

Convening for Action in British Columbia



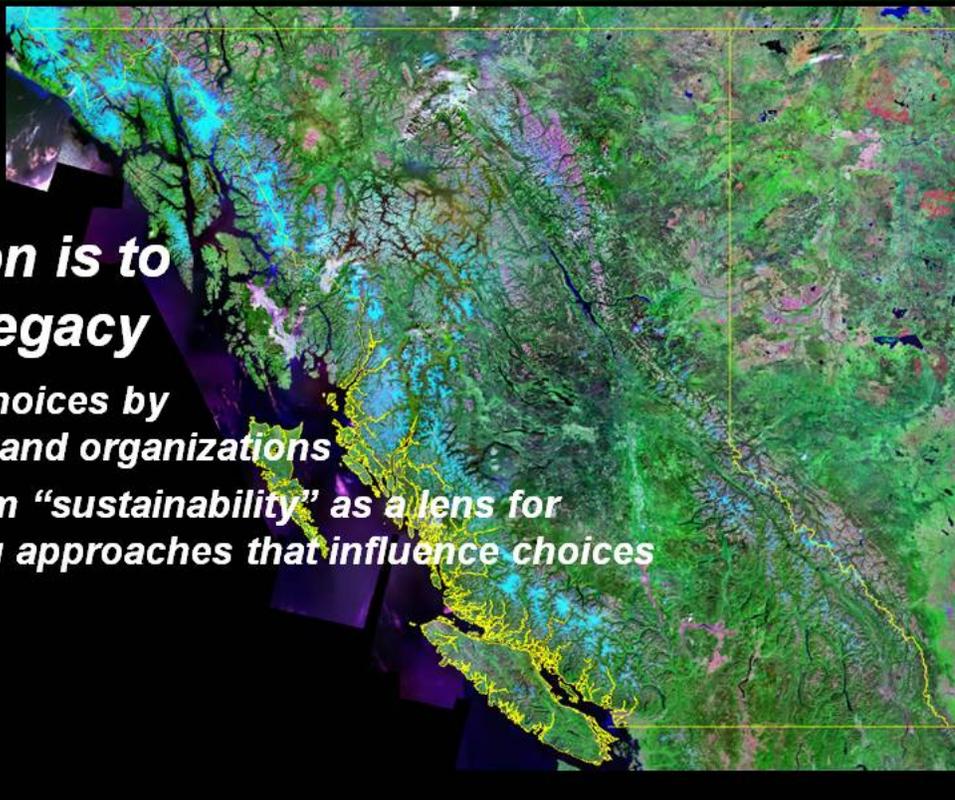
Creating Our Future: Sustainability by Design & The Natural City Vision

Penticton Forum showcases regional team approach on April 29, 2009

The New Business As Usual: Visualize What We Want British Columbia to Look Like in 50 years

The Mission is to Create a Legacy

- 1. Influence choices by individuals and organizations***
- 2. Use the term "sustainability" as a lens for considering approaches that influence choices***



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Building Bridges and Breaking Barriers - Teamwork for a WaterSmart World

Water Bucket Web Story #4 about the Penticton Forum posted March 2009

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How do we align our efforts at three scales – provincial, regional and local – to do business differently, prepare communities for change, and choose to be water smart?

“This is the fourth in a weekly series of stories leading up to the Penticton Forum on April 29,” explains **Kim Stephens**,

Program Coordinator for the **Water Sustainability Action Plan for British Columbia**.

“Their purpose is to progressively connect the dots and foreshadow what participants from the Okanagan, Metro Vancouver, Vancouver Island and elsewhere can expect when they convene for action.”



“This Story #4 foreshadows the ‘book-end’ roles that **Patrick Condon** and **Vic Derman** will play in setting the context and providing a blueprint for action, respectively.”

The Forum is an adjunct to the annual conference of the BC Water & Waste Association (BCWWA); and is co-hosted by three provincial Ministries (Environment, Community Development, and Agriculture & Lands), the Okanagan Basin Water Board, and the BCWWA Water Sustainability Committee.



1. Forum Program – An Overview

The Province’s **Living Water Smart** and **Green Communities** initiatives provide a framework and direction for **convening for action** in the Okanagan, on Vancouver Island and in Metro Vancouver. Each regional initiative is developing a vision and road map for doing business differently in order to change the way that land is developed and water is used.

New Approaches and Tools

“The forum program is organized as four modules, and is built around approaches and tools for achieving truly green development. While each module is stand-alone, they are linked,” states **Glen Brown**. He is an Executive Director with the Ministry of Community Development; and is Chair of the Water Sustainability Committee.



“Our vision is that the Penticton Forum will be a transformational event that inspires people to do better. We are showcasing how partnerships, collaboration, innovation and integration are helping local governments in three regions make the best choices for living water smart.”

Smart Planning & Living Water Smart: Approaches and Tools for Doing Business Differently in BC

- A. Creating Our Future:
What Do We Want British Columbia to Look Like?
- B. Doing Business Differently:
Convening for Action in the Okanagan
- C. Doing Business Differently:
Convening for Action in the Georgia Basin
- D. Creating Our Future:
The Natural City Vision

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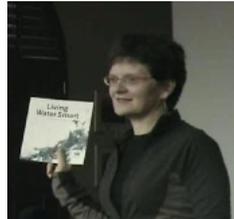
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2. Making Green Choices

“A key message in Living Water Smart is that green development makes sense,” emphasizes **Lynn Kriwoken, Director**, Innovation and Planning in the Water Stewardship Division of the Ministry of Environment. Lynn Kriwoken is the Province’s lead person for delivery of the Living Water Smart program.



“New thinking about development leads to new benefits. These include more green spaces, more water and fish in the streams, improved community vitality, reduced demand for water, and reduced expenditure on infrastructure.”

A Guide to Green Choices

“To help local governments continue the extensive work they are already doing in fostering green communities, the Ministry of Community Development has developed **A Guide to Green Choices** to provide practical advice and ideas in making land use decisions,” states **Karen Rothe**, the Ministry’s Manager for Metro Vancouver and Fraser Valley Growth Strategies.



“Released in September 2008, this Guide is expected to work in tandem with many other provincial programs and projects already underway, including **Living Water Smart**, the **BC Climate Action Plan** and the **Water Sustainability Action Plan**.”



“The Ministry of Community Development is about innovation and integration, and making it real. The other piece of importance to the Ministry is providing communities with the tools to ensure the right development in the right place at the right time,” concludes Karen Rothe.

Community Development

“The Forum program is designed such that Module Nos. 1 and 4 are planning-centric because the focus is on how we design communities; whereas Nos. 2 and 3 are engineering-centric to the extent that the emphasis is on tools and their application to change the way land is developed and water is used,” states **Kim Stephens**.

Two Sustainability Champions:

“Because the conference theme is **Working Together – Encompassing Communities**, we have invited two respected and visionary British Columbians to share their *sustainable community development* stories with Forum participants.”

“We anticipate that the audience will be inspired when they hear about the on-the-ground initiatives that **Patrick Condon** and **Vic Derman** are spearheading,” continues Kim Stephens.

“Patrick is a well-grounded academic who is the driving force behind the **Design Centre for Sustainability** at the University of BC; he will be provocative in kicking-off the Forum with a call to action. Vic will close the Forum with a politician’s pragmatic perspective on how to adapt the existing regulatory process to achieve a paradigm-shift in urban design. He calls this **The Natural City**.”



Patrick Condon
(University of British Columbia)
“Sustainability by Design”



Vic Derman
(District of Saanich Councillor)
“The Natural City”

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3. Creating Our Future: Sustainability by Design

“Patrick Condon is a recognized North American pioneer in applying sustainability principles to achieve smarter and cheaper urban design,” states Kim Stephens. “Patrick was instrumental in establishing the highly successful **Smart Growth on the Ground** charrettes with Smart Growth BC. A decade ago he captured attention with this analogy: *the site is to the health of a region what the cell is to the health of the human body.*”



Province's Perspective

“This analogy establishes context for explaining the Province’s position that *today’s expectations are tomorrow’s standards*’, and how we are leveraging infrastructure funding to encourage changes in behaviour,” states **Glen Brown**.

“The Ministry of Community Development has an increasing role in ensuring that local governments are advancing and changing the ways they plan and design their communities for the better. We are slowly raising the bar to achieve **design with nature outcomes**,” adds **Karen Rothe**.

About Patrick Condon

Professor Patrick Condon has over 25 years experience in sustainable urban design; first as a professional city planner and then as a teacher. He started his academic career in 1985 at the University of Minnesota, moving to the University of British Columbia in 1992, acting first as the Director of the Landscape Architecture program and later as the **James Taylor Chair in Landscape and Livable Environments**.



Patrick Condon is now a senior researcher with the **UBC Design Centre for Sustainability**, an urban design think tank that evolved from the original efforts of the Chair and now employs over a dozen researchers.

Design Charrettes:

As James Taylor Chair, he pioneered multi-party sustainable community design workshops now generally known as *charrettes*, starting in 1995 with the seminal **Sustainable Urban Landscapes Surrey Design Charrette**.

Since that time Patrick Condon has worked to advance sustainable urban design in dozens of major charrettes, and scores of publications. He has lectured widely in both Canada and abroad, and is the author of several books, most recently **Design Charrettes for Sustainable Communities**, Island Press.

He is currently focused on the **Sustainability by Design** project, a vision for a sustainable Metro Vancouver region with a population of 4 million.

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What Would a Sustainable Metro Vancouver Look Like In 2050?

“How will Metro Vancouver accommodate a doubling of the population to 4 million? How will housing, jobs, and transportation be designed, delivered, and distributed? And how are we to do this and still have our aggregate contribution to global warming decline, even as our population doubles? The **Sustainability by Design** project attempts to answer these questions by drawing a literal picture of what a sustainable region might look like,” states **Patrick Condon**.

“The goal of this project is: *to galvanize support for a sustainable region – among citizens, elected officials, government staff, the NGO sector, real estate professionals, and the broader population of community advocates.*”

“We seek to satisfy the need for a clear picture, currently absent in the minds of our citizens and decision makers, of what a sustainable region of 4 million might actually look like. Without an image of what it looks like, it is not surprising that citizens and decision makers don’t know how to build it.”



Sustainability by Design Purpose:

“The SxD purpose is *synthesis*,” continues **Patrick Condon**. “This means we will take what we know and bring it together to create a realistic vision for Metro Vancouver in 2050.”

“The SxD special skill, challenge and mission is to understand what all the lenses might look like....and make it real. This will make it immensely powerful and concrete.”

“By showing people what a sustainable region would look like, we can then understand how we can get from today to tomorrow.”

2006 Regional Design Charrette:

“In 2006, Metro Vancouver hosted the United Nations World Urban Forum. This provided us with an opportunity to establish a unique precedent by undertaking a regional charrette,” continues Patrick Condon. “We wanted to show where each and every one of a million new units of housing would go, right down to details of building footprint and set back conditions. The regional charrette provided the test of our working hypothesis – that the site is to the region what the cell is to the body.”

“We cut up the region into 5 kilometre by 5 kilometre squares, with the resulting grid of squares overlaying the region without reference to municipal or any other kind of boundary. This allowed us to work with manageable pieces and to treat the region as it should be treated: as cultural, economic, and ecological systems extending across the region, with municipal lines exerting little apparent influence on its function.”

“We invited 200 skilled practitioners to do the work pro bono all in one day; and they did it! The regional charrette served as a first iteration field test for the SxD project. This has given us the confidence to the move to the next phase, namely the **Sustainable Metro Vancouver Region 2050 Design Charrette**,” concludes Patrick Condon.

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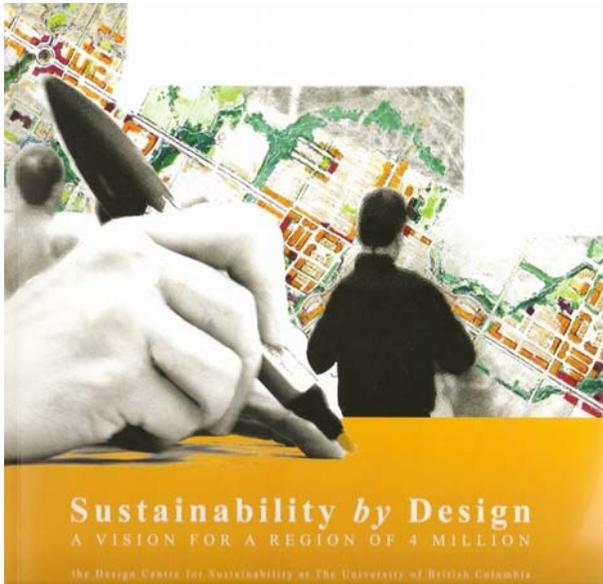
Sustainable Metro Vancouver Region 2050 Design Charrette

According to Patrick Condon, the **2050 Design Charrette** is an ambitious undertaking. "SxD will use design as a collaborative decision making tool to generate a 40-year sustainable plan for Metro Vancouver. In addition to a **Research Roundtable**, the process involves multi-stakeholder **Design Workshops** and a **Regional Design Charrette**."



"Results will include a set of design indicators and sustainability targets, a deeper knowledge base of the constraints to sustainable regional growth, and a 'big map' visual representation of what a sustainable Vancouver region could look like in the year 2050."

"Beyond being a purely academic exercise, Metro Vancouver staff will be participating in the SxD process and will consider the project outcomes as they continue to develop the new **Regional Growth Strategy**."



Research Roundtable Overview:

"The Research Roundtable, as a portion of the larger SxD project, aims to draw together leading local scholars, on-the-ground practitioners from all levels of government, the development community, private firms, infrastructure service providers and non-government organizations to discuss cutting-edge research and real-world problems on a number of key themes that are critical to achieving a sustainable Vancouver region," elaborates **Patrick Condon**.

"Following the core interests of the Design Centre for Sustainability, the Research Roundtable will remain focused on the design of the urban fabric at a regional scale and developing design-based indicators to test the anticipated success of proposed design strategies."

Research Roundtable Themes:

The Sustainable Metro Vancouver Region 2050 Design Charrette will explore regional growth strategies under the six Research Roundtable themes:

- Food;
- Energy;
- Mobility;
- Water;
- Natural Habitat; and
- Economy.

"The underlying goal is to reduce the lag time between research, formulating policy, taking action, and evaluating the results," concludes Patrick Condon.



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4. Creating Our Future: The Natural City Vision

The Natural City is a transformational document for local government created by **Vic Derman**. Well-versed in a water-centric way-of-thinking, he is a visionary elected representative from Vancouver Island. A retired educator, he was one of the founders of **The Land Conservancy of British Columbia**, and has been on District of Saanich Council since 2002.



Vic Derman chaired the organizing committee and was the driving force behind the highly successful **2006 Water in the City Conference**, held in Victoria. He is a Director of the Capital Regional District; and is Vice-Chair of the Capital Region Water Commission.



A Call to Action

In his blueprint for action, Vic Derman points the way to a more sustainable future. "The Natural City challenges traditional approaches and sets the goal of creating a region that is environmentally sustainable, socially equitable and economically sound," he states. Vic Derman calls the project "**THE NATURAL CITY**" to reflect the dramatic shift in direction it demands.

In the opening paragraph of his treatise, Vic Derman writes that: "Past practices have produced a myriad of outcomes such as loss of open space, environmental degradation and choking congestion that are unsustainable and inconsistent with citizen's hopes and expectations."

He then introduces three lenses to change course and shape the future of an urban region, namely:

- **Regional Growth Strategy**
- **Climate Change**
- **Quality of Life and Place**

"The three 'lenses' are offered as a way to scrutinize and direct the choices we make."

"Collectively, the three lenses bring our future into focus. The picture they define is one of environmental, social and economic sustainability. It portrays a new approach that cannot be accomplished with tinkering and incremental change. Instead, bold and visionary action will be needed."

**3 Lenses
to
Shape
our
Region's
Future:**

The RGS

**Climate
Change**

**Quality
of
Life and
Place**

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About the Three Lenses

Living Water Smart creates a water-centric vision that responds to this challenge: *What we want British Columbia to look like in 50 years and beyond.* Achieving the vision depends on the cumulative decisions that British Columbians make now and over time.

The Natural City provides a roadmap for creating the desired future as envisioned in Living Water Smart.

The Natural City is the desired outcome of a layered design process, one that aims to shape and ensure the future wellbeing of an urban region by viewing development and redevelopment opportunities through the three lenses.

Vic Derman's key message is that **Quality of Life and Place** is BC's competitive advantage; thus, it is in our best interests to create a legacy for future generations whereby settlement is in balance with ecology.

Why not
build:

The World's
Most
Attractive,
Livable and,
above all
else,
Sustainable
Medium
Sized Urban
Area
PERIOD!

Call it:
"THE
NATURAL
CITY"

Lens #1 - Regional Growth Strategy:

The first lens is the Regional Growth Study (RGS). According to Vic Derman, it has offered a call for local sustainability for some time but leaders have not always listened. Now, he says, we must ask without fail:

"IS THIS CONSISTENT WITH THE FUTURE THE RGS ENVISIONS?"

Lens #2 – Climate Change:

This 'new' issue is the most critical problem of our time and is arguably the greatest threat humanity has faced," writes Vic Derman. "Its potential consequences range from severe to apocalyptic and add a particularly urgent reason to rethink our direction. Everything we do must help to address climate change and address the question:

"DOES THIS HELP TO MEET THE CHALLENGE CLIMATE CHANGE PRESENTS?"

Lens #3 – Quality of Life and Place:

"The third lens centres around our economic future, continues Vic Derman. "It makes the argument that we are in a growing competition for wealth, talent and skill with urban communities around the globe. It also asks: *"What advantages do we have in this intensifying competition?"* and comes to the conclusion that *quality of life and quality of place* provide our outstanding edge."

"We must hold on to that 'economic ace' and build on it. Create the world's most attractive, liveable, equitable and sustainable medium sized urban area and we can: guarantee our economic future, contribute to climate change solutions and deal with local sustainability. The synergies are tremendous. Invariably, we must ask:

"WILL THIS ACTION MAINTAIN AND ENHANCE THE QUALITY OF THIS PLACE?"

"The Natural City document offers: additional principles for sustainable development, a list of attributes for our future region and a "turned upside down" design process to help reach our goals. It offers prospects of critical and spectacular results and a *vision of hope and promise for a future that begs to be embraced!*"

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Design with Nature

Vic Derman defines a set of ten principles that provide a planning framework for **The Natural City**. One of these is a 'design with nature' way-of-thinking and acting.

"Integration with nature and minimal interference with the natural environment are at the core of **The Natural City**," writes Vic Derman. "The urban area **must** exist harmoniously with the surrounding environment. Key systems should mimic natural processes and integrate with them to the highest degree possible."



A 'Design with Nature' approach and re-use of resources are key to climate change adaptation

- Develop compact, complete communities
- Increase transportation options
- Re-use and recycle water, energy and nutrients from liquid 'wastes'
- Protect and restore urban 'green' space
- Strive for a lighter 'hydrologic footprint'
- Achieve higher levels of stream, wetland and receiving water protection

Climate Change Adaptation:

The 'design with nature' paradigm captures the essence of climate change adaptation.

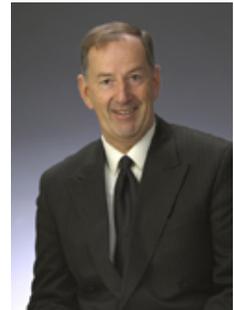
"Adaptation is about responding to the changes that will inevitably occur. Adaptation is at the community level and is therefore about collaboration. If we can show how to get the water part right, then other parts are more likely to follow," states **Lynn Kriwoken**, Ministry of Environment.



A Design Process to Achieve the Vision

Vic Derman advocates application of a layered design process and demonstrates how conventional approaches to urban design could be modified to meet the goals of **The Natural City**. This process does not differ greatly from traditional approaches with one exception, he emphasizes.

"The usual approach is to acquire land, decide what will be placed on it, then go about making it sustainable as possible," writes Vic Derman. "The layered approach effectively turns this upside down. Rather than being 'fitted into the project' after key decisions have been made, elements such as sustainability, amenity and social equity become the drivers of development outcomes."



"By putting them first, the layered approach has the potential to drive a paradigm-shift in urban design. Like all dramatic shifts, it will meet with resistance and will require strong leadership and commitment to succeed."

"Accomplishing **The Natural City** will not be easy but the rewards will be worth the effort," concludes Vic Derman. "Getting even close to The Natural City would: fulfill the vision of the Regional Growth Strategy, help meet the challenge of climate change and all but guarantee our future economic success. Can we afford to do anything else?"

The Natural City - A Design Process

- Base Layer – Ecological Functionality
- Layer 2 – Amenity Layer
- Layer 3 – Sustainability Layer
- Layer 4 – Social Sustainability Layer
- Layer 5 – Development Layer

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5. What Do We Want British Columbia to Look Like?

"Sustainability by Design and The Natural City are different, yet they are the same," reflects **Kim Stephens**. "Both are underpinned by the premise that we **can create our future**; and that to get there, we will need to **do business differently**. These are the intertwined themes for the Penticton Forum."

"Sustainability by Design and The Natural City both draw a picture of '**what this place could look like**' if we think and act like a region. Both reflect a philosophy that to get to the big picture, it starts with the smallest pieces."

"A difference between Sustainability by Design and The Natural City is that the latter is grounded in the hands-on experience of Vic Derman: he is a municipal decision-maker; he knows the regulatory system; and he understands where the process needs to be adapted in order to achieve the desired outcome."



"In summary, the combination of Vic Derman and Patrick Condon is a powerful one.....because their experience and skills are complementary," concludes Kim Stephens.

Living Water Smart

"A provincial policy framework is now in place that enables municipalities to 'do business differently' in order to design their communities to live in harmony with water," states **Lynn Kriwoken**. "By



living water smart, communities will be more prepared for climate change and their quality of life will be enhanced. If we can show how to get the water part right, then other parts are more likely to follow."

Rewarding Good Behaviour

"**Living Water Smart, BC's Water Plan** is a provincial strategy; we must look at it as a shared responsibility," sums up **Glen Brown**. "Actually, it



is not one strategy; the Province has a number of strategies, including the Green Communities Project and the Climate Action Plan. The Province is looking at raising the bar as far as what we are trying to accomplish with standards, provincial

legislation and infrastructure grant programs."

LIVING WATER SMART



B.C.'s Plan to protect and preserve water resources through planning, regulatory change, education, and incentives such as economic instruments and rewards.