

# CATALYST SESSIONS

cause + affect

# THE CATALYST SESSIONS CAUSE+AFFECT FOCUS GROUPS

## INTRODUCTION

The Catalyst sessions were created for key influencers of the younger generation in Vancouver's emerging economies. The key topics discussed pertain to the early development of Vancouver's economic development strategy.

Cause+Affect hosted three separate focus groups of 10-12 people in the month of May. Each session addressed the same questions and responses were documented and summarized to form these six topics to be further reviewed at this workshop.

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## 1. AFFORDABILITY

### A. CONCERN

It is a challenge to attract a young demographic to Vancouver because the cost of living is out of balance with the modest salaries in comparison to other cosmopolitan centres.

### OPPORTUNITY

Private subsidies for housing, workspace or childcare for select sectors or businesses that have been identified as both key emerging economic generators and employers of the "20-30 somethings."

“

The cost of housing, childcare and transportation combined makes other typically expensive cities such as Toronto a much more attractive place to set up my business and start my family.

”

### B. CONCERN

There are not enough registered childcare facilities, resulting in young families having to rely upon private households for childcare.

### OPPORTUNITY

Government could subsidize co-located childcare facilities within workplaces and build-in lease incentive programs for companies that include this program within their facilities. A centralized communication system could connect small businesses so that they could pool their resources and share a daycare facility.

### OPPORTUNITY

Change zoning restrictions to allow for underutilized "party rooms" or gyms to become daycare facilities in identified condo buildings that are occupied by the younger generation.

## 2. PUBLIC SPACE AND LIQUOR REGULATION

### A. CONCERN

Streets in Vancouver are little more than traffic flows. Compared to other major cities, there is very little activity in our public spaces that adds to our urban and cultural vibrancy.

#### OPPORTUNITY

Implement a comprehensive plan for pedestrian streets, frequent & consistent street closures & programmed public amenities. Then implement a communication plan so the public is aware and not surprised by the events so they become integral with city living.

#### OPPORTUNITY

Give life back to the streets. Reduce restrictions on spontaneous public gathering by encouraging outdoor restaurant and bar space that includes stand up tables and patios that don't have to butt up to the building line. Allow street parties and street vendors and temporary liquor licences for special occasions.

#### OPPORTUNITY

Create a footbridge across False Creek to allow connections between public gathering spaces. There is just too much bureaucratic red tape to prevent the best solutions. (Eg. Burrard Bridge)

### B. CONCERN

Vancouver's modest hours of liquor consumption does not reflect well if we are indeed a "world-class city" and there is a lack of discretion from city police about alcohol misconduct.

#### OPPORTUNITY

Lengthen alcohol consumption in restaurants. Use the Olympic period as a trial to judge certain "relaxations" that might be put in place such as late night alcohol or outdoor street activities. Without changing the laws, which is difficult, encourage a more open view of public alcohol use to allow for sophisticated consumption. (Beaches, Parks, Street Parties, Private events, etc.)

### C. CONCERN

Granville Street. Kids are going out at 11:00pm, waiting in line and not getting into a club until 11:30pm. They are then guzzling drinks until 2:00 am where they are sent out onto a couple block area at peak intoxication, it's mayhem.

#### OPPORTUNITY

Ban restrictive regulations. The more you regulate, the less people regulate themselves. Lengthen drinking hours to help slow the exiting of intoxicated patrons. Rather than concentrating late night bars on one street such as Granville, spread them out into various communities to promote community pride, ownership while treating people like responsible adults.

### D. CONCERN

There is a lack of venues with adequate liquor licensing and venues that do have the licensing charge a fortune for their unionized served beverages.

#### OPPORTUNITY

Give the civic venues new life and provide flexibility for events that are proven successful at drawing a crowd. Bring them up to current standards by removing the unionized controlled expensive liquor policies and allowing typical liquor sponsorships.

“

My friends from Europe and I are having a picnic on the beach and the cops come and pour out our bottle of wine at our feet. It's just embarrassing.

”

# 3. BRAND, MARKETING, COMMUNICATION

## A. CONCERN

The world perception of Vancouver seems to have been lead by the tourism industry and does not accurately reflect the current and “real Vancouver”. The Olympics will come to Vancouver and may leave without an impression about our vibrant urban culture. Downtown Eastside will be easily the biggest issue, it is our Tibet.

### OPPORTUNITY

Celebrate our diversity. Centralize our stories. Determine what Vancouver means to the world. Create a communication campaign that informs Vancouverites about what makes the city great, help them find pride in their city and make them intelligent ambassadors. Show all aspects of our city and don't hide anything. There are a lot of good initiatives happening in the downtown eastside. Vancouver could be best known for it's unique “Work-Life Balance + Innovation” not it's beautiful scenery.

### OPPORTUNITY

Rather than importing cultural events from other cities or only creating “entertainment” based events, do like Torino did and coordinate the existing best cultural events in Vancouver to make them happen during the Olympics. (East Side Culture Crawl, The Cheaper Show, Luminaries, Pecha Kucha, etc.) Create an impact give the unaccredited media inspiring content with spontaneous large-scale initiatives organized by key cultural instigators.

“

I am often asked, what is so great about Vancouver? Without even realizing it, I fall back on the lists of features that have been promoted by Tourism BC even though I can't remember the last time I was on the mountains.

”

# 4. GREEN

## A. CONCERN

In order for Vancouver to become the “greenest” city on the planet it needs to first understand what green really means and what truly makes people change their lifestyle.

### OPPORTUNITY

Address Social Sustainability rather than Technological Sustainability as it has been proven to have more impact in changing people/communities. Develop a campaign with the understanding that people respond to their desires, not their guilt.

### OPPORTUNITY

Implement large scale recycling and composting programs across the GVRD that include Commercial use and develop corresponding re-processing plants.

### OPPORTUNITY

Implement a sophisticated “buy local” campaign, from the positioning that it’s not “the right thing to do” but instead because Vancouver has the best to offer...make Vancouver product desirable. Ensure the school kids are immersed in a true green outlook at school so they can influence their parents.

### OPPORTUNITY

Develop a state of the art videoconference centre to encourage business without travel. Centralize and share business and communication activities to allow cross-pollination between industries.

“

Current research shows that Environmental sustainability doesn’t top the list of important sustainability issues for consumers and that personal and social sustainability such as ‘buying local and supporting locally based business’ resonate more.

The five most important Sustainability issues – as consumers ranked them – are:

- \* Feeling connected to my family, my friends, and my community
- \* A sense of well-being
- \* Being paid a living wage
- \* How employees are treated at companies
- \* Nurtured personal relationships versus material possessions

”

# 5. BUSINESS

## A. CONCERN

There are few opportunities for young companies as the “old guard” controls Vancouver.

### OPPORTUNITY

Establish open competitions for major projects so that the work is granted to the best company for the job, not just the most established and create mentorship programs to remove the “young & old” segregation.

### OPPORTUNITY

Establish a selection group that determines the people and companies that are truly adding value to the city’s profile and economic vibrancy. These companies would be given special allowances to make sure they are able to grow and evolve so they can make our city even better. Eg. Rezoning, Subsidies, Promotion, Grants, etc.

## B. CONCERN

Our transportation systems don’t encourage business activities between key business centres and zoning restrictions deter creative companies from setting up shop in unique workplaces.

### OPPORTUNITY

Develop efficient transportation down the Pacific Northwest Coast to The Bay area and relax zoning laws to support our emerging sectors success.

“

I know so many artists that have left Vancouver in frustration and then end up making it big in New York or LA... its really sad we’re losing our city’s best assets.

”

## C. CONCERN

It is difficult to retain the younger demographic (particularly in the creative industry) when other cosmopolitan cities do a better job of supporting their emerging “stars” with both public profile & financial support. This often stems from the lack of relevant & current information in our media that embraces & promotes the emerging innovative & creative sectors both locally & globally.

### OPPORTUNITY

Create a panel of mentors in relevant sectors that determine & supports the emerging “stars” and establish a group from the younger demographic that help to filter information about what is relevant and of interest both locally and globally. (Eg. Every other major city has a Design Week) Start a media strategy that promotes Vancouver in Tokyo, New York and London. Real content about people that live/work in the city, not just from a tourist point of view.

“

Even though we’ve been designing award winning projects in other major cities we’re still not taken seriously enough for major work in Vancouver... the work continues to go to the same old firms.

”

# 6. MULTI-CULTURALISM

## A. CONCERN

Vancouver is a collection of different cultures, each in their own neighbourhood. "Ghettoization."

### OPPORTUNITY

Concentration is a good thing but there should be an umbrella cultural programmer that connects these individual communities so that cross collaboration & awareness happens.

### OPPORTUNITY

Prepare a clear history of the Coast Salish culture so that people understand what this place was before they arrived.

“

We are still a very young city and have to wait for this to happen naturally...this is something you can't force.

”

## B. CONCERN

We have the most diverse collection of ethnic restaurants of any major city, but Tourists are not aware or able to locate them.

### OPPORTUNITY

Encourage quality street vendors to allow this diversity to enter the public space providing an option to the typical hotdog stand.

“

Wouldn't it be great to experience our amazing ethnic food diversity on the streets like in New York.

”

“

We are already very multi-cultural. I don't even notice the different cultures. Maybe this is a generational thing?

”