten Principles of Urban Ecology

Today there is a global movement to green the city. The movement, known variously as urban ecology, eco-cities, sustainable cities, and ecological cities, is seeking deeper and more satisfying answers to the urban issues of our day than can be provided by better technology or more efficient government. This involves a paradigm shift, but not one that is entirely new. “Greening the city” builds on a long tradition, namely the “organic” approach to town planning.

Urban ecology, now more than twenty years old, states that its mission is to create ecological cities by following these ten principles:

1. revise land use priorities to create compact, diverse, green, safe, pleasant and vital mixed-use communities near transit nodes and other transportation facilities;
2. revise transportation priorities to favour foot, bicycle, cart and transit over autos, and to emphasize “access by proximity”;
3. restore damaged urban environments, especially creeks, shore lines, ridge lines and wetlands;
4. create decent, affordable, safe, convenient, and racially and economically mixed housing;
5. nurture social justice and create improved opportunities for women, people of colour and the disabled;
6. support local agriculture, urban greening projects, and community gardening;
7. promote recycling, innovative appropriate technology, and resource conservation while reducing pollution and hazardous wastes;
8. work with businesses to support ecologically sound economic activity while discouraging pollution, waste and the use and production of hazardous materials;
9. promote voluntary simplicity and discourage excessive consumption of material goods;
10. increase awareness of the local environment and bio-region through activist and educational projects that increase public awareness of ecological sustainability issues.

KEY CHARACTERISTICS OF AN ECOLOGICAL CITY

Ecological cities may be said to:

- make the maximum use of local and regional resources and minimize input such as agricultural products and manufactured goods from more distant places, thereby increasing the value of the local and regional economy and the level of self-sufficiency;
- promote an urban form that requires minimal inputs of energy and resources to build and sustain, with emphasis on the efficient use of energy, water, and materials, and the recovery of resources in the wastes produced as a by-product of their use and consumption.
- enjoy the many benefits of significant community economic development which is focused on conserving local capital, small scale business development, maximizing human resource inputs, and minimizing energy and material resource inputs . . . ;
- minimize waste, since most products are designed to be reused and recycled, through disassembly where possible . . . ;
- make use of market mechanisms which reflect the full social and environmental costs, rather than just production, distribution and promotional costs of goods and services . . . ;
- allow individuals to:
 - achieve and maintain personal physical, mental and psychological health;
 - feed themselves adequately and provide adequate and appropriate shelter for themselves;
 - have opportunities for gainful and meaningful employment;
 - improve their knowledge and understanding of the world around them;
 - find opportunities to express creativity and enjoy recreation in ways that satisfy spiritual and psychological needs;
 - express a sense of identity through heritage, art and culture;
 - enjoy a sense of belonging and be assured of mutual social support from their community;
 - enjoy freedom from fear and security of person; and
 - participate actively in civic affairs.
- be distinguished by the extent to which individuals are ‘environmentally literate’ and social values emphasize: community, quality over quantity, conservation/efficiency over consumption, sufficiency, spirituality and interdependence;

continued overleaf

- reflect institutional structures and policies supportive of healthy, safe and vibrant communities with ongoing grassroots stewardship of the natural areas in the region;
- reflect considerably longer time horizons for major decision-making by political institutions, the private sector, non-governmental organizations and individuals;
- reflect institutional systems based on natural boundaries such as watersheds which allow for the effective management of ecosystems and reinforce the interconnections between environment, society and economy;
- reflect a physical shape and structure that works with, rather than against, existing natural features in a manner which increases the efficient use of material and energy resources, promotes bio-diversity, and allows individuals the opportunity to experience and enjoy vibrant natural areas within close proximity of their communities;
- develop a manner that enables individuals to engage in routine behaviour that is ecologically responsible, cost-effective and convenient, rather than relying upon their altruism;
- develop new policies and programs which continue to reflect the integrated nature of urban challenges to sustainability by fully considering their social, economic and environmental components.

The Ecological City: Canada's Overview,
Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, 1995

SUMMARIZING URBAN SUSTAINABILITY

1. ENVIRONMENTAL COMPONENT

Urban sustainability

- implies dynamic, changing processes (rather than a steady state);
- encompasses sufficiency, sustainability of life processes and ecosystem integrity;
- invokes the concept of carrying capacity/appropriate carrying capacity (must stay within the limits of the ecosystem).

2. SOCIAL COMPONENT

Urban sustainability

- connotes social stability and encompasses equity (social, intra- and inter-generational);
- includes individual and community well-being and quality of life and reflects human values;
- implies vitality and a social learning process (feedback on choices and actions);
- implies self-reliance, promotes community empowerment and involvement, and means individual responsibility (people must make sustainability part of their attitudes and lifestyles).

3. ECONOMIC COMPONENT

Urban sustainability

- must reflect economic realities and consumer demand (need to balance with carrying capacity of ecosystems);
- promotes long term economic development that does not unduly draw down the stock of environmental resources (through diversification and increased resource use efficiency);
- provides for a fair distribution of costs and benefits of resource use and environmental protection.

4. INTEGRATIVE/INTERRELATING CHARACTERISTICS

Urban sustainability

- means more than just survival and implies a hierarchy of needs;
- is adaptable to change and can be measured to determine rate of change;
- involves trade-offs and implies that there are limits which we must live within;
- has implications at all levels — household, community, regional, national, international/global; the linkages between levels are important.

A VISION OF A SUSTAINABLE CITY

The community of the future is a place where people want to live.

There is a growing consensus among groups as disparate as environmentalists and building industry, the manufacturer's association and minority groups, that urban sprawl is undermining the social and physical infrastructure necessary to support a viable economy . . . there is agreement that we must change the way we are currently planning our communities.

There is no single formula that is appropriate for each community, no single strategist or leader who holds all the answers. People are no more inclined to live in a series of walkable, yet nearly-identical hamlets, than to live in endless suburban sprawl.

The [following] community principles define what a community should be like, the regional principles define how it should relate to the communities around it, and the implementation strategy provides local officials with a plan for making it all happen.

The community principles call for planning towns and neighbourhoods reminiscent of those built before World War II where everyone, including children and the elderly, can get where they are going without a car. Housing, shops, work places, schools, parks and civic facilities essential to the daily lives of the community's residents are all within easy walking distance of each other. Streets and paths are small and framed by buildings and trees, and they provide direct and pleasant routes to nearby destinations. There are a variety of housing options available, suitable in price and size to all who wish to live and work there.

The building types and the landscaping reflect the climate and the history of the area. Homes are sited and designed to take maximum advantage of the sun for heating. In hot climates, windows are shaded in summer and outdoor areas are covered by a canopy of . . . plantings. A regional architecture, developed before the invention of central heating and air conditioning, is dominant in the community; and native plants are widely used in landscaping homes and public areas. Gurgling creeks carry runoff water during periods of rain and allow precious water to seep back into the soil.

In this scenario, each community is about 0.8 km wide, small enough to be walkable. Towns are made up of several communities, cities are made up of many such communities. There is a well-defined edge around every community or cluster of communities, such as an agricultural greenbelt, waterway or natural wildlife corridor — protected permanently from development.

In this vision, the focus of the community is a town centre. Full of life and vitality, it is the centre of most commercial activity, culture and recreation, and the site of the civic buildings. It is a place where a number of community residents work. There are squares, greens and parks which are full of people and activities at all hours of the day and night. Here, people can also hop on a transit system to travel outside the area.

continued overleaf

The vision continues into the region. Each community's transit system ties into an urban core where government services, museums, stadiums, convention centres and the like are located. The collection of communities served by this core are surrounded by a continuous system of wildlife corridors. Open space is dictated by natural conditions — it may be made up of mountains, farmlands, rivers or wetlands. Each region has its own local character, the community identity which is a result of the use of building styles which are appropriate to the climate and history of the area.

The architects [of these principles] have provided a way for local governments to translate these planning principles into reality. First, they suggest a review of local general plans in order to incorporate the community and regional principles. Zoning codes will have to be modified to assure that they do not inadvertently obstruct pedestrian-oriented design.

Second, they suggest that rather than allowing developer-initiated piece-meal development, local government should take charge. Community leaders and residents should decide where they want to grow and what new developments should look like. In areas where there is to be a new development, redevelopment or in-fill, specific plans should be prepared. This process must involve community residents. All proposals presented by the architects and planners should be illustrated with models, computer simulations and the like to enable design process participants to fully visualize the impact of the decisions they will make.

In sum, [these principles] call for a return to designing on a human scale.

The Community of The Future,
from *Land Use Strategies for More Livable Places*,
by Weissmann et al, 1992

REFLECTIONS ON THE FUTURE (1)

The Changes Needed

SUSTAIN THE CITY CORE . . . by taking immediate steps to upgrade every viable element already in place and energetically curbing urban sprawl in industrialized countries. We must favour the human aspect, foster gradual change that is easily absorbed into the environment as opposed to radical, spectacular change. We must not be afraid to change, but at a pace suited to the carrying capacity of the environment involved and the people who inhabit it. I also believe that cities will have to take effective measures to guarantee their coherent development, that they must seek proper balances in terms of energy use, transportation, population density and the distribution of services. You know, it may be nice having neighbourhoods where private homes stand isolated in the middle of large grounds. But conviviality requires a certain amount of density, for you cannot put on street festivals in those gloomy neighbourhoods that shut down at night . . . Local tax policy should require developers to reimburse the costs of building schools and health and cultural facilities to service new developments and even the costs of abandoning similar facilities in the downtown core. If a promoter [developer] still wants to develop after adding up those costs, let him. After all, we live in a democracy. But make him pay the real costs of his projects.

Interview with Peter Jacobs, Professor,
University of Montreal,
Forces, n°95, 1991, Montréal, Québec

SUSTAIN THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT . . . changing the rules will help to reconnect us to the sources of life. Calling a halt to urban sprawl means deciding what we value most and then laying down the law to protect it . . . The kinds of changes that we have to undertake to reverse what cities are currently doing to the planet are going to come about from either of two sources — either because we decide to do them in the name of grace, co-operation, beauty, a sense of heightened livability, or because they are forced on us because the faucet runs rust, because when you turn on the gas stove the gas does not come on, because the lights go out, because the food is too expensive. It is either going to be one way or another. The choice really is ours. I am not talking about one political party over another. I am talking about a shift in the emphasis of civilization. We have to develop our human species on the planet together — the idea of mutualism and an immediately local idea of participating with the life systems around us. What we have to do to succeed at this point is to stop participating as we have in the past, in overwhelming nature and succeed at being sustainable — which is a whole new era for humankind.

The Living City: The Nature of Things,
CBC Show #13, 1993/94

REFLECTIONS OF THE FUTURE (2)

The Mission of the City in the Global Village

. . . Its mission is to hand onto the smallest urban unit the cultural resources that make for world unity and co-operation. Thus the very traits that have made the metropolis always seem at once alien and hostile to the folk in the hinterland are an essential part of the big city's function: it has brought together, within relatively narrow compass, the diversity and variety of special cultures: at least in token quantities all races and cultures can be found here, along with their languages, their customs, their costumes, their typical cuisines: here the representatives of mankind first met face to face on neutral ground. The complexity and cultural inclusiveness of the metropolis embody the complexity and variety of the world as a whole. Unconsciously the great capitals have been preparing mankind for the wider associations and unifications which the modern conquest of time and space has made probable, if not inevitable . . .

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We must now conceive the city, accordingly, not primarily as a place of business or government, but as an essential organ for expressing and actualizing the new human personality — that of “One World Man”. The old separation of man and nature, of townsman and countryman, of Greek and barbarian, of citizen and foreigner, can no longer be maintained: for communication, the entire planet is becoming a village; and as a result, the smallest neighbourhood or precinct must be planned as a working model of the larger world. Now it is not the will of a single deified ruler, but the individual and corporate will of its citizens, aiming at self-knowledge, self-government, and self-actualization, that must be embodied in the city. Not industry but education will be the centre of their activities; and every process and function will be evaluated and approved just to the extent that it furthers human development, whilst the city itself provides a vivid theatre for the spontaneous encounters and challenges and embraces of daily life.

The City in History,
by Lewis Mumford,
Harcourt Brace & Co., 1961, 1989