

# MAKING SPACE IN VANCOUVER'S EAST END:

## *From Leonard Marsh to the Vancouver Agreement*

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IN CANADA, IN THE EARLY YEARS of the twenty-first century, poverty's neighbourhood-level characteristics and processes assumed new importance in public discourse and policies. In the eyes of many policy researchers, political leaders, and welfare advocates, tackling poverty would require innovative governance mechanisms trained on local space.<sup>1</sup> Poverty interventions deemed workable in the early decades

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\* To the memory of my cousin Stacey, who lived, worked, and died in the Downtown Eastside.

† I extend my deepest appreciation to the people who gave so generously of their time to participate in this study. Long acknowledgments are not typical for journal articles, but this article has been a very long time in the making and many hands have played a role in its creation. The research began at the University of New Brunswick with generous support from the then vice-president of research, Greg Kealey. It then made its way to York University, where Robert Latham and Leo Panitch kindly commented on drafts, and where graduate and undergraduate students in my seminars on urban governance provided dynamic intellectual exchanges that influenced the analysis herein. The research continued at the Centre of Criminology at the University of Toronto, where I spent my sabbatical in 2008-09 and where Mariana Valverde's work deeply influenced me. I am indebted to Michael Goldberg, who was based at the Social Planning and Research Council of British Columbia when I embarked upon this plan of study; he knew there were stories to tell about Grandview-Woodland and he pointed me in that direction. My gratitude extends to Margaret Condon, who conducted the interviews and assisted with preliminary data analysis; to City of Vancouver Archivist Chak Yung, who helped me navigate through countless boxes of documents; and to Mary Lehane and everyone at the Resource Sharing Department at the Scott Library, York University, who found materials from afar that I simply could not have reached on my own. I thank the two anonymous reviewers who offered crucial feedback as the article entered its final stages. This has been a truly collaborative endeavour, and I cannot possibly mention everyone who helped shape it. But especially to editor Graeme Wynn I owe an enormous debt of gratitude. This article simply would not have found its final form without him. Errors are, of course, mine alone. Funded in part under a joint grant from the Canadian Institutes of Health Research and the University of New Brunswick (Grant No. 80P-6276), as well as in part by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (Grant Number: 832-2002-0114).

<sup>1</sup> Big City Mayors' Caucus, *Our Cities, Our Future: Addressing the Fiscal Imbalance in Canada's Cities Today* (Ottawa: Federation of Canadian Municipalities, 2006), 32; Canada, Standing Senate Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology, *In From the Margins: A Call to Action on Poverty, Housing and Homelessness: Report on the Subcommittee on Cities*, 40th Parliament, 2nd session (December 2009), available at <http://www.parl.gc.ca/40/2/parlbus/commbus/senate/com-e/citi-e/rep-e/rep02dec09-e.pdf> (viewed 27 February 2011),

after the Second World War (i.e., hierarchically ordered bureaucratic approaches premised upon universality, such as those associated with Keynesian-inspired programs) were now considered wholly inadequate. Political scientist Neil Bradford put it this way:

Spatially concentrated problems are not simply complex, they are wicked ... Characterized by critical information gaps about what precisely is required to help and by large coordination failures in terms of channeling the appropriate resources to the right target, city problems are resistant to traditional monosectoral interventions designed from above by insulated, distant bureaucracies. Instead, they demand place sensitive, holistic approaches ... That is, strategies built from the “ground or street up” ... on the basis of local knowledge, and delivered through networked relations crossing program silos, even jurisdictional turfs.<sup>2</sup>

Poverty’s pernicious local character had been discovered.

Yet such claims obscure the fact that, even in the halcyon days of “universal” welfare programs in Canada, the links between local space and poverty were well recognized.<sup>3</sup> As an individual experience, poverty is always an inherently local issue. However, how local spaces are conceptualized in terms of poverty, how they are rendered technical fields (through maps, statistics, experiential knowledge and the like), and how they are fashioned as targets of official action – all this is historically contingent. The intellectual and practical machinery wedding localities and poverty does not merely occupy space: it helps to create it. Space, to put it differently, has “a materiality which is not merely imagined but is realised.” We must therefore reject binaries that divide “the lived and the represented, the experienced and the conceptualised, the abstract and the concrete” and pay attention to “the different styles of spatialisation employed in different spheres ... and at different times in history.”<sup>4</sup>

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2; S. Torjman, *Poverty Policy* (Ottawa: Caledon Institute, 2008), 1; United Way of Greater Toronto, *Poverty by Postal Code: The Geography of Neighbourhood Poverty, 1981–2001* (Toronto: United Way of Greater Toronto and the Canadian Council on Social Development, 2004), available at <http://www.unitedwaytoronto.com/whatWeDo/reports/povertyByPostalCode.php> (viewed 25 June 2010).

<sup>2</sup> N. Bradford, “Place Matters and Multi-Level Governance: Perspectives on a New Urban Policy Paradigm,” *Policy Options*, 25, 2 (February 2004): 40. As of 19 August 2010, Google Scholar showed this article as cited thirty-six times.

<sup>3</sup> R. Harris, “A Reinterpretation of Urban Reform in Canada,” *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 11, 3 (1987): 363–81.

<sup>4</sup> T. Osborne and N. Rose, “Spatial Phenomenotechnics: Making Space with Charles Booth and Patrick Geddes,” *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 22 (2004): 212.

Focusing on major urban planning exercises in the City of Vancouver's east end, I identify and assess predominant mutations in the ways in which local space and poverty were twinned as interlocking governmental concerns from the 1950s into the early years of the new millennium. The east end of Vancouver provides a fitting focus for such a study. Its three contemporary administrative districts – the Downtown Eastside, Grandview-Woodland, and Strathcona – each saw landmark urban planning schemes aimed at addressing poverty; and, in every case, officials were attentive to the relationship between the three districts. This was particularly visible in Grandview-Woodland. In this area, which has been almost completely ignored in the academic literature,<sup>5</sup> we find an especially sharp example of the historical specificity of the poverty-local space governmental problematic.

To examine the links between poverty and local space, I use three spatial lenses devised by neo-Foucauldian scholars Thomas Osborne and Nikolas Rose: modelling, realization, and demarcation. *Modelling* concerns how “space is itself conceived, the ways in which space is distributed within the space of thought, and the array of concepts that divide it up, make relations within it, distinguish and associate points, planes, sectors, and territories.” Models can be explicit or implicit. They can be found in social scientific studies, official plans, or in specific interventions. *Realization* refers to the manner in which “space is made thinkable, vision is spatialized, and space is materialized” through, for instance, statistics, maps, surveys, street-level tramping, and micro-level interventions. *Demarcation* refers “to the ways in which topographical fields are marked out and delimited as sites which have salience for investigation.”<sup>6</sup> This line of inquiry identifies how certain spaces, such as the east end of Vancouver, became associated with particular governmental problems or solutions.

Using these analytical foci, I begin by foregrounding Leonard Marsh's Keynesian-inspired report on Strathcona, *Rebuilding a Neighbourhood* (1950).<sup>7</sup> Into the 1960s, this report had a direct influence on the character of east end urban planning. Marsh's ideas were evident a quarter-century later in the main rationales for creating the Britannia Community Services Centre (also referred to herein as “Britannia” or the “Britannia Centre”),

<sup>5</sup> A notable exception is D. Ley and C. Dobson, “Are There Limits to Gentrification? The Contexts of Impeded Gentrification in Vancouver,” *Urban Studies* 45, 12 (2008): 2471–98.

<sup>6</sup> Osborne and Rose, “Spatial Phenomenotechnics,” 213–14.

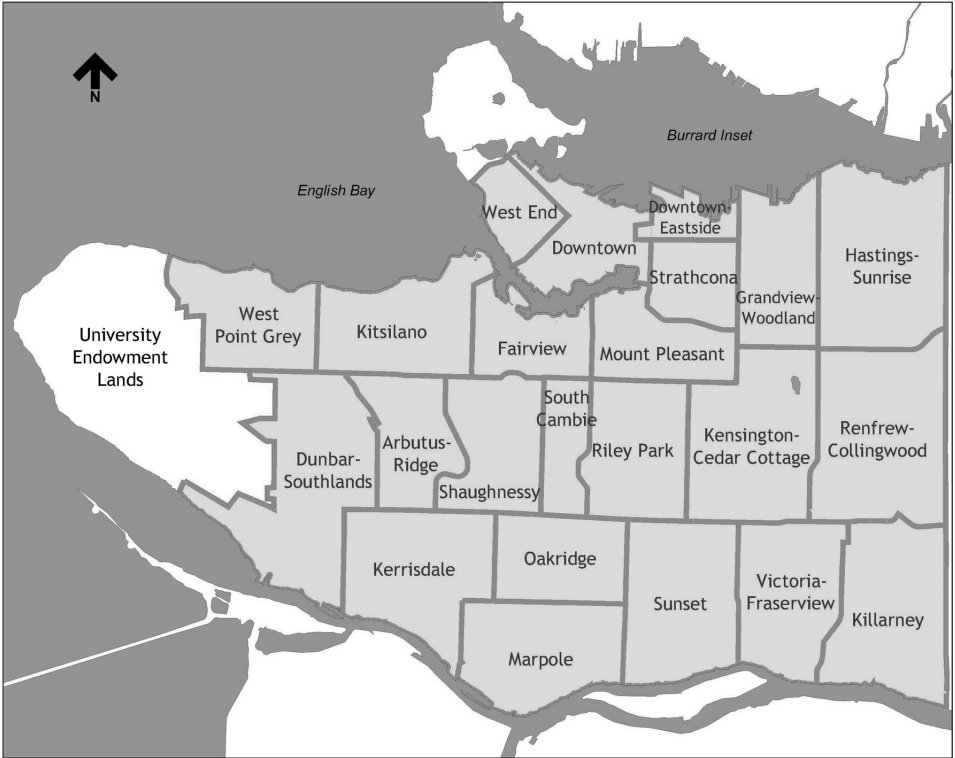
<sup>7</sup> L. Marsh, *Rebuilding a Neighbourhood*, Research Publications No. 1, Vancouver, University of British Columbia, 1950.

which opened in 1974 in Grandview-Woodland.<sup>8</sup> Against this historical backdrop, I consider shifts in Britannia's human service milieu in the context of the rise of neoliberal political programs. New mentalities about poverty emerged in practical street-level adaptations, which would ultimately be buttressed and extended by the Vancouver Agreement, which, in 2000, was signed by the City of Vancouver, the Government of British Columbia, and the Government of Canada. The agreement was renewed in 2005, by which time it was heralded as an urban management template both in Canada and internationally. The agreement expired in 2010.<sup>9</sup> While the Vancouver Agreement is often considered to have been trained exclusively on the Downtown Eastside, human service agencies in Grandview-Woodland were closely aligned with the agreement; and, the launching of the agreement reinforced Britannia as a key node in an emerging network of services and practices. This new system targeted and constituted extreme forms of suffering, such as homelessness, addictions, hunger, and child poverty, as conventional policy matters to be better managed and controlled. Local poverty's rediscovery as a policy field in the early twenty-first century thus occurred as acute forms of human suffering in Vancouver's east end were already being naturalized and institutionalized in ways unthinkable in the early decades following the war. I conclude by pondering the troubling possibility that the rediscovery of the presumed essential nature of poverty's local qualities might be contributing, unwittingly of course, to normalizing dire modes of human hardship.

<sup>8</sup> City of Vancouver, *Report to Joint Technical Committee, Social Planning/Community Development re Proposed Services Centre (Britannia)*, prepared by the Subcommittee of the Joint Technical Committee Social Planning/Community Development (1968), City of Vancouver Archives (cva), Public Document 333; City of Vancouver, Social Development Committee, *Community Services Centre (Britannia): A Report of the Social Development Committee*, cva, City Council and Office of the City Clerk Fonds, Urban Renewal Scheme 3 (Britannia), 1966-71, 142 A, file 8.

<sup>9</sup> *The Vancouver Agreement: An Urban Development Agreement between Canada-British Columbia-Vancouver Regarding Economic, Social and Community Development in the City of Vancouver* (2000), available at <http://www.vancouveragreement.ca/the-agreement/> (viewed 19 August 2010); Canada, Western Economic Diversification Canada, "Vancouver Agreement Wins Highest Award" (2004), available at [http://www.wd.gc.ca/eng/77\\_2719.asp](http://www.wd.gc.ca/eng/77_2719.asp) (viewed 19 August 2010); Canada, Western Economic Diversification Canada, "Vancouver Agreement Renewed for a Second Five-Year Term," (4 April 2005), available at [http://www.wd.gc.ca/eng/77\\_2918.asp](http://www.wd.gc.ca/eng/77_2918.asp) (viewed 19 August 2010).

MAP 1  
*City of Vancouver administrative boundaries*



Source: Map created by Ed Cheng, City of Vancouver, GIS and Topobase Support Term. Used with permission of the City of Vancouver.

### MAKING SPACE WITH LEONARD MARSH

Leonard Marsh studied at the London School of Economics (LSE) and worked as a researcher under Sir William Beveridge. Like Beveridge, Marsh was influenced by Keynesianism. Shortly after graduating from the LSE in 1928, Marsh became the director of social research at McGill University, a role he maintained until 1941, when he became an advisor to the Dominion Committee on Reconstruction.<sup>10</sup> Positioned in this capacity at the heart of a growing faith in rational planning in Canada,<sup>11</sup>

<sup>10</sup> C. Hives and E. Wodarczak, "Leonard Marsh Fonds Description," University of British Columbia Archives, available at [http://www.library.ubc.ca/archives/u\\_arch/marsh.html](http://www.library.ubc.ca/archives/u_arch/marsh.html) (viewed 11 August 2010).

<sup>11</sup> S.V. Ward, "The International Diffusion of Planning: A Review and a Canadian Case Study," *International Planning Studies* 4, 1 (1999): 63.

Marsh penned two of his most celebrated works: *Report on Social Security for Canada* (1943) and *Report on Housing and Community Planning* (1944).<sup>12</sup> In *Report on Social Security for Canada*, Marsh contends, in Keynesian fashion, that unemployment would foster low incomes; low incomes would equal low spending; low consumerism would equal low economic growth; and low growth would equal low competitiveness. Income redistribution via state interventions would stave off poverty, produce employment, and maximize consumerism in ways that would enhance democracy.<sup>13</sup> At the core of his thinking is the heterosexual, two-parent family,<sup>14</sup> which Marsh regards as a pivotal consumption machine. He considers mothers, in particular, as key consumers.<sup>15</sup> They would be the ones purchasing school supplies, children's clothing, paying for recreation activities, and so on.<sup>16</sup> But the "absence of poverty" alone would not assure spending. People need reasons to buy. They need goods and services to purchase. Marsh therefore called for "bold acts of income mobilization" at the local level to promote mass consumption. Marsh recognized that no one template would be applicable in all parts of Canada, but he was certain that in some places, including some inner-city spaces, it would be necessary to create schools, libraries, and recreational facilities, and, if need be, to erase "eyesores," "blighted areas," and "slum dwellings."<sup>17</sup> The latter concerns underscore Marsh's emphasis on housing redevelopment, which he expands upon more fully in his *Report on Housing and Community Planning*.

Marsh routinely considered local dimensions in his writings on poverty, but he elaborated on this relationship with respect to a specific setting (Vancouver's east end) only after taking up a joint appointment in the School of Architecture and the School of Social Work at the University of British Columbia in 1947. By the time Marsh arrived in Vancouver, local academics, artists, and activists had already been agitating for a "renewal of the eastern sector" through the development of "high- and low-rise apartments, row housing, parks, recreational

<sup>12</sup> L. Marsh, *Report on Housing and Community Planning* (Ottawa: Cloutier, 1944).

<sup>13</sup> Marsh, *Rebuilding a Neighbourhood*, 2-6.

<sup>14</sup> A. Porter, *Gendered States: Women, Unemployment Insurance, and the Political Economy of the Welfare State in Canada, 1945-1997* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2003), 39.

<sup>15</sup> J. Parr and G. Ekberg, "Mrs Consumer and Mr Keynes in Postwar Canada and Sweden," *Gender and History* 8, 2 (1996): 212-30. I thank colleague Ann Porter for pointing out this reference.

<sup>16</sup> L. Marsh, *Report on Social Security for Canada: The Requirements for Post-War Planning* (Ottawa: Cloutier, 1943), 2.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, 36-38.

facilities, schools and shops.”<sup>18</sup> Nevertheless, Marsh’s *Rebuilding a Neighbourhood* is a landmark contribution. His ideas not only gave the stamp of social science legitimacy to calls for neighbourhood redevelopment but also provided a conceptual model that tangibly shaped the urban planning agenda in Vancouver into the 1960s and early 1970s.

In considering how Marsh *modelled* the relationship between poverty and local space, we see that he was preoccupied with creating environments that promoted civic life. He wrote: “Many a slum area has a ‘bad name’ from the activities of a small proportion of its inhabitants, in unfairness to the rest whose only ‘crime’ is that of poverty. *The biggest cost of the slum to society is apathetic, dreary living, which is a menace to every aspect of healthy citizenship*” (emphasis in original).<sup>19</sup> Substandard living conditions were destructive to what Marsh regarded as a key component of civic existence: “morale.”<sup>20</sup> Building a sense of purpose and optimism about the future would require the demolition of existing housing stock in Strathcona and the complete rebuilding of the neighbourhood based on rational planning.<sup>21</sup> The symbol of this imagined community, exhibiting an esprit de corps, was the tripartite “community facility” comprised of schools, health services, and a “neighbourhood house” that, collectively, would cater to the two-parent, heterosexual, male-breadwinner family.<sup>22</sup>

Marsh *realized* local poverty spaces in several ways. After tramping the streets of Strathcona, at the time a colloquial term used to refer to the section of the east end that became, in 1969, the basis for a city administrative unit of the same name, he claimed that it did not “require a prolonged study to see how much of Vancouver has grown up haphazardly.” But, he asserted, “this [was] particularly true of the eastern sections of the city, where there [had] been even less regard for the economics of distance than in the western half.” Marsh also relied upon case records drawn from the city’s Social Service Index, which exposed a high reliance on relief services in the area.<sup>23</sup> He assessed maps that showed the location and numbers of houses, blocks, and lots. He wrote that, “in terms of community building,” Strathcona was “handicapped from the outset by grid-patterned streets.” “More serious,”

<sup>18</sup> R. Windsor-Liscombe, “Leonard Marsh and the Vancouver Modern,” *Architecture and Ideas*, 1, 1 (1994): 41–42.

<sup>19</sup> Marsh, *Rebuilding a Neighbourhood*, 23.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, 25. See also L. Marsh, “Social Welfare and the Social Sciences: A Perspective,” in *Social Welfare and the Preservation of Values*, ed. W.G. Dixon (Vancouver: J.M. Dent and Sons, Canada, Ltd. and the University of British Columbia, 1957), 40.

<sup>21</sup> Windsor-Liscombe, “Leonard Marsh.”

<sup>22</sup> Marsh, *Rebuilding a Neighbourhood*, 26 and 39.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, 26.

he continued, “there [were] many clusters of houses which belong[ed] to no definite ‘neighbourhood’ at all.”<sup>24</sup> Marsh devised his own survey as a sort of three-dimensional mapping to identify the state of physical repair and the human use of space. He created “dwelling cards” and “family cards” to record the physical descriptions of abodes and to document the number of occupants in each home, along with their social and economic conditions.<sup>25</sup> Enacting local knowledge in the construction of this more dynamic map, Marsh positioned himself as an intercessor fostering “general public enlightenment on town planning *for the city as a whole*” (emphasis in original).<sup>26</sup> In many ways, Marsh’s writings are reminiscent of H.B. Ames’s pioneering study, *The City Below the Hill*,<sup>27</sup> which assesses sociological conditions of poverty on the western side of Montreal. Ames, like Marsh, emphasizes the structural dimensions of poverty, although where the former stresses a lack of employment options, Marsh is more centrally concerned, at least in his writings on Strathcona, with the lack of affordable housing for people with low incomes, many of whom were employed.<sup>28</sup>

Marsh *demarcated* Strathcona as a space whose future had implications for the “whole city,” the “metropolitan region,” and “citizens at large.”<sup>29</sup> To the south and southwest, adjacent to False Creek and extending into what Marsh referred to as “East Kitsilano,” there were more economically depressed areas, but they lacked the existing infrastructure that Strathcona had, namely, a school and two churches that could be associated with the neighbourhood centre. They also lacked comparable open space that would lessen the need for resident dislocation to make room for a fire station, a power centre, and new housing.<sup>30</sup> To the west lay the commercial centre, making Strathcona a key locale for “traffic routes and industrial areas.” To the north, in the area that would later be named the Downtown Eastside, Marsh saw an outright “slum” best to be razed and replaced with industrial manufacturing. To the east, in the place that would come to be known as Grandview-Woodland, he noted over crowding, transiency, and the “disordered appearance of the streets.” This “easterly locale,” Marsh concluded, “would have a much better

<sup>24</sup> Ibid., 1.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., 68.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., 1.

<sup>27</sup> H.B. Ames, *The City Below the Hill: A Sociological Study of a Portion of the City of Montréal, Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1972).

<sup>28</sup> Marsh, *Rebuilding a Neighbourhood*, 7 and 9-11.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., iii-iv and vii.

<sup>30</sup> Windsor-Liscombe, “Leonard Marsh,” 44.



chance of resisting deterioration, even of considerable improvement, if the Strathcona district were completely reconstructed.”<sup>31</sup>

Ideas akin to Marsh's were evident in the growing presence of the federal government in planning, funding, and financing housing developments under the Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation (later renamed the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation), created in 1945,<sup>32</sup> and in the proliferation of programs at both the provincial and federal levels in areas such as social assistance, unemployment insurance, vocational training, health care, and family allowances.<sup>33</sup> Of particular significance, the Canada Assistance Plan (CAP), established in 1966 as a joint provincial-federal program, expressly defined poverty in a manner close to Marsh's conceptualization. The program sought to provide “adequately” to people in “need,” disallowed working for assistance, and emphasized the importance of ensuring sufficient “food, shelter, clothing, fuel, and personal requirements.”<sup>34</sup> CAP became a major source of funding for provincial family and children's programs.<sup>35</sup> It also supported “community development services” to assist “residents of a community to participate or to continue to participate in improving the social and economic conditions of the community for the purpose of preventing, lessening or removing the causes and effects of poverty, child neglect or dependence on public assistance in the community.”<sup>36</sup> This emphasis on community development extended Marsh's notion of civic morale to participatory forms of democratic engagement in community planning. One must not, of course, overstate the singularity of Marsh's influence. Rational planning preceded Marsh's entry into social security debates and was shaped by numerous considerations, including a “massive housing

<sup>31</sup> Marsh, *Rebuilding a Neighbourhood*, 3-4.

<sup>32</sup> B.W. Carroll and R.J.E. Jones, “The Road to Innovation, Convergence or Inertia: Devolution in Housing Policy in Canada,” *Canadian Public Policy* 26, 3 (2000): 279.

<sup>33</sup> K. Battle, “Transformation: Canadian Social Policy since 1985,” *Social Policy and Administration* 32, 4 (1998): 321-40.

<sup>34</sup> Quoted in S. Day and D. Brodsky, *Women and the Equality Deficit: The Impact of Restructuring Canada's Social Programs* (Ottawa: Status of Women Canada, 1998), 14.

<sup>35</sup> M. Little, “Claiming a Unique Place: The Introduction of Mothers' Pensions in BC,” *BC Studies* 105/06 (1995): 80-102.

<sup>36</sup> Canada Assistance Plan Act, 1985, Canada Assistance Plan Regulations (C.R.C., c. 382); M. Clague, “Thirty Turbulent Years: Community Development and the Organization of Health and Social Services in British Columbia,” in *Community Organizing: Canadian Experiences*, ed. M. Wharf and M. Clague (Toronto/New York/Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 92; D. Guest, *The Emergence of Social Security in Canada*, 3rd ed. (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2003), 178; W. McKeen, *Money in Their Own Name: The Feminist Voice in Poverty Debate in Canada, 1970-1995* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2004), 168; A. Moscovitch, “The Canada Assistance Plan: A Twenty Year Assessment, 1966-1986,” in *How Ottawa Spends 1988/89*, ed. K.A. Graham (Ottawa: Carleton University Press, 1998), 286-307.

shortage, reflecting the stagnation of the 1930s and renewed growth pressures";<sup>37</sup> fears of a recurrence of the Depression years and the failings of municipal services; the impact of leftist ideas and leaders; postwar prosperity; and a strong consensus among intellectual and policy elites regarding the need for state wealth redistribution programs.<sup>38</sup>

Marsh's work on Strathcona had a direct impact on urban planning in Vancouver, a city that provided fertile terrain for his ideas. In 1950, the University of British Columbia launched the third professional planning department in Canada, following McGill (1947) and Manitoba (1949).<sup>39</sup> In 1952, upon the recommendation of architects Harold Spence-Sales and John Bland,<sup>40</sup> the Vancouver city council, dominated by Non-Partisan Association councillors who favoured a greater professionalization of city administration, reframed the Town Planning Commission. The voluntary commission was turned into an advisory body, and a planning department was created as an integrated part of city government.<sup>41</sup>

At the end of the 1950s, the city's new Planning Department became influential under a supportive city council and within the context of a growing national acceptance of urban planning.<sup>42</sup> The stage was set for Marsh's vision to be transformed into public policy. In 1957, the Planning Department released its *Vancouver Redevelopment Study*, which largely reiterated Marsh's recommendations for Strathcona.<sup>43</sup> Vancouver's east end was about to become one of Canada's iconic examples of "slum" clearance.<sup>44</sup> In 1959, the municipal and provincial governments endorsed a truncated version of Marsh's vision for Strathcona, omitting the creation of community facilities. Three housing projects were completed between 1960 and 1967: McLean Park, Skeena Terrace, and Raymur Place.<sup>45</sup>

<sup>37</sup> Ward, "International Diffusion of Planning," 63.

<sup>38</sup> K.G. Banting, *The Welfare State and Canadian Federalism*, 2nd ed. (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1988), 60-82; J. Brodie, "The Social in Social Citizenship," in *Recasting the Social in Citizenship*, ed. Engin F. Isin (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2008), 32-43; R. Haddow, *Poverty Reform in Canada, 1958-1978: State and Class Influences on Policy Making* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1993); B.D. Palmer, *Canada's 1960s: The Ironies of Identity in a Rebellious Era* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2009), 211-41.

<sup>39</sup> K. Gerecke, "The History of Canadian City Planning," in *The Second City Book*, ed. J. Lorimer and E. Ross (Toronto: James Lorimer, 1977), 152.

<sup>40</sup> H. Spence-Sales and J. Bland, "Physical Planning in Vancouver's Government," *Community Planning Review*, February 1952, 18-26.

<sup>41</sup> D. Gutstein, *Vancouver Ltd.* (Toronto: James Lorimer, 1975), 197-98.

<sup>42</sup> Ward, "International Diffusion of Planning," 66.

<sup>43</sup> City of Vancouver, *Vancouver Redevelopment Study* (Vancouver: Planning Department, 1957).

<sup>44</sup> J. Wolfe, "Our Common Past: An Interpretation of Canadian Planning History," in *A Reader in Canadian Planning: Linking Theory and Practice*, ed. J. Grant (Toronto: Thomson Nelson, 2007), 34.

<sup>45</sup> Windsor-Liscombe, "Leonard Marsh," 46-47.

Combined, these operations displaced more than three thousand people and transformed parts of Strathcona into high-density rental settings where once single-family homes had predominated.<sup>46</sup> These developments constituted Phases 1 and 2 of what would soon become a three-stage urban renewal process, which included plans for a new freeway into the city through the east end.<sup>47</sup>

As plans for Phase 3 were formulated, Grandview-Woodland and Strathcona residents became more politicized.<sup>48</sup> This stemmed in part from a United Community Services of Greater Vancouver (ucs) initiative, which oversaw the creation of local-area citizen councils in the mid-1960s. Some of these would later obtain funding under CAP. The ucs regarded local councils as a means to offset the impersonal facets of metropolitanism, providing a basis for citizen involvement in “social and physical planning” and offering a presumed logical geographical unit for service administration. In 1964, the Grandview-Woodland Area Council became the first of its kind. The next year, the Strathcona Area Council was established. The ucs envisioned councils comprised of individuals from similar socio-economic backgrounds living in close proximity to each other.<sup>49</sup> In Grandview-Woodland and Strathcona, however, the councils were dominated, at least in the first instance, by professionals who did not live in these areas.<sup>50</sup>

Ultimately, Grandview-Woodland became part of the Phase 3 plan. Strathcona was to see more mass housing demolition and redevelopment, and Grandview-Woodland was to see “limited clearance of residential uses”<sup>51</sup> and was to provide the land for a new multi-service community

<sup>46</sup> M.A. Mitchell and C. Goldney, *Don't Rest in Peace – Organize – A Community Development Scrapbook Reviewing Five Years Experience with Vancouver Citizens* (Vancouver: Neighbourhood Services Association of Greater Vancouver, 1975), 49.

<sup>47</sup> J. Aitkin, *Strathcona: Vancouver's First Neighbourhood* (Vancouver/Toronto: Whitecap Books, 1994), 74; S. Hasson and D. Ley, “Neighborhood Organisations, the Welfare State, and Citizenship Rights,” *Urban Affairs Review* 33, 1 (1997): 28–58; D. Ley, K. Anderson, and D. Konrad, “Chinatown-Strathcona: Gaining an Entitlement,” in *Neighbourhood Organizations and the Welfare State*, ed. S. Hasson and D. Ley (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1994), 112–36; Windsor-Liscombe, “Leonard Marsh,” 1996.

<sup>48</sup> On some of the gendered dimensions of this politicization see Jo-Anne Lee, “Gender, Ethnicity, and Hybrid Forms of Community-Based Activism in Vancouver, 1957–1978: The Strathcona Story Revisited,” *Gender, Place and Culture* 14, 4 (2007): 381–407.

<sup>49</sup> B. Mayhew, *Local Areas of Vancouver* (Vancouver: United Community Services of Greater Vancouver, 1967).

<sup>50</sup> M. Bruce, “A New Breed of Activism: Community Activism in Vancouver's Strathcona Neighbourhood, 1968–1972” (MA thesis, University of British Columbia, 2005), 17–18; Mitchell and Goldney, *Don't Rest in Peace*, 56.

<sup>51</sup> City of Vancouver, Urban Renewal and Public Housing Submission to the Hon. Robert K. Andras, 7 August 1969, 5, cva, City Social Planning Department Fonds, Public Record Series 571, Britannia Community Service Centre, 85-A-7, file 10.

centre.<sup>52</sup> Bruce Hasley, a Salvation Army worker, had proposed a community centre for Grandview-Woodland in 1967.<sup>53</sup> The ideas of the “Hasley Report” gained significant support, including from the Grandview-Woodland Area Council, which, by then, had been taken over by Britannia High School students who used it as a venue to protest the planned freeway through their neighbourhood (which they succeeded in curtailing by collaborating with the Strathcona Area Council).<sup>54</sup>

By 1968, federal funding for Phase 3 had been approved, but, in November of that year, the federal minister of transportation and minister responsible for housing, Paul Hellyer, imposed a moratorium on the project. Hellyer had brought his Task Force on Housing and Urban Development to Vancouver to assess the merits of urban projects encouraged by an open-ended federal commitment (made in 1964) to fund urban renewal. Although Strathcona residents had been agitating against the bulldozing of houses since 1960,<sup>55</sup> their efforts had had little effect. The residents confronted an enormous challenge. West Enders and property developers dominated a city council led by former developer mayor Tom Campbell, who favoured expert recommendations for demolition.<sup>56</sup> Hellyer’s Task Force arrived at an opportune moment for the urban renewal’s detractors. Going over the heads of local politicians, residents demanded that Hellyer shut down the process. Two months before its proposed start date of January 1969, Phase 3 came to an abrupt halt.<sup>57</sup>

In the aftermath of the moratorium, Strathcona became the testing ground for a new federal focus on urban “rehabilitation,” leading to the implementation of two national programs. The Residential Rehabilitation Assistance Program, launched in 1973, provided low-

<sup>52</sup> City of Vancouver, memorandum to Vancouver City Council from Board of Administration, re: Urban Renewal Scheme (Britannia Community Services Centre), re: recommendation, 15 March 1971, CVA, City Council and Office of the City Clerk Fonds, Urban Renewal Scheme 3 (Britannia), 1966-71, 142 A, file 8; Letter from Thomas J. Campbell, Mayor of Vancouver, to Dan Campbell, Minister of Municipal Affairs, re: Urban Renewal Scheme (Britannia Community Services Centre), 11 May 1971, City Council and Office of the City Clerk Fonds, Urban Renewal Scheme 3 (Britannia), 1966-71, 142 A, file 8.

<sup>53</sup> B. Hasley, “A Community Services Centre: A Proposal for Civic and Social Development,” presented to Vancouver City Council on 1 August 1967, CVA, City Social Planning Department Fonds, Public Record Series 571, Britannia Community Service Centre, 85-A-7, file 11.

<sup>54</sup> Mitchell and Goldney, *Don’t Rest in Peace*, 57.

<sup>55</sup> M. Harcourt and K. Cameron, *City Making in Paradise: Nine Decisions that Saved Vancouver* (Vancouver and Toronto: Douglas and McIntyre, 2007), 49.

<sup>56</sup> Gutstein, *Vancouver Ltd.*, 196-203

<sup>57</sup> Bruce, “New Breed of Activism,” 18-19; Mitchell and Goldney, *Don’t Rest in Peace*, 158; D. Ley, *Millionaire Migrants: Trans-Pacific Life Lines* (Malden: Blackwell, 2010), 37-38.

income households funds for housing improvements.<sup>58</sup> The Neighbourhood Improvement Program, started in 1974, assisted with “upgrading of local services, facilities, and infrastructure.”<sup>59</sup> These endeavours were part of the wider turn away from the emphasis on physically altering space, through housing demolitions and highway constructions, towards shaping human environments by preserving established communities and providing opportunities for citizen involvement in public decision making. In 1968, mentalities such as these precipitated the launching of a new City of Vancouver Social Planning Department that would work in conjunction with the Planning Department that had been set up in 1952.<sup>60</sup>

Part of the Grandview-Woodland portion of the original Phase 3, the community centre aspect, became the first major project of the newly created Social Planning Department. The centre’s proposed official catchment area traversed the Grandview-Woodland and Strathcona districts. A large facility would be located at what would eventually become the Britannia site, and it would be linked to a smaller satellite neighbourhood centre in Strathcona.<sup>61</sup> In 1969, Grace McCarthy, provincial minister without portfolio, wrote to federal minister of housing Robert Andras explaining that the plan would “arouse the interest of private developers in the area.” But she also echoed the rationale laid out in one of the city’s key planning documents, which sounded a lot like Marsh’s community ideal, stating:

The concept is to create a multi-purpose service centre, using the elementary and secondary schools as focal points, which will provide in one building, or combination of buildings, all the community services required by residents. The complex of land and buildings is intended to satisfy the social, recreational, health, educational and cultural needs of people of all age groups in an area which is presently devoid of all these services.<sup>62</sup>

<sup>58</sup> M. Egan, “Social Planning in Vancouver,” *Plan Canada* 17, 2 (1977): 124; Harcourt and Cameron, *City Making in Paradise*, 49; M. Steeles, “Incomes, Prices, and Tenure Choice,” in *House, Home, and Community: Progress in Housing Canadians, 1945-1986*, ed. J. Miron (Ottawa: Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, 1993), 48.

<sup>59</sup> L. Hannley, “Substandard Housing,” in Miron, *House, Home, and Community*, 208.

<sup>60</sup> Egan, “Social Planning in Vancouver”; City of Vancouver, Community Services, *Social Planning: Celebrating Thirty Years: 1968-1998* (Vancouver: City of Vancouver, 1998).

<sup>61</sup> City of Vancouver, *Report to Joint Technical Committee*, 8; City of Vancouver, *Community Services Centre (Britannia)*, 3; N. Cooley, “An Introduction to the Britannia Community Services Centre,” n.d., CVA, MSS 734, SPOTA, vol. 12, 583-C-2, file 7, 1; Hasley, “Community Services Centre,” 3-4.

<sup>62</sup> Letter to R.K. Andras, Minister of Housing, from G. McCarthy, Minister without Portfolio, re Urban Renewal Scheme No. 3 (Vancouver), 1 August 1969, CVA, City Social Planning

Since 1949, the city had been involved in the establishment of ten community centres.<sup>63</sup> But Britannia was different.<sup>64</sup> It was the “first centre to be financed on a city wide” basis and planned in close collaboration with local citizens,<sup>65</sup> who had supported the plan’s financing in a referendum.<sup>66</sup> Its aims were loftier, seeking to become an “opportunity centre” for meeting “community needs.”<sup>67</sup> It would be a place where people could “seek fulfillment and enjoyment ... a focal point for community and neighbourhood services which would encourage local initiative in developing a broad range of programs.”<sup>68</sup> The Britannia concept was premised upon the view “that there exist[ed] within any community a hierarchy of needs and that each of these needs [had] a proximity factor.”<sup>69</sup> This model was consistent with that envisioned in the Hasley Report, as indicated in Figure 1. Britannia Secondary School offered an institutional base for new facilities,<sup>70</sup> and nearby public housing projects provided “a strong case for financial assistance from the senior levels of government,” an important consideration because Grandview-Woodland’s tax base could not support the cost of a new centre.

The Britannia site was *realized* as a development locale through the use of maps that showed the area as having a high “concentration of public housing,” “older houses,” and a “shortage of parks and recreation facilities.” Officials noted that the environs lacked many of the amenities found in other sections of the city, such as a library, health unit, day-care services, and parklands. It also had “no headquarters for social services.”<sup>71</sup> Socio-demographic statistics indicated that the proposed catchment area of the centre had high proportions of low-income residents, people on social assistance, and new immigrants, along with

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Department Fonds, Public Record Series 571, 85-A-7, file 11. See also City of Vancouver, *Report to Joint Technical Committee*.

<sup>63</sup> J.E. Roberts, “Britannia Community Services Centre: Organization and Administrative Study. Interim Report (Draft),” December 1971, CVA, MSS 734, vol. 12, 583-C-2, file 4, 2.

<sup>64</sup> Egan, “Social Planning in Vancouver,” 123.

<sup>65</sup> Roberts, “Britannia Community Services Centre.”

<sup>66</sup> Cooley, “Introduction to Britannia Community Services Centre.”

<sup>67</sup> Roberts, “Britannia Community Services Centre.”

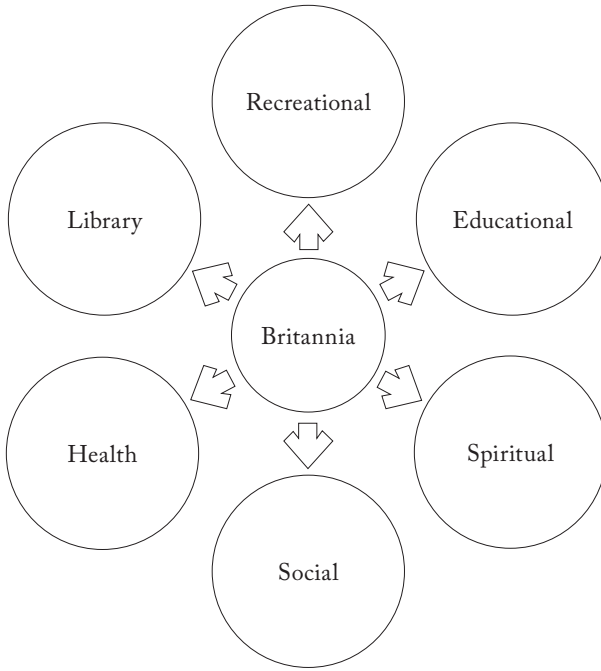
<sup>68</sup> City of Vancouver, *Community Services Centre (Britannia)*; See also, City of Vancouver, *Report to Joint Technical Committee*, 21; and, City of Vancouver, memorandum to Vancouver City Council from Board of Administration.

<sup>69</sup> City of Vancouver, *Report to Joint Technical Committee*, 16.

<sup>70</sup> City of Vancouver, attachment to Selwyn A. Miller, Director, Department of Research and Special Services, to City Mayor, 31 July 1967, CVA, City Social Planning Department Fonds, Public Record Series 571, 85-A-7, file 11; M. Clague, “The Britannia Community Services Centre,” in *Community Work in Canada*, ed. B. Wharf (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1979), 51-86.

<sup>71</sup> City of Vancouver, *Community Services Centre (Britannia)*, 3-4 and 8-9.

FIGURE 1  
*Adaptation of community services centre model depicted in the  
 Hasley Report, 1967*



“excessive unemployment.”<sup>72</sup> A central concern was the “percentage of families on welfare assistance” and the “imperative that programs for young children ... and mothers with pre-school children ... be located in their immediate vicinity.” “Total family participation” was to be promoted, but it was also understood that it might “become necessary to extend certain programs, [such as] adult education for immigrant women, outward from the centre itself into church halls and private homes. The important thing [was] that the integrated programs and services become a vital part of community life and be accepted as such.”<sup>73</sup> Britannia was to be a centre point that would radiate outwards to gather people together towards the common goal of partaking in all aspects of social, cultural, and recreational life in the neighbourhood and beyond.

<sup>72</sup> City of Vancouver, attachment to Selwyn A. Miller to City Mayor; City of Vancouver, *Community Services Centre (Britannia)*, 4; City of Vancouver, *Urban Renewal and Public Housing*, 1.

<sup>73</sup> City of Vancouver, *Report to Joint Technical Committee*, 3-4.

In terms of Grandview-Woodland's *demarcation* as the milieu for the proposed centre, Mayor Tom Campbell stated in a letter to the provincial minister of municipal affairs that the new centre would "be a major factor in the renewal of [this] older area of the City."<sup>74</sup> For her part, McCarthy said that the area could be "classified as a 'depressed area'" that had an "urgency of need" and that the new facilities would "be a big step towards revitalizing a deteriorating section of the city."<sup>75</sup> The key planning document for the centre found that Grandview-Woodland had fewer schools and churches than either the Downtown Eastside or Strathcona, both of which had many more other established agencies as well, including the Kiwassa Neighbourhood House, the St. Vincent's Home and Shelter, and the Salvation Army.<sup>76</sup> In his retrospective of the making of Britannia, Michael Clague notes that officials considered it ill advised to locate the multi-service centre in either of these proximate districts because their local organizations were insufficiently coordinated and were disconnected from "community affairs," an odd observation in relation to Strathcona, which had been so recently the locus of citizen engagement (although perhaps not the kind desired by the city). Grandview-Woodland, conversely, was seen as having the kind of "self-help" street-level milieu city officials sought to nurture.<sup>77</sup> Even though the city hoped for the Downtown Eastside's "eventual elimination" as a "skid road," the City Planning Department saw its predominantly male (80 percent) and unmarried population as void of potential to benefit from the proposed family-oriented centre.<sup>78</sup> However, officials anticipated that residents on the eastern part of Hastings-Sunrise (see Map 1) would avail themselves of Britannia's services.<sup>79</sup>

<sup>74</sup> Letter to Dan Campbell, Minister of Municipal Affairs, from Thomas J. Campbell, Mayor of Vancouver, re: Urban Renewal Scheme (Britannia Community Services Centre), 11 May 1971, City Council and Office of the City Clerk Fonds, Urban Renewal Scheme 3 (Britannia), 1966-71, 142 A, file 8.

<sup>75</sup> Letter to R.K. Andras, Minister of Housing, from G. McCarthy, Minister without Portfolio, re Urban Renewal Scheme No. 3 (Vancouver), 1 August 1969, CVA, City Social Planning Department Fonds, Public Record Series 571, 85-A-7, file 11.

<sup>76</sup> City of Vancouver, *Report to Joint Technical Committee*, 9; M. Clague, "Creating the Britannia Centre: Britannia Community Services Centre, Vancouver: The Formative Years, 1970-1978," Vancouver: Britannia Community Services Centre, 1988), 24.

<sup>77</sup> M. Clague, R. Dill, R. Seebaran, and B. Wharf, *Reforming Human Services: The Experience of Community Resources Boards in BC* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1984), 22.

<sup>78</sup> City of Vancouver, Downtown Eastside (Vancouver: Planning Department, 1965), 18 and postscript.

<sup>79</sup> City of Vancouver, *Report to Joint Technical Committee*, 8; City of Vancouver, *Community Services Centre (Britannia)*, 3; Cooley, "Introduction to Britannia Community Services Centre"; Hasley, "Community Services Centre," 3-4.



TABLE 1  
*Selected new endeavours in the Britannia milieu by date of creation, 1960s and 1970s\**

DATE	ORGANIZATION
1963	Vancouver Indian Centre (former Coqualeetza Fellowship Club)
1969	REACH Community Clinic
1969	British Columbia Association of Non-Status Indians
1970	Raymur Housing Project
1971	Vancouver Mental Patients Association Society (VMPAS)
1974	Britannia Community Services Centre
1974	Success Social Service Centre (SUCCESS)
1975	Pacific Immigrant Resources Society (PIRS)
1976	Kettle Friendship Society (Kettle)
1976	Multilingual Orientation Service Association for Immigrant Communities (MOSAIC)
1977	United Native Nations Society
1979	Eastside Family Place (joins Britannia in 1998)
1979	Raycam Cooperative Centre (emerged from Raymur Housing Project)

\* The significance of the emergence of organizations geared towards indigenous peoples living in the city requires a full analysis that is beyond the scope of this paper. For an insightful discussion of governance issues relating to indigenous peoples in the city see Nicholas Blomley, *Unsettling the City: Urban Land and the Politics of Property* (New York: Routledge, 2004).

The vision for Britannia encapsulated a predominant sentiment expressed by then prime minister Lester B. Pearson, who declared the need to recognize “the human equality of our community development.” Pearson stated:

Surely ways can be found to encourage development of the kind of community units with Neighbourhood Centres in our growing metropolitan and other urban areas which will minimize the pressures of bigness, impersonality and alienation that encourage delinquency, mental illness and other social evils ... The Neighbourhood Centre [should] be designed as much to serve the needs of the mind and the spirit as to provide material convenience.<sup>80</sup>

<sup>80</sup> L.B. Pearson, excerpts from a speech by Prime Minister Lester B. Pearson at Calgary, 29 March 1967, CVA, City Social Planning Department Fonds, Public Record Series 571, 85-A-7, file 11.

Uttering these words in 1967 at a public event in Calgary, Pearson did not mention Leonard Marsh, but the legacy of this central figure in Canada's urban planning discourse was easily recognizable.

Britannia became, in many respects, the architectural symbol of Marsh's ideal community when it opened in 1974. Premised upon a predominant mentality that poverty eradication was integral to the promotion of a democratic civic ideal, the Britannia service milieu was not only conceptually consistent with what Marsh had in mind but was also linked to many of the institutional forms he had promoted, including a health unit set up with a family focus (REACH), schools, recreation facilities, new housing stock (e.g., Raymur Housing Project), and settlement services (MOSAIC, SUCCESS, PIRS) as well as some organizations that he had not talked about, such as mental health services (Kettle, VMPAS) (see Table 1).<sup>81</sup>

Into the early 1980s, urban development funds flowed into Grandview-Woodland. In 1983, it was reported that most of the \$18,182,700 in combined municipal, provincial, and federal funding Vancouver received for neighbourhood renewal went to Britannia, REACH, MOSAIC, and area schools and parks for enhancements and beautifications.<sup>82</sup> By that time, many believed that the area was in the process of gentrifying.<sup>83</sup> Whether or not state funding was quickening gentrification is uncertain. What is clear is that neighbourhood rejuvenation in the Britannia environs was premised upon the desire, to some degree, to promote an environment in which people of all income levels had *common* access to a variety of social, health, and recreational activities as well as opportunities to meaningfully share in decisions affecting the local area as part of a larger engagement with their city, province, and country more generally. Such ideals and the practices to which they were tied were laden with problematic gendered assumptions and spatial exclusions (e.g., the Downtown Eastside), and their egalitarian presuppositions were clearly geared primarily towards economic objectives. Nevertheless, when compared to what would emerge in years to come, as the next section shows, it is easy to understand why some might view these postwar years as a "golden age" of welfare governance.

<sup>81</sup> City of Vancouver, "Non-Market Housing: Inventory, 2009," available at [http://vancouver.ca/nmi\\_wac/nmi.exe](http://vancouver.ca/nmi_wac/nmi.exe) (viewed 19 August 2010).

<sup>82</sup> City of Vancouver, *Neighbourhood Improvement Program Review* (Vancouver: Planning Department), 44-51 and 97.

<sup>83</sup> B. Jackson, "Social Worlds in Transition: Neighbourhood Transition in Grandview-Woodlands" (MA thesis, University of British Columbia, 1984); Ley and Dobson, "Are There Limits?"

## GRANDVIEW-WOODLAND'S NEOLIBERAL TURN

*Realigning the Britannia Milieu: Families, Schools, and Communities*<sup>84</sup>

In British Columbia, the first appearance of ascendant neoliberal political programs followed the 1983 re-election of the Social Credit Party under Premier Bill Bennett. A period of fiscal restraint ensued, which included cuts to programs for families, women, children, and youth as well as to mental and physical disability services.<sup>85</sup> By the early 1990s, the federal government was also embarking upon a massive realignment of its role in wealth redistribution, including the rolling back and ultimate curtailment of CAP, marking the end of an official national poverty-amelioration standard.<sup>86</sup> Even the “left-of-centre” political establishment showed it was embracing neoliberal mentalities when, for instance, as reported by the *Vancouver Sun* on 22 September 1993, the then New Democratic Party premier, Michael Harcourt, declared an assault on “welfare cheats and deadbeats.”<sup>87</sup> But retrenchment took on an entirely different hue after the 2001 election of Liberal premier Gordon Campbell. The unprecedented changes that followed left no doubt: Keynesian mentalities were dead.<sup>88</sup>

Neoliberal political programs were not framed in obvious spatial terms, although often they were launched amid a rhetorical cloud about the importance of “communities.” But, as Osborne and Rose remind us, political plans, like “all social and cultural thought[,] presuppose ... a way of spatializing [their] objects even when that is not made explicit.”<sup>89</sup> We can decipher the implicit ways that poverty and local space were modelled, realized, and demarcated by drawing upon in situ knowledge. To this end, in 2004 and 2005, a researcher who lived in the neighbourhood and was affiliated with the Social Planning and Research Council of British Columbia interviewed twenty-seven people identified as having historical knowledge of Britannia’s changing human-service

<sup>84</sup> This subsection builds upon my earlier work, “Urban Poverty and Spatialized Governmentalities in Vancouver: A Study of Grandview-Woodland,” *Transdisciplinary Studies in Population Health Series* 2, 2 (2010): 98–111.

<sup>85</sup> J. Rekart, *Voluntary Sector Social Services in the 1980s* (Vancouver: Social Planning and Research Council of British Columbia, 1988), 9.

<sup>86</sup> Battle, “Transformation,” 331.

<sup>87</sup> T.J. Barnes and T. Hutton, “Situating the New Economy: Contingencies of Regeneration and Dislocation in Vancouver’s Inner City,” *Urban Studies* 46, 5–6 (2009): 1247–69; Caledon Institute of Social Policy, *A New Era in British Columbia: A Profile of Budget Cuts across Social Programs* (Ottawa: Caledon Institute of Social Policy, 2002).

<sup>88</sup> G.W. Roe, “Fixed in Place: Vancouver’s Downtown Eastside and the Community of Clients,” *BC Studies* 165 (2009/10): 75–103; J. Wilson, “For the Birds? Neoliberalism and the Protection of Biodiversity in British Columbia,” *BC Studies* 142/43 (2004): 241–77.

<sup>89</sup> Osborne and Rose, “Spatial Phenomenotechnics,” 213.

milieu. Research participants were asked open-ended questions about predominant street-level alterations. Interviewees offered information that exposed facets of less visible micro-level transformations, critical moments of change, and predominant processes. Participants shared resources and “grey” data (such as minutes of meetings, pamphlets, posters, etc.) and gave feedback on preliminary findings. A total of seventeen people associated, at some stage, with official organizations, such as community workers, public servants, and political activists, participated in the study. Ten area residents who had direct experience with local programs and services were also interviewed. Participant selection began with a conspicuous sampling method, whereby individuals known to be active in or to have knowledge of neighbourhood services, particularly those with historical knowledge, were deliberately chosen. The interview list expanded through a snowball sampling technique, whereby each person interviewed provided the names of people whom she or he felt fit the key informant selection criteria. Contributors were guaranteed confidentiality and privacy. Stringent reporting techniques provided an interview context conducive to candour in situations in which frankness might have negatively affected an individual’s professional relationships or access to services. To guard against revealing the identities of interviewees, an alphanumeric coding system was used to distinguish interview group A (i.e., people occupying official positions [Interview A<sub>1</sub>, A<sub>2</sub>, etc.]) from interview group B (i.e., people on the receiving end of services [Interview B<sub>1</sub>, B<sub>2</sub>, etc.]).

Research interviews underscore that the three pillars upon which Britannia had been built – families, schools, and communities – had radically altered by the new millennium. Public provisions to reduce poverty had given way to a growing stress on individual responsibility for one’s own economic welfare. Even for families with young children, this point was made clear. In 2001, the year that Gordon Campbell formed his Liberal government in British Columbia, Census Canada data showed that Grandview-Woodland had, proportionately, more parents raising children “on-their-own” than was found in the city as a whole (26.4 percent compared to 17 percent).<sup>90</sup> At that time, just below 38 percent of Grandview-Woodland’s population had incomes below the “poverty line.”<sup>91</sup> It was against this backdrop that the Campbell

<sup>90</sup> City of Vancouver, Grandview-Woodland Demographic Profile, available at [www.justwork.ca/pdfs/](http://www.justwork.ca/pdfs/) (viewed 21 November 2010).

<sup>91</sup> H.V. Barbolet, V. Cuddeford, F. Jeffries, H. Korstad, S. Kurbis, S. Mark, C. Miewald, and F. Moreland, “Vancouver Food System Assessment,” research paper prepared for Western Economic Diversification Canada in Partnership with the City of Vancouver’s Department of

government imposed new restrictions on income assistance, requiring parents to enter the paid workforce if their youngest child was three years of age or older. The cut off had previously been seven years of age.<sup>92</sup> The government also lacerated the fabric of subsidized childcare spaces. The impact of these cuts was palpable in the work of Britannia-area institutions – institutions that were created to cater to families raising children. A study of thirteen east end organizations conducted by the City of Vancouver found that, from April to December 2002, the number of subsidized spots had been reduced from 895 to 580 – a 35 percent drop. Most of these cuts were in the preschool category, which saw a reduction over the period from 253 to 30 allotments – a 76 percent drop. In assessing the overall reductions to subsidies, the city's director of social planning stated:

Overall, what the information tells us is that child care programs are in a very vulnerable position. Many low and moderate income families have had to either withdraw their children from child care or have given up trying to access licensed child care and have turned to the unregulated sector. While some programs have been able to fill spaces with full fee-paying families, creating a two tier system; others, particularly those in the east side of Vancouver, are struggling with low enrollment, staff layoffs and the threat of closures.<sup>93</sup>

These dramatic alterations can be understood as part of a broader shift in the definition of the “normal” family. Raising children was being reframed as a lifestyle option rather than as an integral part of the social fabric to be shored up through public policy. More than ever since the postwar zenith of welfare programs, workers and their families were expected to provide for their own health and well-being through paid employment. This ideal of autonomy hinged on eradicating dependency on public income assistance. It did not seem to matter that, for many families, self-sufficiency through employment would mean low incomes

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Social Planning, Simon Fraser University's Centre for Sustainable Community Development, and the Environmental Youth Alliance, 2005, 19 and 23, available at [vancouver.ca/commsvcs/.../foodpolicy/tools/pdf/vanfoodassessrpt.pdf](http://vancouver.ca/commsvcs/.../foodpolicy/tools/pdf/vanfoodassessrpt.pdf) (viewed 23 June 2010).

<sup>92</sup> M. Young and S. Day, “Women in British Columbia: Human Rights Under Attack,” paper prepared for the Poverty and Human Rights Centre and submitted to the United Nations Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (2006), 19, available at [www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/cescr/docs/info-ngos/povertyHRCenter.pdf](http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/cescr/docs/info-ngos/povertyHRCenter.pdf) (viewed 10 August 2010).

<sup>93</sup> Memorandum from Jeff Brooks, Director of Social Planning, to Mayor and Council, re subsidy impacts on childcare, 19 February 2003, available at <http://vancouver.ca/ctyclerk/cclerk/20030327/csb6.htm> (viewed 19 August 2010).

and poverty just the same.<sup>94</sup> Mothers raising children “on-their-own” were particularly visible in these mentalities due to their overrepresentation among families obtaining public assistance.<sup>95</sup> Over the course of the 1990s, this visibility made it possible for “single mothers” to be demonized by many observers, and all the while family poverty in all of its forms was becoming normalized, defined in the main as beyond the legitimate scope of public support. Thus, in 2008, Prime Minister Stephen Harper could declare, “no one is for child poverty,” without feeling compelled to explain why governments should not be at the forefront of obliterating it.<sup>96</sup> From the vantage of the street in Grandview-Woodland, we begin to comprehend how such a remark could be made without any hint of shame and in a tone that was not remotely apologetic. Harper uttered his words well after poverty had taken on more extreme forms for many families, well after it had been naturalized as a policy field that could be both observed and acknowledged without any general public expectation that it was a public calamity with which to reckon.

Towards the end of the twentieth-century, even as the former executive director of Britannia, Michael Clague, claimed that Britannia’s “secondary school had developed a solid reputation . . . for scholarship, particularly in the maths and sciences,”<sup>97</sup> the role of local schools was on the verge of major change. Particularly during the 1990s, there were reductions in special needs and English as a second language (ESL) programs as well as in psychological, social work, and public health services.<sup>98</sup> In a dramatic turn, public health nurses became immunization functionaries, where they had once also played a crucial educational role.<sup>99</sup> It was in this context that The Fraser Institute, a right-wing think tank, began, in 1998, publishing school rankings that identified Britannia-area schools as below average on educational scores. Britannia schools were also shown to be above average on the number of students with ESL

<sup>94</sup> A. Jackson, “Wage Supplements for Working-Poor Women,” in *Public Policy for Women: The State, Income Security, and Labour Market Issues*, ed. M.G. Cohen and J. Pulkingham (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2009), 299.

<sup>95</sup> For a discussion on shifting mentalities regarding “single mothers,” see K. Murray, “Governmentality and the Shifting Winds of Policy Studies,” in *Critical Public Policy: Canadian Perspectives*, ed. M. Smith and M. Orsini (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2007), 161–84. See also J. Mosher, “Welfare Reform and the Re-Making of the Model Citizen,” in *Poverty, Rights, Social Citizenship and Legal Activism*, ed. M. Young, S.B. Boyd, and S. Day (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2007), 128.

<sup>96</sup> Canada, House of Commons Debates, 24 November 2009, 116 (Mr. Stephen Harper).

<sup>97</sup> Clague, *Creating the Britannia Centre*, 180.

<sup>98</sup> Interviews A2 and A4.

<sup>99</sup> Interview A1.

and special needs,<sup>100</sup> which is perhaps not surprising because the City of Vancouver was encouraging newcomers to settle in service-“rich” districts, such as Grandview-Woodland (although The Fraser Institute offered no such context in its reports).<sup>101</sup> Images of them being milieus of disadvantage (including racialized assumptions associated with ESL rankings) no doubt had a major effect on Britannia-area schools when, after 2002, the Campbell government began allowing parents greater choice in determining where their children would attend public schools.<sup>102</sup> Parents who regarded Britannia schools as “dis”amenities no longer had a strong incentive to fight for improvements to schools in their neighbourhoods.<sup>103</sup> They could now simply vote with their feet, and many did just that as significant student outmigration followed. Theoretically, all parents had equal choice; however, in reality, lower-income and new immigrant parents would be less likely to have the means (e.g., knowledge, transportation, money, etc.) to place their children in the top-ranked schools, many of which were located on the west side of the city.<sup>104</sup> That the provincial government stripped school districts of their property tax-raising authority and centralized school governance was further evidence that schools were officially no longer regarded as an integral part of the local neighbourhood as they had been, for instance, when the Britannia Centre had first been set up.

Britannia-area non-profit, philanthropic, and voluntary organizations were also realigning. Here the impact of psychiatric patient deinstitutionalization was highly significant. Beginning in the 1980s and into the 1990s, following a widespread North American valorization of community-based care,<sup>105</sup> the provincial government slashed the number of beds at Riverview Hospital, British Columbia’s main psychiatric facility. Following this, there was an onslaught of “predominantly middle-aged patients migrat[ing] to the low-cost single-room occupancy

<sup>100</sup> Fraser Institute, “Schools Report: British Columbia. Vancouver,” available at <http://www.fraserinstitute.org/reportcards/schoolperformance/britishcolumbia.htm> (viewed 19 August 2010).

<sup>101</sup> City of Vancouver, *Newcomers Guide* (2002), available at <http://vancouver.ca/commsvcs/socialplanning/newtovancouver/part3/community.htm> (viewed 19 August 2010).

<sup>102</sup> G. Fallon and J. Paquette, “Devolution, Choice, and Accountability in the Provision of Public Education in British Columbia: A Critical Analysis of the School Amendment Act of 2002 (Bill 34),” *Canadian Journal of Educational Administration and Policy* 75 (2008): 1-34.

<sup>103</sup> Ley and Dobson, “Are There Limits?” 2490.

<sup>104</sup> J. Malcolmson, “Another Year of Funding Restraint for Schools?” *Finance Watch* (CUPE Newsletter) 1, 1 (2005): 1, available at <http://222.cupe.bc.ca> (viewed 21 November 2010); J. Malcolmson, “Privatization Threat Looms Over K-12,” *Finance Watch* (CUPE Newsletter) 2, 3 (2006): 1-2, available at <http://222.cupe.bc.ca> (viewed 21 November 2010).

<sup>105</sup> M.J. Dear and J.D. Wolch, *Landscapes of Despair: From Deinstitutionalization to Homelessness* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987).

... hotels in the Downtown Eastside.”<sup>106</sup> These dynamics reverberated into Grandview-Woodland, where homelessness, addictions, and other forms of disadvantage became more visible.<sup>107</sup> As elsewhere, public funds to local agencies were not reallocated in a manner commensurate with the magnitude of change.<sup>108</sup> Coping with this new context, street-level agencies began focusing more on service provision and less on their civic-minded beginnings.

The newly predominant competitive contract environment also reoriented the roles of street-level agencies. Similar to what anthropologist Gordon Roe found in his study of the Downtown Eastside, and as many others have found with respect to wider trends,<sup>109</sup> a shift took shape in Grandview-Woodland as many “extra-state” organizations moved away from offering supplemental services complementing public programs towards providing core services under short-term contingent contracts. Small- and medium-sized non-profit entities, such as those that predominated in the Britannia area, were most affected.<sup>110</sup> Across Grandview-Woodland, long-established professional and institutional ties frayed.<sup>111</sup> Inter-agency tensions intensified in the race for funding. There were job losses,<sup>112</sup> public servant reassignments, and people abandoning their positions in the face of dropping morale.<sup>113</sup> Recruiting volunteers became more difficult. Previously, many parents (mostly mothers) on social assistance worked in local agencies as volunteers. Now, with many more parents with young children expected to enter the paid labour force, drop-in and child-minding programs in Grandview-Woodland

<sup>106</sup> M. Mason, “Collaborative Partnerships for Urban Development: A Study of the Vancouver Agreement,” *Environment and Planning A* 39 (2007): 2369; A. Read, “Psychiatric Deinstitutionalization in BC: Negative Consequences and Possible Solutions,” *UBC Medical Journal* 1, 1 (2009): 25-26.

<sup>107</sup> Grandview-Woodland Drug and Alcohol Coalition, “Alcohol and Drug Resources,” n.d. available at <http://underoneumbrella.net/wp-content/uploads/Community-Lines-news38E959.pdf> (viewed 27 February 2011).

<sup>108</sup> Read, “Psychiatric Deinstitutionalization in BC.”

<sup>109</sup> Roe, “Fixed in Place.” See also B. Evans, T. Richmond, and J. Shields, “Structuring Neoliberal Governance: The Nonprofit Sector, Emerging New Modes of Control and the Marketization of Service Delivery,” *Policy and Society* 24, 1 (2005): 76; J. Laville, B. Levesque, and M. Mendell, “The Social Economy: Diverse Approaches and Practices in Europe and Canada,” in *Social Economy: Building Inclusive Economies*, ed. A. Noya and E. Clarence (Paris: Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2007), 166; J. Rekart, *Public Funds, Private Provision: The Role of the Voluntary Sector* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1993); J. Rekart, *The Transformation of the Voluntary Sector: From Grassroots to Shadow State* (Vancouver: Social Planning and Research Council of British Columbia, 1997).

<sup>110</sup> S. Carter, “Nonprofit Organizations in Tough Times: The View from Ground Level,” *Philanthropist* 23, 1 (2010): 75.

<sup>111</sup> Interviews A2-A6, A10, and A12.

<sup>112</sup> Interviews A9 and A10.

<sup>113</sup> Interviews A4 and A7.



had to offer services with fewer contributions of unpaid labour.<sup>114</sup> The growing prevalence of violent and volatile situations fostered by the increase of psychiatric issues in the Britannia area also dissuaded many would-be volunteers.<sup>115</sup>

From 1994 to 1997, Britannia officials rallied agencies behind a plan entitled “The Community Place: The Integrated Services Delivery Centre Project.” The plan articulated an objective akin to that upon which the area’s local institutions had been first assembled:

Picture a place where, at one location, you can obtain health, education, social, cultural, library and recreation services. It’s a place where teams of people from different community agencies work together to provide programs and services in response to community priorities as identified by local residents. It’s a gathering place; where people who live or work in the area discuss and debate community issues, and make plans for community celebrations ... where personal health is directly linked to the health of the community.<sup>116</sup>

This effort failed. Busy scrambling for their institutional survival, organizations had little time to pursue the hope of maintaining local traditions and practices, which, by then, were already fractured if not completely broken.<sup>117</sup>

When, in 2008, city council placed Britannia on a “path of renewal,” statistics showed Grandview-Woodland had not only a “high number of low-income families” but also the “highest rate of children in the bottom ten percent for social competence, emotional maturity, language and cognitive development, and physical health and well-being.”<sup>118</sup> In the City of Vancouver’s 2005 budget, the district was called one “of the poorest communities in Canada.” By then, “basic needs” programs, including “food, shelter and clothing,” had become integral parts of Britannia’s mandate.<sup>119</sup> And yet, among all areas in the city, Grandview-Woodland was depicted as having the most pressing demands for shelters for the

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<sup>114</sup> Interview A10.

<sup>115</sup> Interviews A4, A6, and A9.

<sup>116</sup> Integrated Services Delivery Centre Project, “The Community Place,” report submitted to the Britannia Board of Management, August 1996.

<sup>117</sup> Interviews A4 and A6.

<sup>118</sup> HIPPY Canada, “HIPPY Canada Start Up Manual, Revised,” (2010) available at <http://www.hippycanada.ca/setupasite.php> (viewed 23 June 2010).

<sup>119</sup> City of Vancouver, 2005 *Budget*, 176, available at <http://vancouver.ca/fs/budgetServices/pdf/2005BudgetFinal.pdf> (viewed 19 August 2010).

homeless and an urgent need for drop-in spaces and food relief services.<sup>120</sup> The original model of the Britannia Centre had ceased to exist.

### *The Vancouver Agreement and the Reframing of East End Space*

In 1995, city council adopted CityPlan as a “framework for deciding City programs, priorities, and actions over the next 20 years.” CityPlan contained “directions on a range of topics, from transportation to arts, housing to community services.” In 1997, as part of CityPlan, the city embarked upon a community visions program to encourage local neighbourhoods to devise long-term, area-specific plans. “Neighbourhood centres” were proposed as a way to fashion a “public heart” in specific geographic settings “where people [could] find shops, jobs, and services close to home; where there [were] safe and inviting public places.” Initially, eight locales were slated for neighbourhood centres, but by 2009, twenty areas fell under CityPlan’s catchment, although just two had seen any concrete action.<sup>121</sup> CityPlan excluded the Marpole and Oakridge areas located on the very south end of the city (see Map 1). It also excluded the Downtown Eastside, Strathcona, and the Britannia section of Grandview-Woodland.<sup>122</sup>

Left out of CityPlan, the Britannia portion of Grandview-Woodland, the Downtown Eastside, and Strathcona were brought under the remit of the Vancouver Agreement, a high-profile example of one of several attempts in Canada since the early 1980s to coordinate urban partnerships between governments, businesses, and community organizations in areas marked by high levels of disadvantage.<sup>123</sup> By 2009, over the then lifespan of the agreement, a plethora of public-private partnerships and programs, across multiple planes and domains, and including “more than 70 projects funded through almost 50 different organizations,”

<sup>120</sup> City of Vancouver, memorandum from Managing Director of Social Development to Vancouver City Council, re 2010 winter homeless response (2009), 4, available at <http://vancouver.ca/ctyclerk/cclerk/20091215/documents/a15.pdf> (viewed 21 June 2010).

<sup>121</sup> City of Vancouver, *Neighbourhood Centre Delivery Program Terms of Reference*, City Council, Community Service Group, City Plans (2002), available at <http://vancouver.ca/commsvcs/planning/neighcentres/pdf/ncdptor.pdf> (viewed 21 June 2010); City of Vancouver, *Issues and Opportunities Paper, Appendix A, Vision Implementation Program Review: November 2008–December 2009* (2009), available at <http://vancouver.ca/commsvcs/planning/cityplan/Visions/review/index.htm> (viewed 15 August 2010).

<sup>122</sup> The northern part of Grandview-Woodland was folded into the adjacent Hastings-Sunrise’s (see Map 1) Community Visions planning process.

<sup>123</sup> Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, *The Promise of Investment in Community-Led Renewal: State of the Inner City Report – 2005* (Winnipeg: Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, 2005).

had been joined to the agreement,<sup>124</sup> although not always in a durable sense, as discussed below.

The Vancouver Agreement *modelled* poverty and local space in relation to an ideal of the safe, healthy, and sustainable community, where “all organizations from informal groups to governments” work “effectively together to improve the quality of everyone’s life” both “now and in the future.”<sup>125</sup> Unsustainable places, by contrast, were settings where businesses, visitors, and people higher up the economic ladder would not want to live, generally places characterized by disorder, disease, and decline. Disorder, disease, and decline hindered what the Vancouver Agreement treated as a key component of sustainability: population diversity. This “ethic of diversity” included not only “multicultural” and “multi-linguistic” differences but also distinctions along economic lines.<sup>126</sup> As a statement developed as part of the Vancouver Agreement’s planning process illustrates: “*The community continues to include and support lower-income individuals and families, and people who require specialized services for mental illness and addiction. It should also be open to new people, lifestyles and businesses*” (emphasis in original).<sup>127</sup> The motto of “revitalization without displacement” captures these sentiments.<sup>128</sup> While a regulated form of economic development and gentrification would be a crucial part of urban renewal, the agreement aimed to ensure a residential mix by creating housing for “at risk” groups, such as “street entrenched youth,” “people with addictions and mental health issues,” “hotel residents” (i.e., people living in single room occupancy accommodations), and the “long term unemployed.”<sup>129</sup>

The Vancouver Agreement described the Downtown Eastside in particular as a place with “a well-developed tradition and network of support for low income and less advantaged people.”<sup>130</sup> This depiction valorized community services – charities, non-profits, and voluntary

<sup>124</sup> Vancouver Agreement, Schedule A, 4 and 8. Quote from “History,” available at <http://www.vancouveragreement.ca/history/> (viewed 2 September 2010).

<sup>125</sup> Vancouver Agreement.

<sup>126</sup> On the idea of the “ethic of diversity,” see M. Valverde, “The Ethic of Diversity: Local Law and the Negotiation of Urban Norms,” *Law and Social Inquiry* 33, 4 (2008): 895-923; Vancouver Agreement, *ibid.*, n. 133, Schedule A, 10.

<sup>127</sup> “History” (see n. 124).

<sup>128</sup> City of Vancouver, Planning Department, *10 Years of Downtown Eastside Revitalization: A Backgrounder* (2009), available at <http://www.vancouver.ca/commsvcs/planning/dtes> (viewed 21 November 2010); “Safety and Security Projects,” available at <http://www.vancouveragreement.ca/projects-safety-security/> (viewed 24 June 2010).

<sup>129</sup> Fast Track to Employment Website, available at <http://www.dtes.ca/fte/board.htm> (viewed 23 June 2010); Vancouver Agreement, “Integrated Strategic Plan,” available at <http://www.vancouveragreement.ca> (viewed 21 November 2010).

<sup>130</sup> Vancouver Agreement, Schedule A, 5.

entities – and, in some sense, naturalized the inequalities to which they catered. For such agencies to be “well-developed” they necessarily required an equally well-established poverty setting. But the agreement sought to work collaboratively with local organizations to address poverty in new ways, as the following quote indicates:

The neighbourhood economic and social development component ... aims to reduce poverty and increase the self-reliance of the community by creating an economy that is capable of sustaining the needs and aspirations of the community. These actions may span a continuum: meeting basic needs, overcoming barriers, and building skills. They might also focus on such things as attracting new business and business expansion, empowering the community, creating local employment and training, and community enterprise development and investment, in a manner consistent with the principles of this agreement.<sup>131</sup>

Poverty, in other words, would be addressed by working on the aspirations and competencies of individuals through community agencies in the interest of economic development. That neither schools nor families nor parents, mothers, fathers, or even heads-of-households were mentioned in the agreement was indicative of the central target: locally situated individuals, be they “men, women [or] children.”<sup>132</sup>

In large measure, the Vancouver Agreement *realized* the east end as a problem space in terms of bio-statistical and geographical information system data. Such data revealed an acute health crisis centred in the Downtown Eastside in the mid-1990s. Local planners regarded the situation, marked by a “high incidence of mental illness, drug addiction and HIV within the local population,” as too exceptional for CityPlan. Planners favoured integrating what would come to be known as the “four pillars strategy” into a stand-alone urban agreement. The four pillars were “prevention, treatment, enforcement and harm reduction activities,” which in their combined effect were to address “community economic and social development.”<sup>133</sup> Prevention, treatment, and enforcement were not new ideas, but harm reduction was. Harm reduction stresses avoidance of “harm to individuals and communities from the sale and use of both legal and illegal substances.”<sup>134</sup> This emphasis is

<sup>131</sup> Ibid., Schedule A, 8.

<sup>132</sup> Ibid., Schedule A, 5.

<sup>133</sup> Mason, “Collaborative Partnerships,” 2369–70.

<sup>134</sup> City of Vancouver, “Four Pillars Drug Strategy: Harm Reduction Fact Sheet” (2008), available at [http://vancouver.ca/fourpillars/fs\\_harmreduction.htm](http://vancouver.ca/fourpillars/fs_harmreduction.htm) (viewed 21 June 2010).

not about treatment but about management of addictions and their harshest ramifications – death and disorder. The four principles had already taken hold in the Downtown Eastside under the rubric of the Crime Prevention through Social Development Project (later renamed the Downtown Eastside Community Development Project), funded in 1999 by a \$5 million federal grant and co-sponsored by the city council and the Vancouver Coalition of Crime Prevention and Drug Treatment (later renamed the Four Pillars Coalition). Health Canada was also collaborating on the project. After negotiations among various parties, the urban development model was embraced, the four pillars strategy adopted, and the Vancouver Agreement signed.<sup>135</sup>

The geographical purview of the Vancouver Agreement *demarcated* the east end in new ways. Scholars, policy observers, political officials, and the media routinely depicted the agreement as a Downtown Eastside concern, almost as if this east end administrative unit were hermetically sealed. But the agreement's official scope encompassed a much wider geographical space, the "Downtown Eastside *Communities*" (emphasis added), comprised of the Downtown Eastside, Strathcona, and parts of Downtown.<sup>136</sup> On the surface, it appeared as though Grandview-Woodland were excluded, but the agreement allowed incremental expansion "to those communities in the City of Vancouver where addressing specific issues [would] enhance the work currently underway, and/or [would] lead to more effective achievement of the strategic goals."<sup>137</sup> This proviso was easy to effect over the three east end districts of the Downtown Eastside, Grandview-Woodland, and Strathcona. Both Vancouver Coastal Health and the Vancouver Police Department (VPD), at the apex of the agreement's health and safety (e.g., management of disease and disorder) objectives, respectively, treated the Downtown Eastside, Grandview-Woodland, and Strathcona as a single governance entity.<sup>138</sup> Day-to-day interactions also blurred the lines between the three districts. Forty-five percent of Britannia's patrons came from the

<sup>135</sup> Mason, "Collaborative Partnerships," 2370.

<sup>136</sup> Vancouver Agreement. Map-making in the Downtown Eastside has been highly politicized. See N. Blomley and J. Sommers, "Mapping Urban Space: Governmentality and Cartographic Struggles in Inner City Vancouver," in *Governable Places: Readings on Governmentality and Crime Control*, ed. R. Smandych (Aldershot: Dartmouth Publishing, 1998), 261–286.

<sup>137</sup> Vancouver Agreement, 5.

<sup>138</sup> Vancouver Coastal Health, "Local Health Areas," available at <http://www.bcstats.gov.bc.ca/data/pop/maps/hsda.asp> (viewed 21 June 2010); Vancouver Police Department, "Operations Division," available at <http://vancouver.ca/police/organization/operations/patrol-districts/district-two/index.html> (viewed 21 June 2010).

Downtown Eastside and Strathcona,<sup>139</sup> and most high school students in the Downtown Eastside attended Britannia High School.<sup>140</sup> Organizationally straddling Grandview-Woodland and Strathcona, Britannia fell within the agreement's official "first focus." What this shows is that the Vancouver Agreement was not an exceptional response for an exceptional place; rather, it was a mainstream strategy that cast a wide governmental net across the entire east end.

### *Making Space for Abject Persons*

The Vancouver Agreement modelled, realized, and demarcated a link between poverty and local space, but, apart from its call for new governance strategies to address disease, disorder, and decline, it was not a unified statement about the types of interventions needed to address these issues. The latter would be configured at the local level, in relation to local knowledge about local needs. Marsh, of course, had twinned his vision of poverty to concrete institutional forms and symbols: families, schools, and community agencies that, for him, were vital to civic morale. The early years of the new millennium, however, formed a historical moment that lacked a dominant articulation about how particular local spaces and undertakings aligned with broader conceptualizations of poverty. This void can be explained by the fluidity of the times.<sup>141</sup> There was no stable apparatus, such as a "welfare state," whereby "heterogeneous elements ... work[ed] in multiple domains." Britannia-area services remained intertwined with some relatively stable entities, such as the municipal, provincial, and federal governments, but in new ways that lacked what anthropologist Paul Rabinow calls a "structured apparatus" meant to last. Britannia's setting now had, instead, "emergent assemblages" that were often fleeting. Assemblages such as these stood "in a dependent but contingent and unpredictable relationship to ... grander problematizations," such as those set out in the Vancouver Agreement; even the agreement proved ephemeral, as the signatories did not renew it in 2010. The analysis to follow seeks to identify such assemblages "in an environment that [was] partially

<sup>139</sup> *Annual General Report of the Britannia Society* (Vancouver: Britannia Community Services Centre, 2009), 3.

<sup>140</sup> City of Vancouver, 2005/2006 *Downtown Eastside Community Monitoring Report*, 10th ed. (2006), 34, available at <http://vancouver.ca/commsvcs/planning/dtes/pdf/2006MR.pdf> (viewed 19 August 2010).

<sup>141</sup> Z. Bauman, *Liquid Times: Living in an Age of Uncertainty* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2007).

TABLE 2  
*Selected endeavours in the Britannia milieu by date of creation, 1981–2008*

DATE	ORGANIZATION
1981	Greater Vancouver Food Bank Society
1990	Quest Food Exchange
1992	Canada Action Program for Children (CAP-C)
1994	Grandview Community Policing Centre
1998	HIPPY Britannia
2001	Fast Track to Employment
2001	Us Moms Community Projects
2003	Insite
2004	Grandview-Woodland Drug and Alcohol Coalition
2004	Grandview-Woodland Food Connection
2008	Under One Umbrella
2008	Vancouver Community Court

composed of apparatuses and partially of other elements (such as institutions, symbols, and the like).<sup>142</sup>

The early years of the twenty-first century marked the first time since the early 1970s that the Britannia milieu was targeted for major official planning efforts (albeit hidden behind dominant images of the Vancouver Agreement as a Downtown Eastside undertaking). As early as the 1980s, however, the objectives and forms of street-level services were beginning to alter. Table 2 highlights landmark institutional innovations established physically nearby or relating closely to the Britannia service setting. These were distinctive in their aims and techniques, and, in various ways, at various times and for various durations, each new entity was linked to the Vancouver Agreement.

The idea that French philosopher Gilles Deleuze frames as “control societies” offers a useful lens for interpreting the seemingly disparate fields over which these new institutional forms emerged.<sup>143</sup> In his adaptation of Deleuze’s ideas, neo-Foucauldian scholar Nikolas Rose explains that control societies seek to “modulate” the “flows and transactions between

<sup>142</sup> P. Rabinow, *Anthropos Today: Reflections on Modern Equipment* (Princeton/Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2003), 56.

<sup>143</sup> G. Deleuze, *Negotiations* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1992).

the forces and capacities of the human subject and the practices in which he or she participates.” The “control of conduct” becomes “immanent to all the spaces in which deviation could occur, inscribed into the dynamics of the practices to which human beings are connected.”<sup>144</sup>

The novel undertakings emerging in Vancouver’s east end operated as a network of control strategies. We can see this by separating them out for analytical purposes along a continuum of aims and techniques. As depicted in Figure 2, three objectives are apparent, each of which is tied to specific governmental techniques: (1) the physical removal of people (arrest/coercion), (2) the reinforcement of civil norms (subsistence provisions and harm reduction services), and (3) the redirection of individual conduct (employment and parental skills training). In some senses, these control mechanisms are consistent with the concept of the “service-dependent ghetto” developed by geographers Michael Dear and Jennifer Wolch. Service-dependent ghettos are de facto segregated places that attract abject persons because they have a modicum of human services.<sup>145</sup> The effects of neoliberal political programs in Grandview-Woodland have aspects of service-dependent ghetto dynamics; however, as the Vancouver Agreement makes clear, and as a closer examination of the emerging street-level control strategies also attests, the segregation idea is insufficient. In Vancouver’s east end, a new poverty-local mentality was surfacing that was premised upon the assumption that wealth and poverty could be made to live happily together, in close geographical proximity.

*Reinforcement* refers to efforts to legitimize charitable, non-profit, and voluntary – “community” – services providing for the basic necessities of life as a new civil norm for abject persons. Subsistence resources proliferated in Grandview-Woodland. Food, clothing, showers, lockers, laundry facilities, and various other in-kind resources took on a growing centrality.<sup>146</sup> The importance of subsistence approaches was brought into sharp relief in a *Province* news item dated 6 July 2006, which reported that a pamphlet was being distributed in Grandview-Woodland instructing people in “dumpster diving” as a technique for finding food. The article claimed that the Grandview-Woodland Food Connection

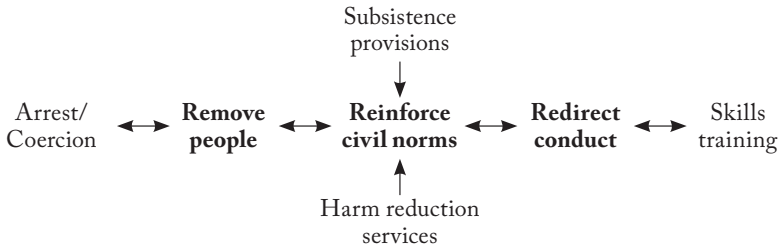
<sup>144</sup> N. Rose, *Powers of Freedom: Reframing Political Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 234.

<sup>145</sup> See Dear and Wolch, *Landscapes of Despair*, chap. 2.

<sup>146</sup> M. Hudspith and D. MacFarlane, “Grandview-Woodlands Community Health Centre project: Phase 1 – Consumer/Client Consultation on Building Design,” unpublished report prepared for Vancouver Coastal Health (2005), 8; Interview A1; Strathcona Research Group, “Identifying Drug and Alcohol Issues and Solutions in Grandview-Woodlands,” unpublished report submitted to the Grandview-Woodlands Drug and Alcohol Coalition (2006).



FIGURE 2  
*Diagram of Grandview-Woodland's governance system for object persons in the early years of the new millennium*



prepared the flyer with financial support from Britannia and Vancouver Coastal Health, the latter a key Vancouver Agreement partner. While the phenomenon of dumpster diving is considered by some to be an act of resistance,<sup>147</sup> in this case it was far from the policy “fringe.” These subsistence strategies were tied to conventional governance objectives and mainstream governmental structures.

Subsistence interventions had a predominant symbol: food relief.<sup>148</sup> Food relief in Vancouver encompassed many variants, including food banks, soup kitchens, community kitchens, and community gardens, most of which were clustered in the Downtown Eastside.<sup>149</sup> Vancouver’s first food bank, the Greater Vancouver Food Bank Society (GVFBS), emerged the same year as Canada’s first, which was set up in Edmonton in 1981. At that time, few doubted that the need for “emergency food relief” would be short-lived. Instead, food insecurity exploded and food relief became fully institutionalized.<sup>150</sup> The Quest Food Exchange (Quest) was established in 1990 and like the GVFBS is a key food service organization in the city’s east end. Each of these umbrella entities works collaboratively with street-level agencies, facilitating food collection, financial donations, and food redistribution. Both reinforce the salience of

<sup>147</sup> I am indebted to York University graduate Krisy Moore for this insight. See for instance Jeff Shantz, “One Person’s Garbage ... Another Person’s Treasure: Dumpster Diving, Freeganism, and Anarchy,” *VERB*, 3, 1 (2005): 9–19.

<sup>148</sup> For an analysis of the shifting contours of food relief governance in Vancouver, see Wendy Mendes, “Negotiating a Place for ‘Sustainability’ Policies in Municipal Planning and Governance: The Role of Scalar Discourses and Practices,” *Space and Polity* 11, 1 (2007): 95–119.

<sup>149</sup> Barbolet et al., “Vancouver Food System Assessment,” 6, 19, and 23.

<sup>150</sup> G. Riches, *Food Banks and the Welfare Crisis* (Ottawa: Canadian Council on Social Development, 1986); “Receiving Food,” Greater Vancouver Food Bank Society, available at <http://www.foodbank.bc.ca/main/?receivingFood> (viewed 23 June 2010).

locality in the provision of food. The GVFBS requires that people disclose their place of residence in order to obtain information about the nearest food depot. Quest assesses eligibility by insisting that individuals contact their local agency and obtain a letter of referral. No doubt insufficient resources produced such policies. Nevertheless, people seeking food assistance have little option but to place their subsistence requirements at the behest of the system – a system that, by design and effect, reinforces the link between poverty and local space.<sup>151</sup>

Many front-line food providers operate outside of the major food re-distribution system, springing up to address specific needs that are being missed by other charitable food relief operators. These micro-level tactics are particularly tenuous. The example of the Us Moms Community Project is illustrative. Launched in 2001 to provide food in the east end, including Grandview-Woodland, Us Moms, according to its website, supported over three thousand “impoverished single parent families ... by providing free weekly boxes of nutritious foods, free clothing, free furniture and household items.” In 2002, it received \$74,000 under the Vancouver Agreement, but in 2004, it lost its warehouse. Without a permanent physical home, Us Moms closed down its food distribution service.<sup>152</sup> This instability was pervasive. As one report explains: “Because funding for charitable food programs is often provided only for a limited time, programs are unstable and there is a high rate of turnover in the programs available. It is difficult for service providers to know where to send clients, especially when lists of food resources are not maintained. Some services overlap, while other needs remain unmet.”<sup>153</sup> To live without the assurance of sufficient food is to be put into a perpetual state of dependency on any entity or activity that might offer relief. At its ultimate, the alternative, of course, is death by starvation. In such a context, we see how the food relief system, reinforcing locality as a paramount measure of deservedness and entitlement, exerts control over people attempting to meet the basic necessities of life. To live is to abide by the civil norm of community subsistence services in your own backyard.

Harm reduction is another main terrain over which civil norms for abject persons are reinforced. Detoxification, methadone clinics, needle exchanges, and the like comprise various facets of harm reduction techniques, many of which are closely associated with the health services of the provincial government. Insite is the emblem of harm

<sup>151</sup> Quest Food Exchange, available at <http://questoutreach.org/programs/> (viewed 15 August 2010).

<sup>152</sup> Us Moms Community Projects Home, available at <http://www.us-moms.com/> (viewed 21 June 2010).

<sup>153</sup> Barbolet et al., “Vancouver Food System Assessment,” 24.

reduction in the east end. Opened in 2003 in the Downtown Eastside, Insite is North America's first legal supervised injection site. It aims to intervene to prevent deaths by overdose and to promote less harmful drug use in the interest of wider governmental concerns.<sup>154</sup> Clients receive "clean injection equipment such as syringes, cookers, filters, water and tourniquets" and inject "pre-obtained illicit drugs under the supervision of nurses."<sup>155</sup> In 2009, Insite recorded "276,178 visits to the site by 5,447 unique individuals."<sup>156</sup> Insite's internal arrangement is a panopticon design. Twelve mirrored booths placed in a semi-circle make each user visible to a centrally situated medical worker.<sup>157</sup> Inside, individual conduct is "marked off from the outside world, divided in space, and organized in time."<sup>158</sup> Outside, the Downtown Eastside is shaped as the de facto legitimate focal point for drug addictions, drug use, and drug dealing, magnifying the east end as a key node in the city's drug landscape, containing problematic bodies and facilitating the control of those deemed deviant.

The Britannia area became significant for harm reduction services as well, largely through the work of the North Community Health Office and the Grandview Mental Health Team. In 2008, the city approved the relocation of these entities to a new multi-purpose health centre to be built adjacent to a nearby light rapid transit station. These endeavours would remain within a kilometre of the Britannia Centre but would be more readily accessible to public transit users. The VPD opposed the move because the transit stop had a "high incidence" of "crime and mischief." Vancouver Coastal Health supported it as a way to bring together "spread out" services that were housed "in facilities that [were] deteriorating ... and crowded."<sup>159</sup> No doubt medical studies documenting the higher concentration of HIV/AIDS along the SkyTrain route figured into the plan.<sup>160</sup> Certainly, property owners and business interests closer to the

<sup>154</sup> E. Drucker, "Insite: Canada's Landmark Safe Injecting Program at Risk," *Harm Reduction Journal* 3, 24 (2006): 1-3.

<sup>155</sup> Vancouver Coastal Health, "Services," available at <http://supervisedinjection.vch.ca/services/> (viewed 23 June 2010).

<sup>156</sup> Vancouver Coastal Health, "Supervised Injection Site," available at [http://supervisedinjection.vch.ca/research/supporting\\_research/user\\_statistics](http://supervisedinjection.vch.ca/research/supporting_research/user_statistics) (viewed 25 June 2010).

<sup>157</sup> P. Lejtenyi, "Insite Chez Nous," *Montreal Mirror*, 19 June 2008, 24, 1, available at <http://www.montrealmirror.com/2008/061908/news2.html> (viewed 19 August 2010).

<sup>158</sup> Osborne and Rose, "Spatial Phenomenotechnics," 217.

<sup>159</sup> City of Vancouver, Development Permit Board and Advisory Panel minutes, 28 July 2008, available at <http://vancouver.ca/commsvcs/planning/dpboard/2008/Minutes/jul28.html#motion1> (viewed 19 August 2010).

<sup>160</sup> E.K. Wood, J.S.G. Chan, M.T. Montaner, M. Schechter, M. Tyndall, M.V.O. O'Shaugnessy, and R.S. Hogg, "The End of the Line: Has Rapid Transit Contributed to the Spatial Dif-

Britannia Centre favoured the scheme as it helped push problems they had long complained about (as discussed below) further towards the edge of Grandview-Woodland and closer to neighbouring Kensington-Cedar Cottage (see Map 1). While not uncontested, the growing prominence of harm reduction approaches, as evidenced in efforts to construct more “user friendly” service milieus, shows how fully embedded and naturalized abject persons are in governmental policy and planning objectives and programs.

The principles of harm reduction are not fundamentally distinct from subsistence approaches.<sup>161</sup> A case in point is the work of the Grandview-Woodland Drug and Alcohol Coalition, which held its first event in 2004. Local business people, human service workers, and drug users struck the coalition to assess community needs and to provide addicts with knowledge about local resources.<sup>162</sup> In 2007, the coalition became known as Under One Umbrella to reflect a shift to the “San Francisco model.” Damian Murphy, a long-time activist in Grandview-Woodland, explained the model at a 2009 workshop, which had been organized by the City of Vancouver’s Social Development Department. He stated that the San Francisco model emphasized “hands-on direct action ... where people could receive ID, get placed in housing or employment or even [be] registered to receive income assistance on the spot.”<sup>163</sup> Harm reduction and subsistence interventions both seek to regulate bodies and behaviours, thereby encouraging new norms and expectations about how best to live with one’s abject situation. Under One Umbrella makes this implied theoretical understanding of poverty a practical matter. The interlocking problematics of subsistence and harm reduction have, if not by design, then certainly in effect, the same mainstream policy target: people whose existence is treated as having little or no use and as potentially damaging to urban profitability, stability, and order.

*Redirection* refers to efforts that, through paid employment, seek to move individuals off public income assistance towards the self-reliance ideal. In the east end, the public-private partnership Fast Track to Employment (Fast Track) is the flagship program. Set up in 2001 at the

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fusion of HIV in One of Canada’s Largest Metropolitan Areas?” *Social Science and Medicine* 51, 5 (2000): 741-48.

<sup>161</sup> Vancouver Coastal Health, “North Community Health Office,” pamphlet, nd.

<sup>162</sup> Grandview-Woodland Drug and Alcohol Coalition, “Alcohol and Drug Resources.”

<sup>163</sup> D. Murphy, “Under One Umbrella Speak: City Workshop on Community-Based Solutions to Connecting with the Homeless,” paper presented at “How to Forum” on Homelessness Action Week held at Plaza 500 Hotel, 8 July 2009, available at City of Vancouver, Social Development Department, Housing Policy, <http://vancouver.ca/commsvcs/housing/pdf/July8Forum/UOUSSpeak.pdf>, 1.

corner of Main Street and East Hastings, the geographical heart of the Downtown Eastside, Fast Track's Board of Directors was dominated by officials from Downtown Eastside, Grandview-Woodland, and Strathcona agencies. Soon after being launched, Fast Track partnered with the Vancouver Agreement's Building Opportunities with Business Inner City Society Program, which was a "key component of the Vancouver Agreement Economic Revitalization Plan."<sup>164</sup> Fast Track offered "pre-employment and skills training components" that would "prepare unemployed persons for a successful transition and retention into the *local labour market*" (emphasis added). This emphasis was "guided by the principle of revitalization without displacement." For participants, the "great reward" would not be a decent income but, rather, the chance to meet their own "potential and create a secure future through successful employment." They would find "dignity and self-reliance," making them "healthy member[s] of the community."<sup>165</sup> With Fast Track we see the assumed importance of the connection between neighbourhood space and disadvantaged status. Placing people in low-skill, low-income, and low-benefits jobs would not eradicate poverty, but it would render it normal, that is, unthreatening to the public purse. No doubt, too, the program would reinforce the legitimacy of east end subsistence mechanisms. Jobs gained through the program were unlikely to provide livable wages. Consistent with the Vancouver Agreement to which it was tied, Fast Track fit well with the ideal of making spaces conducive to the peaceful coexistence of people living in poverty and would-be developers/gentrifiers. "Bad" types of poverty could be made "good."

Parental conduct is another key target of redirection strategies tied, in this instance, to street-level at-risk children's programs. The policy focus on vulnerable children emerged from neurological development research, which identified "the early years," up to the age of seven, as a deciding epoch, shaping mental, verbal, and social development for the rest of a child's life. Psychosocial development, according to this body of research, is fostered both in the local space of the family and in the neighbourhood system within which a child is raised. Hence one

<sup>164</sup> D. LePage, "Social Purchasing – Buying Locally, Helping Locally," Ottawa: Caledon Institute of Social Policy, September 2004, available at <http://www.caledoninst.org/Publications/PDF/50iENG.pdf> (viewed 27 February 2011); Fast Track to Employment, available at <http://www.dtes.ca/fte/> (viewed 19 August 2010); Building Opportunities with Business, "Fast Track to Employment is Affiliated with Building Opportunities with Business," available at <http://www.buildingopportunities.org/about/fte.asp> (viewed 27 February 2011); Vancouver Agreement, "Economic Revitalization Projects," available at <http://www.vancouveragreement.ca/project-descriptions-economicrevitalization>, 2009 (viewed 27 February 2011).

<sup>165</sup> Fast Track to Employment, available at <http://www.dtes.ca/fte/> (viewed 19 August 2010).

study's title: *From Neurons to Neighborhoods: The Science of Early Childhood Development*.<sup>166</sup> Some such views inform a new national policy field in Canada under the rubric of the National Children's Agenda (NCA), launched in 1997 as an overall framework for extending and developing local children's programs in collaboration with the provinces and territories.<sup>167</sup>

Britannia established at-risk programs under the Canada Action Program for Children (CAP-C) and the Home Instruction for Parents of Preschool Youth Program (HIPPY). In 1992, the federal government launched CAP-C as one of its largest programs for children up to six years of age.<sup>168</sup> Fully funded by the Public Health Agency of Canada through a federal-provincial-territorial bilateral agreement, CAP-C aims "to reduce threats to children's health ... while striving to strengthen skills and capabilities of parents to take action on their health and the health of their children."<sup>169</sup> The CAP-C in Grandview-Woodland works closely with those in the Downtown Eastside and Strathcona.<sup>170</sup> In 1998, Britannia launched the first HIPPY program in Canada as a pilot project. In 2001, HIPPY obtained official charitable status for tax purposes. In 2009, HIPPY Canada received \$3.5 million from the federal government.<sup>171</sup> HIPPY focuses on children from ages three to five years who are "at risk" of falling behind "similarly situated students." Both CAP-C and HIPPY target low-income parents, typically mothers, for parenting and job skills training, while encouraging reliance on "mainstream" in-kind subsistence resources (e.g., food, clothing, etc.), including, in the case of CAP-C, "street level programs for substance abusing mothers."<sup>172</sup>

<sup>166</sup> J.P. Shonkoff and D.A. Phillips, *From Neurons to Neighborhoods: The Science of Early Childhood Development* (Washington: National Academy Press, 2000).

<sup>167</sup> W. McKeen, "The National Children's Agenda: A Neo-Liberal Wolf in Lamb's Clothing," *Studies in Political Economy* 8 (2007): 154.

<sup>168</sup> Public Health Agency of Canada, "Community Action Program for Children," available at [http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/dca-dea/programs-mes/capc\\_main-eng.php](http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/dca-dea/programs-mes/capc_main-eng.php) (viewed 24 June 2010); M. Van de Plaat and G. Barrett, "Building Community Capacity in Governance and Decision Making," *Community Development Journal* 41, 1 (2005): 26-27.

<sup>169</sup> Public Health Agency of Canada, "Formative Evaluation of the Community Action Program for Children," available at <http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/dca-dea/programs-mes/comm-eval/ch-or-eng.php> (viewed 24 June 2010).

<sup>170</sup> Downtown Eastside Residents Association, "CNCN Children Need Care Now CAPC Coalition," available at [http://www.dtes.ca/cms/index.cfm?group\\_id=3846](http://www.dtes.ca/cms/index.cfm?group_id=3846) (viewed 24 June 2010).

<sup>171</sup> M. Leaf, "Selection of Good Practices in Canada. Observatorio Experimental Sobre las Migraciones Internacionales en Las Áreas Urbanas de Americana Latina," (2006), available at [http://www.miurbal.net/GoodPractices\\_Canada01.pdf](http://www.miurbal.net/GoodPractices_Canada01.pdf) (viewed 24 June 2010); HIPPY Canada, available at <http://www.hippycanada.ca/whycanadaneeds.php> (viewed 21 June 2010).

<sup>172</sup> Public Health Agency of Canada, "About the Program: Community Action Program for Children (CAPC)," available at <http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/dca-dea/programs-mes/>

This “new” Britannia’s focus on children is not the same as the “old” Britannia’s focus on families. The latter was not a disciplinary space for deviant parents, but the former most certainly is. City officials, now singling out Britannia as a key hub in the city’s emergent child development network,<sup>173</sup> are helping to constitute a new governance apparatus, perhaps the most chilling one of all. Child destitution is being treated as an inherently local matter, an approach that unbendingly focuses on parental failings rather than on broader structural processes that render abject poverty and its myriad ramifications possible. Not only parents but also children can be acclimatized into legitimized modes of poverty living. Or so it seems, given that children comprise almost 40 percent of food bank users and that more than half of the households assisted are families with children.<sup>174</sup> Regulating parents will change none of this, but it will, of course, instill in children a familiarity with charitable food relief.

*Removal* techniques took on an increasing salience in Grandview-Woodland with the launching of a “resident led” community policing office (CPO) in 1994. Local service officials, along with business and property owners,<sup>175</sup> established the CPO in the context of growing anxieties about an increasingly visible “transient population.”<sup>176</sup> The CPO involved itself in a diverse set of activities. One particularly significant undertaking was an attempt to measure the experiences of neighbourhood livability by surveying area residents. The results indicate that certain types of behaviour are “completely unacceptable to the majority ... include[ing] aggressive panhandlers, litter, discarded syringes ... condoms on the ground, and sex trade workers in residential areas or near schools.”<sup>177</sup> These results informed the decision to relocate addiction

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capc\_goals-eng.php (viewed 16 August 2010).

<sup>173</sup> C. Carson, “Models of Child Development Hubs Outside Vancouver,” City of Vancouver, Social Planning Department (2005), available at <http://vancouver.ca/commsvcs/social-planning/info/index.htm> (viewed 21 June 2010); City of Vancouver, *City of Vancouver Budget: 2004, 150*, available at <http://vancouver.ca/fs/budgetServices/pdf/Budget2004.pdf> (viewed 21 November 2010).

<sup>174</sup> Food Banks Canada, “Hunger Count 2009,” available at <http://www.cafb-acba.ca> (viewed 2 September 2010).

<sup>175</sup> Center for Problem-Oriented Policing, “Showdown at the Playground: The Vancouver Police Department, British Columbia” (2000), available at [http://www.popcenter.org/library/awards/goldstein/2000/00-32\(F\).pdf](http://www.popcenter.org/library/awards/goldstein/2000/00-32(F).pdf) (viewed 19 August 2010).

<sup>176</sup> Grandview-Woodland CPC, “History,” available at [http://www.gwpc.ca/about\\_our\\_cpc/about\\_our\\_cpc/history.html](http://www.gwpc.ca/about_our_cpc/about_our_cpc/history.html) (viewed 23 June 2010).

<sup>177</sup> V. Spicer and E. Mosca, *Commercial Drive Community Survey 1997*, unpublished report prepared for the Britannia Community Policing Survey, 2-3.

services (discussed earlier).<sup>178</sup> City of Toronto researchers who examined different models for “curb[ing] panhandling” shed further light on the work of the CPOs. The research shows that the Grandview-Woodland CPO had devised and promoted various coercive mechanisms to remove non-criminal conduct from the streets. The CPO had encouraged property owners to close off places where squeegees and buckets were being stored, requested gas station owners to “engrave their squeegee equipment to deter theft,” and had facilitated the extrication of newspaper boxes to prevent them from being used to hide alcohol bottles. The CPO also oversaw the enclosure of “alcoves around buildings ... to make it impossible for panhandlers to have a sit down.”<sup>179</sup>

During the 1990s, the VPD began working with many CPOs in the city, including the one in Grandview-Woodland. As it did so, police officers also began to make greater use of coercive techniques along with traditional approaches of arrest and incarceration. Police would advise street youth to enter foster homes, confiscate drug paraphernalia, and ask panhandlers to “move along.” Arrest and detention were saved for the worst cases: “squeegee-ers” impeding traffic, incorrigible drug dealers, aggressive panhandlers, and others whose breaches of civility could not be normalized. In 2003, these coercive activities were sanctioned under a new VPD enforcement program. As part of this move, the VPD closed its affiliated CPOs, except those in the Downtown Eastside, Grandview-Woodland, and Strathcona.<sup>180</sup>

The rising pertinence of coercive approaches within the official police services is explicable when one considers the complete absence of political will to ameliorate poverty’s manifold facets of human suffering. The shaping of behavioural norms towards normalized forms of severe poverty is an alternative, but one that cannot be achieved through punishment and incarceration. Informal and formal coercive practices offer a solution. By 2010, this third option had become deeply entrenched in the work of the VPD – at least that is what one can infer from its website, which offers information about where to find “free/low-cost meals &

<sup>178</sup> City of Vancouver, Development Permit Board and Advisory Panel Minutes, 28 July 2008, available at <http://vancouver.ca/commsvcs/planning/dpboard/2008/Minutes/jul28.html#motion1> (viewed 19 August 2010).

<sup>179</sup> City of Toronto, memo from City of Toronto General Manager, Shelter, Support and Housing Administration to Executive Committee re enhancing streets to homes service to address the needs of people who are street involved, including those who panhandle, 21 April 2008, 21 and 23, available at <http://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2008/ex/bgrd/backgroundfile-12533.pdf> (viewed 21 November 2010).

<sup>180</sup> L. Huey, *Negotiating Demands: The Politics of Skid Row Policing in Edinburgh, San Francisco, and Vancouver* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2007), 156–57.



bargain food,” free clothing, free showers, and free laundry facilities, along with information about health and crisis services as well as resource centres. It also lists four community centres, three of which are located in the east end: the Ray-Cam Cooperative, the Strathcona Community Centre, and, yes, the Britannia Community Services Centre.<sup>181</sup> In these ways, the shape of street-level services hinges not on clear divisions between different roles and tasks but, rather, on the close intermingling of objectives and slippages between strategies aimed at reinforcement of civil norms and removal of problematic people.

Coercive techniques did not supplant arrest and punishment but, rather, proliferated in tandem with the use of new legal tools and harsher enforcement of laws addressing various facets of visible poverty. In 2002, for instance, as the provincial government embarked upon the most draconian public program cuts Canada had ever seen, anti-poverty activists gathered in front of the Britannia Centre to confront Premier Gordon Campbell.<sup>182</sup> The *Vancouver Sun* reported that nine people were arrested at the demonstration, including a clown. The “clown” turned out to be the Reverend George Feenstra, a United Church minister who had donned a red rubber nose to perform a mime about wealth and power. Police arrested and strip-searched the minister only to discover that he had in his possession “a Bible and a copy of Plato’s Republic.” Feenstra was charged with “unlawful assembly, causing a disturbance and two counts of assaulting a police officer.” He was later acquitted, but officials at his church forced him to tone down his activism, which had included allowing people to camp out in front of Grace Memorial Church in the Mount Pleasant district (see Map 1), where they were offered food and clean needles.<sup>183</sup> As this example suggests, the balance between coercion and arrest is negotiated over different planes. Nevertheless, the legal instruments that could be brought to bear on abject people expanded in 2004 with passage of the British Columbia Safe Streets Act. Squeegeeing and panhandling are forms of work for people living in poverty. They were now, with few exceptions, illegal.<sup>184</sup>

<sup>181</sup> Vancouver Police Department, “The Vancouver Police Department: Beyond the Call,” available at <http://vancouver.ca/police/community-policing/community-services/index.html> (viewed 2 September 2010).

<sup>182</sup> Caledon Institute of Social Policy, *New Era in British Columbia*. That Campbell would show up at Britannia provides an indication of how little attention political officials paid to the impact of neoliberal-type cuts on specific settings.

<sup>183</sup> D. Todd, “Protesting Pastor Returns to the Pulpit,” *Vancouver Sun*, 21 February 2004; “All Charges against United Church Minister Dismissed by Judge,” *Vancouver Sun*, 6 April 2004.

<sup>184</sup> A.M. Hitchens, “Safe Streets Act: Discourses around Legislating Citizenship and Public Spaces in British Columbia and Beyond,” 1, available at <http://www.hsd.uvic.ca/journals/variegations/documents/hitchen.pdf> (viewed 23 June 2010).

With the launching of the Vancouver Community Court in 2008, an architectural domain for balancing coercion and arrest rose up from the east end landscape. Located in the Downtown Eastside, the court's jurisdiction included the entire downtown area west of Clark Drive (the western border of Grandview-Woodland) to Stanley Park. Linked to the Vancouver Agreement via various agencies and departments,<sup>185</sup> the court aimed at reducing "harm caused to the community by crime," operating "on the principle that collaborative case management can help offenders make long-term changes to their behaviour." Each case would be approached in relation to the individual's specific situation, including the "severity of the crime, the offender's history," and, "where possible, the reasons the offender was involved in criminal activity." Sentences "could range from community service, to compensate the community for harm done by the crime, to jail time."<sup>186</sup> In her evaluation of the emergence of community courts in the United States, American anthropologist Victoria Malkin concludes that they have replaced "older models of social welfare" and have "recategorize[d] individuals with specific problems, previously thought to derive from social problems whose resolution was part of the social contract, into a high-risk category to be managed." The community court's emphasis is not on finding punishments to fit crimes but, rather, on acting upon individual will, encouraging a desire to conduct oneself civilly for the wider public good.<sup>187</sup>

#### CONCLUDING REMARKS<sup>188</sup>

Against the now-standard assumptions in policy discourse about the essential relationship between poverty and local spaces, I suggest that there is nothing natural or self-evident about this link. This is not to say that it is inherently wrong to consider the complex relationship between poverty and local settings. But early twenty-first century policy researchers propagating this apparently taken-for-granted connection are doing so without making any attempt to investigate the historical role

<sup>185</sup> British Columbia, "Information for Accused Persons," available at [http://www.criminaljusticereform.gov.bc.ca/en/.../information\\_for\\_accused.pdf](http://www.criminaljusticereform.gov.bc.ca/en/.../information_for_accused.pdf) (viewed 25 June 2010).

<sup>186</sup> British Columbia, "Vancouver's Downtown Community Court," available at <http://www.criminaljusticereform.gov.bc.ca/en/> (viewed 21 November 2010).

<sup>187</sup> V. Malkin, "The End of Welfare as We Know It: What Happens When the Judge Is in Charge?" *Critique of Anthropology* 25, 4 (2005): 368, 382.

<sup>188</sup> As always, my writing is inspired by the work of Mariana Valverde, whose use of the iceberg metaphor I have adapted herein. See her "Peace, Order, and Good Government: Policelike Powers in Postcolonial Perspective," in *The New Police Science: The Police Power in Domestic and International Governance*, ed. M.D. Dubber and M. Valverde (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2006), 100.

played by officials of various kinds in the formulation of poverty's local manifestations. Well-intentioned people who uncritically accept the logic of poverty's local complexity as a governance focus are helping to shape the very phenomenon they hope to challenge. In order to understand the political significance of poverty, to work towards another world where poverty is not a naturalized part of urban life, and to open up the possibility of a more egalitarian existence for everyone, we must first clear the misguided assumption that poverty and local spaces are in any sense obviously interconnected. We need to grasp how various governments and officials have imagined and shaped space, implicitly and explicitly. We need to be attuned to the legacies of earlier endeavours, their mutations and ramifications, which are often obscured rather than illuminated by maps, statistics, surveys, and the like. We need to recognize that, even as we think, speak, and act, we are configuring and limiting options, configuring and limiting people's lives.

Africville. Regent Park. Strathcona. These became iconic places in Canada's collective memory, exposing gross injustices visited upon disadvantaged peoples whose lives had gotten in the way of the privileged. We can now add Grandview-Woodland to this disturbingly violent pattern of Canadian urban governance history. Places were not razed. Houses were not demolished. No one was subject to forced relocation. But in this east end neighbourhood lives were "wasted," to use philosopher Zygmunt Bauman's term, rendered disposable, "excessive," and "redundant,"<sup>189</sup> governed in the temporal fixity of their disadvantage. But this is only the tip of the iceberg, a massive iceberg that includes many other forms of poverty, less "wicked" forms, non-threatening, docile, and therefore in effect ordinary and accepted manifestations of the violence against people whose lives are considered expendable, worthless at best. The now well-established presupposition that poverty is self-evidently complex and locally situated has ignored the past. Grandview-Woodland calls out for us to remember.

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<sup>189</sup> Bauman, *Wasted Lives*, 5.