

Regional Cultures, Cultural Regions, and the Creative City: A Case Study of Vancouver

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Agenda

① Vancouver Overview

“Cascadia” Regional Context

Development History & New Industry Formation

“Vancouverism” and its Challenges

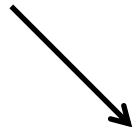


② Victory Square Case Study

Area Background & Revitalisation Planning

Woodward’s Development

Impact of Culture & Capital



③ New Role of Public Engagement & Community Art

Public Opportunity to Lead Change

Art as a Generator of Empowerment

Vancouver in the Broader Regional Setting: *Cascadia*



[from Government of British Columbia planning process circa. 1991]

Cascadia

- Larger regional territory known as the **'Pacific North West'** in the age of European exploration and colonization (Russian, Spanish and British)
- Unresolved dislocation and **displacement of aboriginal (First Nations) peoples**, culture and communities
- **Specific ecological context** (boreal forests, mountains, river and coastal ecosystems) **and associated social and cultural values** expressed in Joel Garreau's concept of 'Ecotopia', encompassing a territory bounded by the Yakutat Peninsula in Alaska, Cape Mendocino in California, and the continental divide (from: *The Nine Nations of North America*)
- "Cascadia" a **geographically elastic concept**, but the urban region at a minimum **encompasses Vancouver, Seattle, Portland and Victoria**

Cascadia

Commonalities and Contrasts

- Cities, settlements and the physical environment: **resource-dependency for major settlements** (Seattle, Portland, Vancouver) in the ‘staples’ political economy: forestry, fishing, agriculture, mining)
- **Proximity of the natural environment** as influence on social values, practices, lifestyles (but . . . declining?)
- **Public/social valuation of the natural environment as foundation of progressive planning** and land use policies (but . . . how robust is this commitment?)
- **Diverse cultural values** (First Nations, recent Asian immigration, ecological legacies) as influence on the economy: architecture, urban design, graphic design, new media): cities as sites of ‘cultural fusion’ – complements and tensions?

Cascadia

Commonalities and Contrasts: Development

- **Vancouver and Portland** enjoy generally **positive image as sites of progressive planning**, in urban structure (green zones, metropolitan growth boundaries) land use (compact development, mixed use), amenity, public housing and transit
- **Seattle's profile** as a site of innovative planning **relatively weaker**, although recent record more positive, e.g. in terms of community planning and 'urban villages'
- In broad developmental terms **Vancouver and Portland have SME economies, while Seattle/Central Puget Sound encompasses world-scale MNCs** (Weyerhaeuser, Boeing, Microsoft, Amazon, Starbucks, Costco), shaping a very different regional space-economy with implications for the region's transport systems, labour market, social morphology and externalities

Post-staples Vancouver



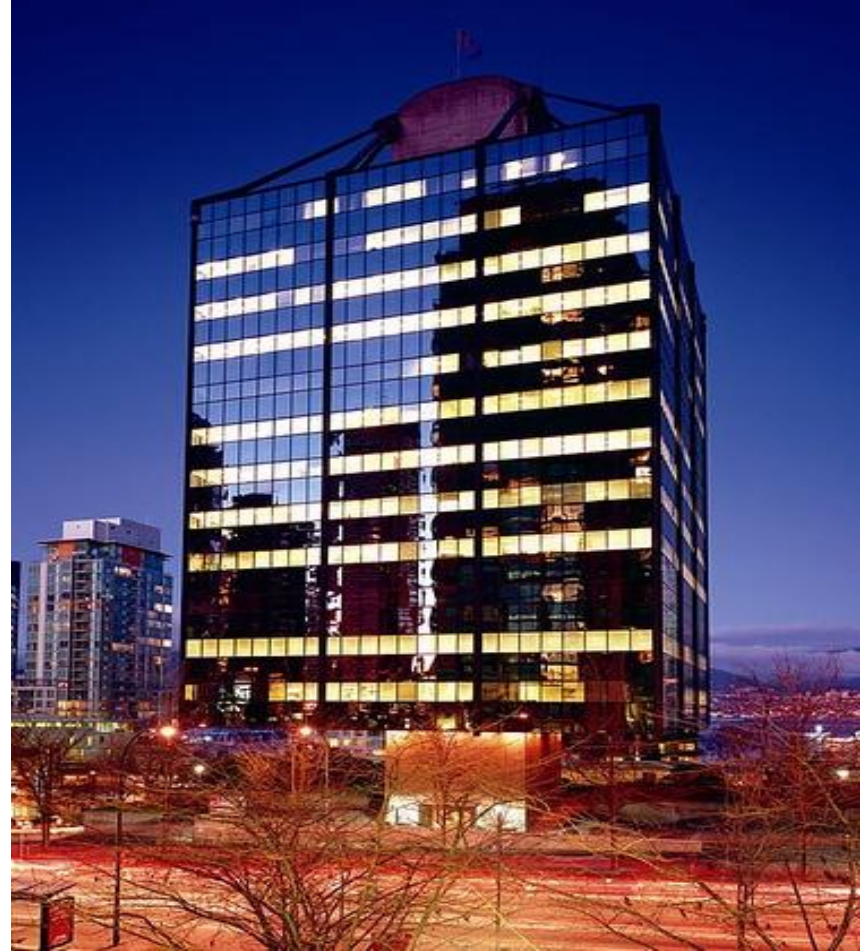
Downtown Vancouver and False Creek, 2007

New Industry Formation & the Reconstruction of the Metropolitan Core

- **Structure of the central city at mid-century:** CBD, inner city industry and resource processing, low-rise residential neighbourhoods
- **Collapse of industry:** market forces + 'postindustrial policy values'
- **Seminal influence of the Central Area Plan (1991):** reordering space in the central city
- **Privileging of housing in the Plan:** consolidation of the CBD, new allocations of space for housing
- **Coincident emergence of new production spaces in the CBD fringe and inner city districts:** generation of a new 'space-economy' of specialized production in the urban core

Post-corporate Vancouver

- US resource corporations leave Vancouver from the late 1970s
- MacMillan Bloedel head office reduced from 11 floors to 1 by 1999
- Vancouver loses 30% of head office jobs between 1999-2005
- Conversion of head offices into condominiums



“The Qube” formerly known as “The Westcoast Transmission Building”

Transnationalism: Asia Vancouver

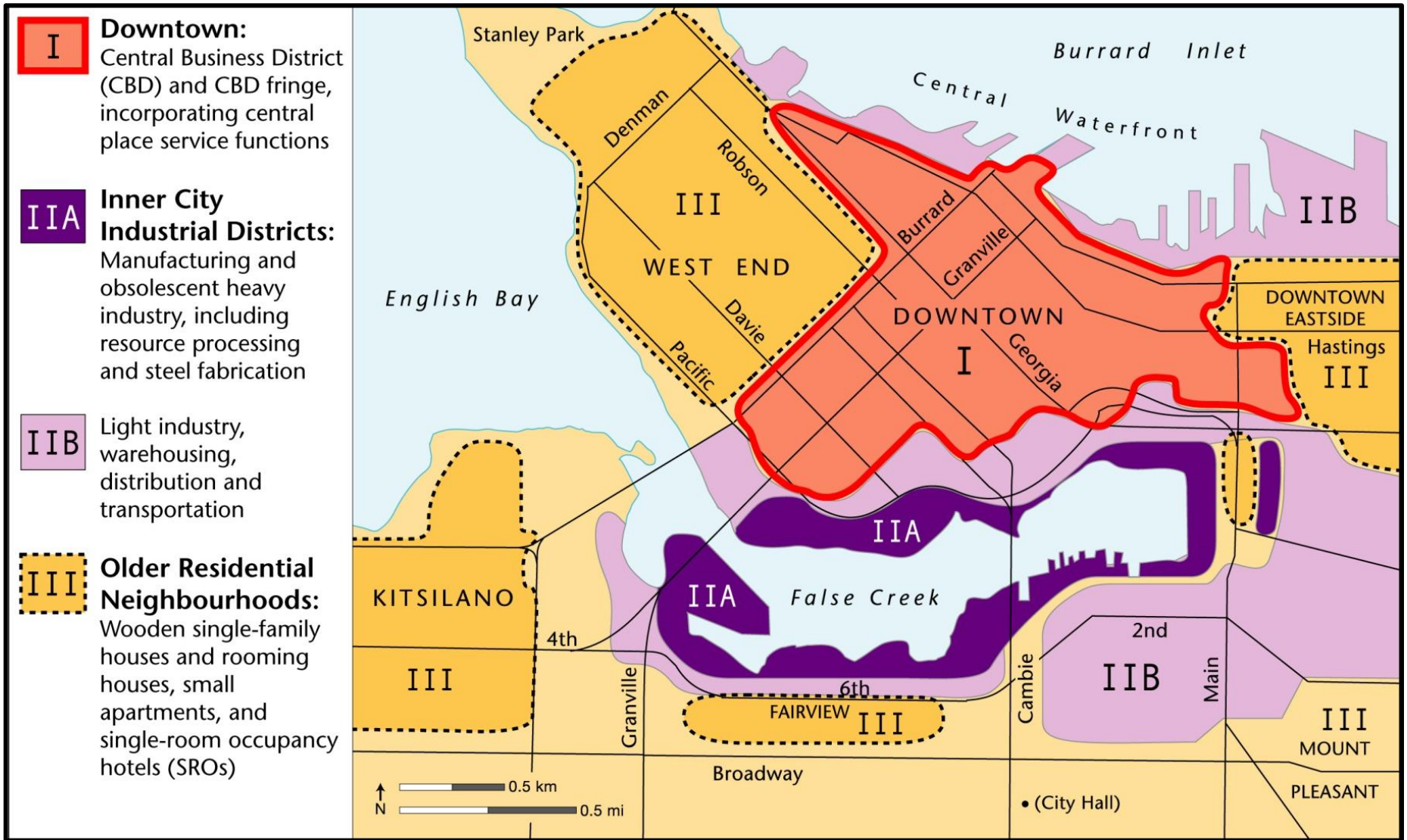
- Vancouver historically connected to Asia
- 2006 18.2% of Metro Vancouver's population is ethnic Chinese (3/4 born outside Canada), 9.9% S. Asian (2/3 born outside Canada)
- Business Immigration Programme: “a source of capital but also as pioneers of high technology and value-added production for export” (David Ley, 2003)



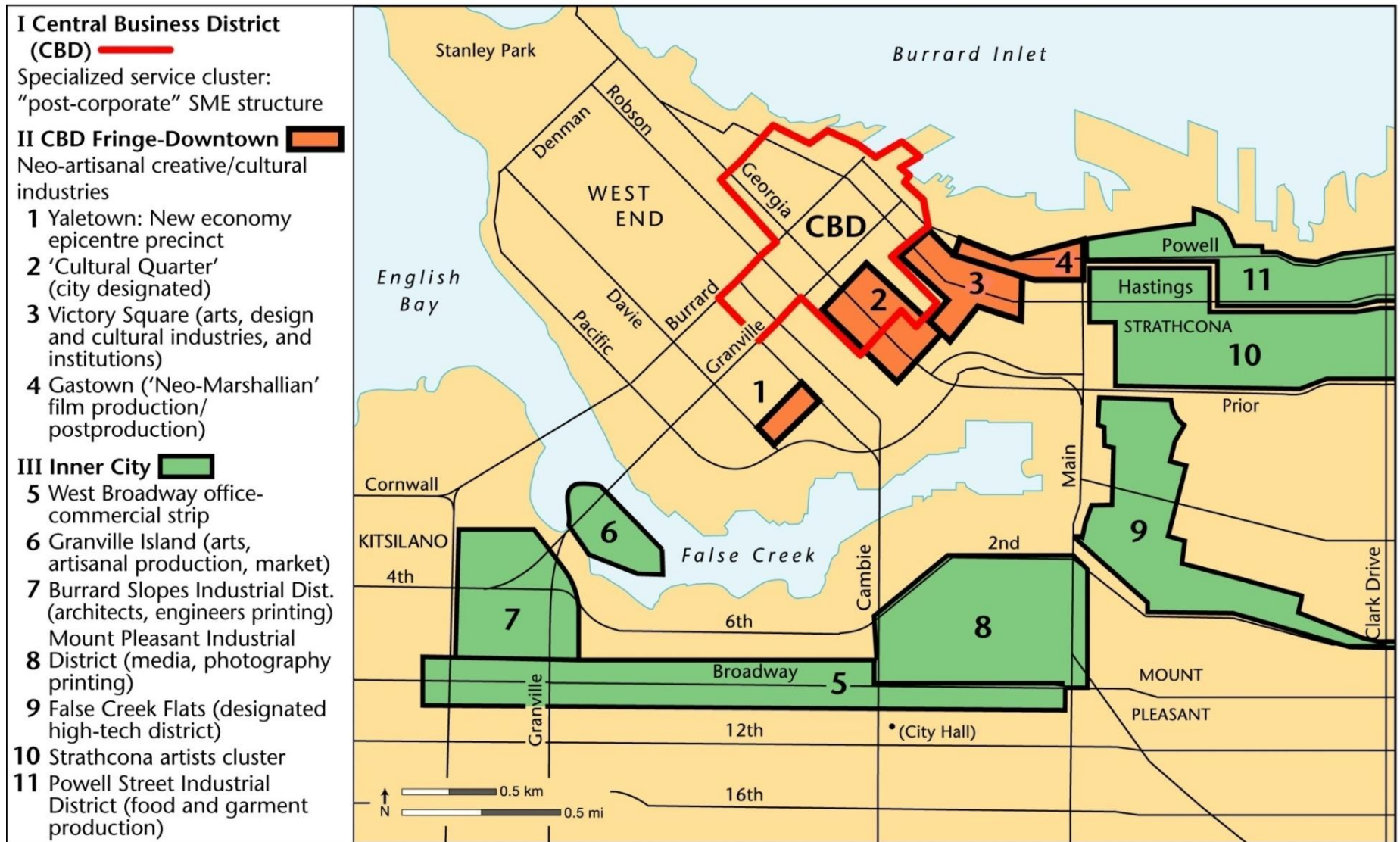
Punjabi market, Main and 49th, Vancouver



Chinatown, Main and Georgia, Vancouver



Zonal structure of Vancouver's central area at mid-century.



The space-economy of specialized production in Vancouver's metropolitan core, 2008.

Vancouverism



- Density bonusing
- Social and cultural amenities
- Small building footprint = opportunity for more green and open space
- Case by case basis at discretion of Vancouver planners

The Most Livable City?



Source: Tim Baird

Average price of a detached home (2012): **\$950,200**

Average price of residential home (2012): **\$616,000**

Average price of townhouse (2012): **\$468,700**

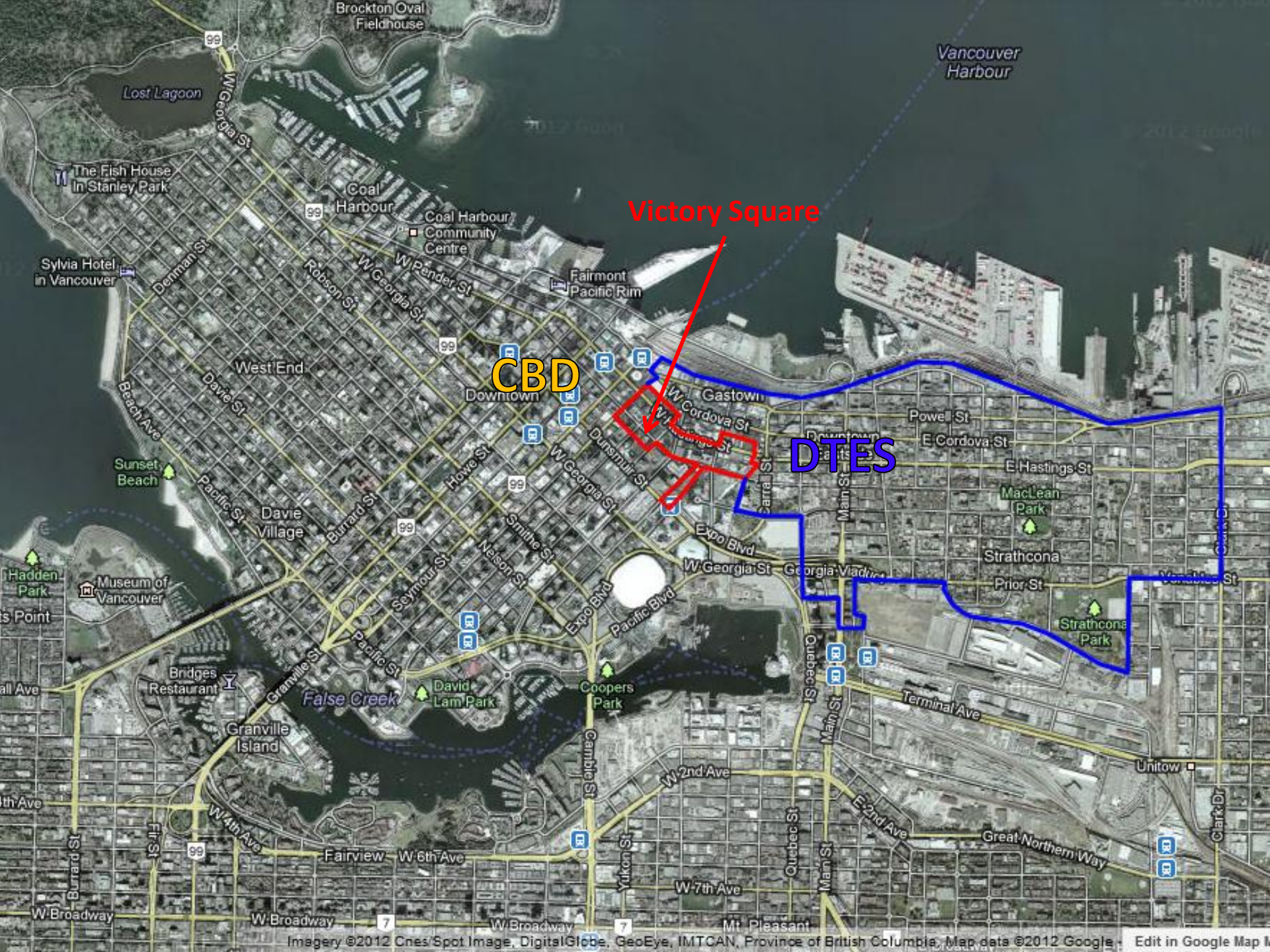
Average price of apartment (2012): **\$374,300**

Source: MLS

Victory Square



Social & Industrial Change
in an Historic Precinct



Victory Square

CBD

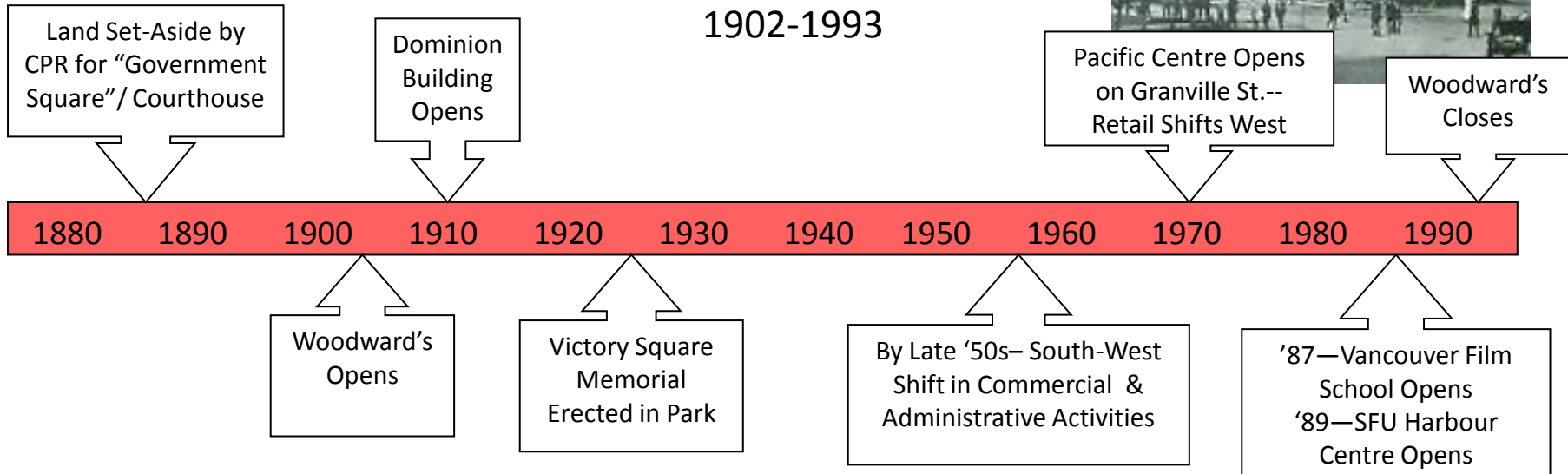
DIES

Background



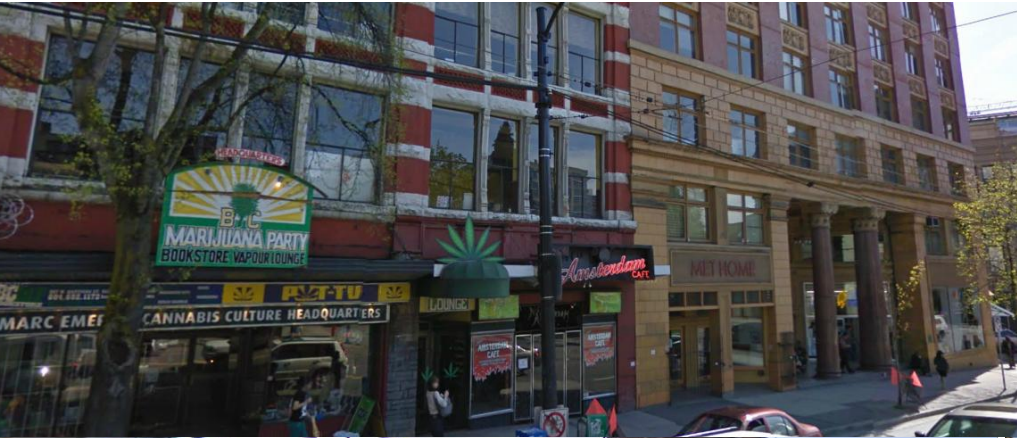
Woodward's Department Store
1902-1993

Dominion Building
c. 1910



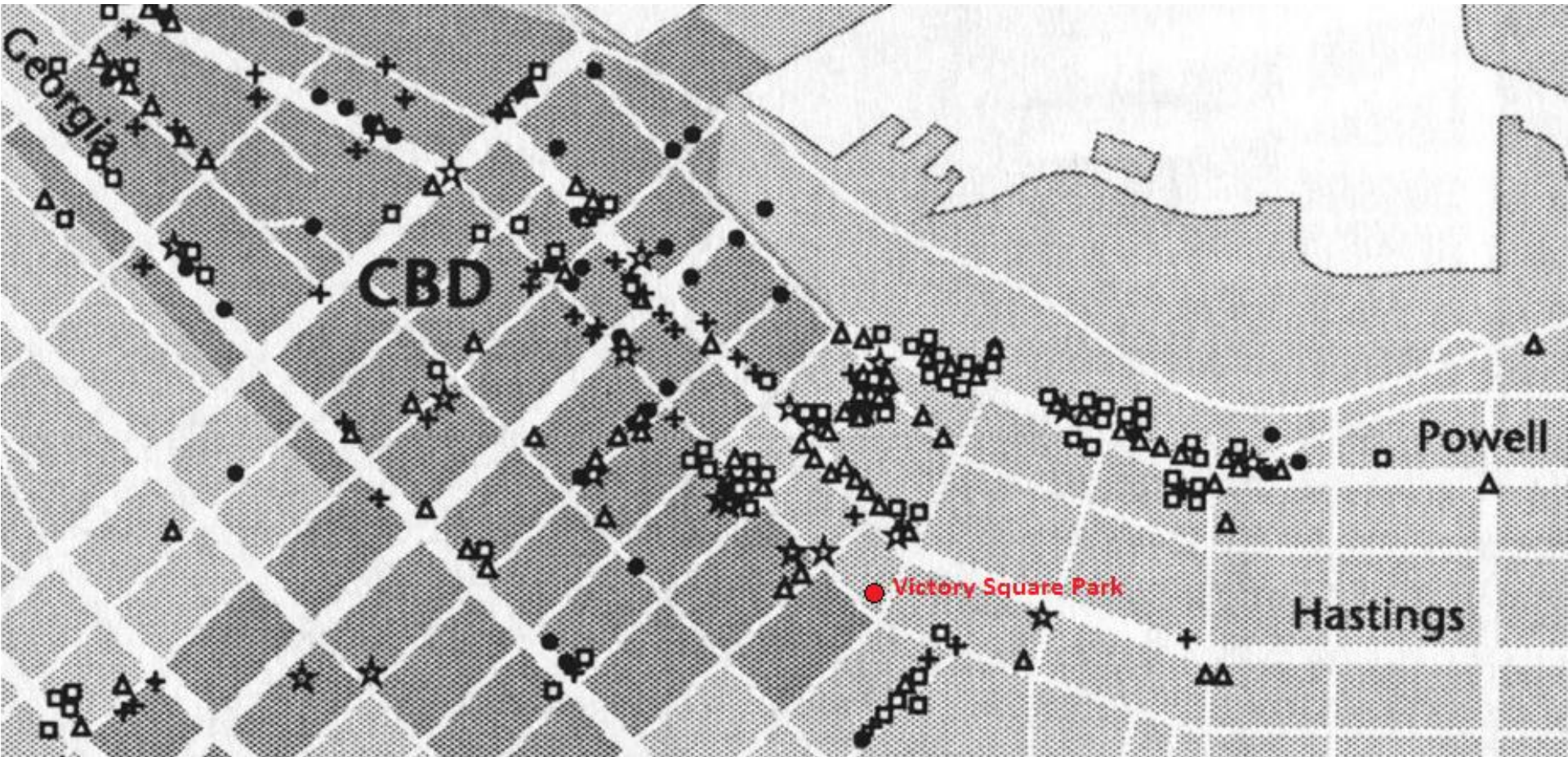
Seeds of Revitalisation

Location, Rent, Heritage, Grit



Present Day

New Industry Formation



+ *Computer services*

Computer graphic
Computer network
Computer applications

Δ *New media and design services*

Multimedia
Graphic designers

☆ *Technical support services*

Commercial artists
Commercial photographers

• *Advertising*

◻ *Architects*

Source: Hutton (2008)

Present Day

Creative/Knowledge Industries & Education

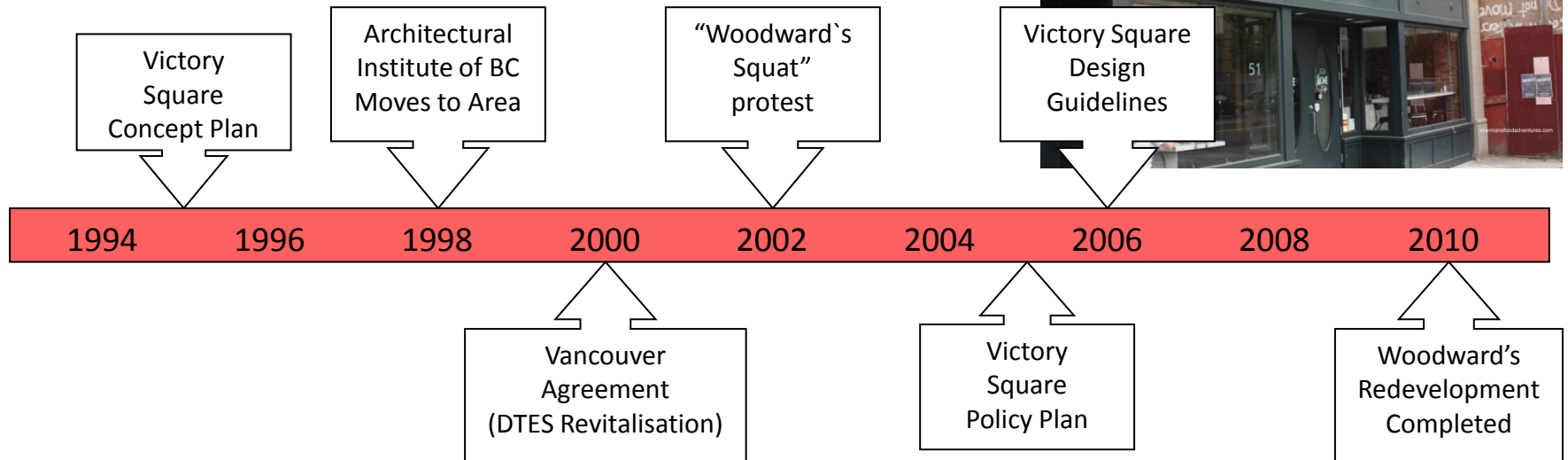


Source: Hutton (2008)

Revitalisation Planning (1997-Present)

- Design & Historic Preservation
- Commercial Revitalisation
- Retention of Creative Industries
- Mixed-Income Housing/SRA Retention
- Address Social Needs
- Public Realm Improvements

- Redevelopment of Woodward's Site



Woodward's Redevelopment

- Residential:

- 536 Market-Value Condo Units (72.8%)
- 200 Social Housing Units (125 Single, 75 Family) (27.2%)

- Government/University/Non-Profit:

- SFU Goldcorp Centre for the Arts
- National Film Board Offices
- City of Vancouver Offices
- W2 Media Café, etc.

- Commercial:

- Upscale Food Market
- Chain Pharmacy
- Café, etc.



Gentrification Frontier?



Pigeon Park

2005 Storefront Vacancy Rates

- 10% west of Cambie St.
- 48% east of Cambie St.

Social Change & Dislocation

Culture and Capital in Neighbourhood Change

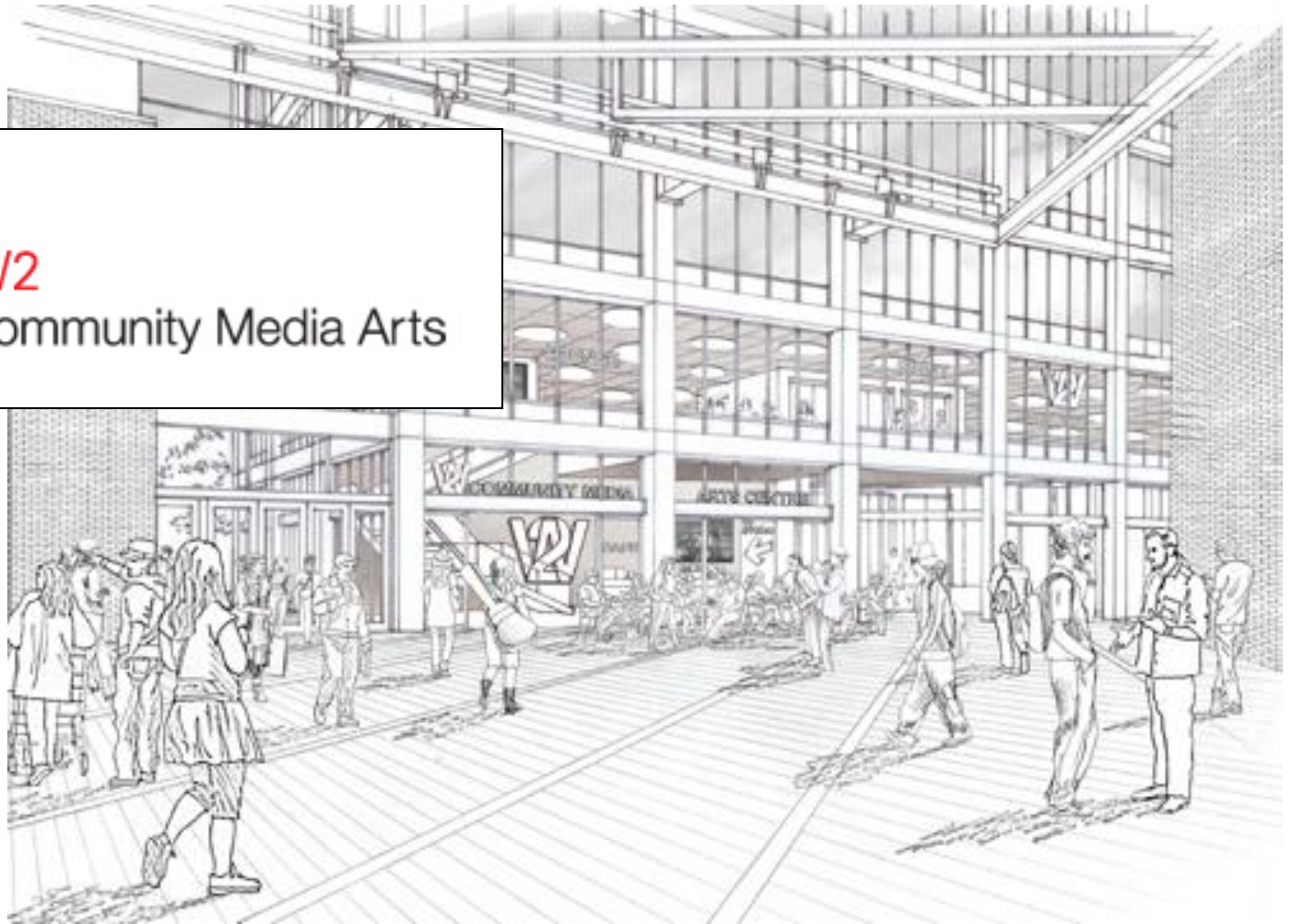
**“Be bold or move to
the suburbs”**

Social Change & Dislocation

W2 Controversy



W2
Community Media Arts



Social Change & Dislocation



Rising Rents



Crisis of Authenticity

 **GOLDCORP**
Corporatisation



Over-Policing



Over-Formalisation



ARCHITECTURAL INSTITUTE OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

Professionalisation

Public Engagement and Community Art as New Drivers of Vancouver's Urban and Cultural Landscape



A new direction?

Source: City of Vancouver



How will the public help influence development trajectory?

The Creative City

Source: Paul Krueger



“The ability to create **civic creativity** is where the **public sector learns to be more entrepreneurial** and **the private sector more socially responsible** in pursuing joint aims and the willingness to share power, with a goal of having greater influence over **an enlarged more successful whole.**”

(Laundry, 2006, p.338)

Movers & Shakers of the New Creative City

Source: Gen Why Media



PEOPLE

- Gen Why Media
- Ear to the Ground Planning
- Civic Renewal Lab

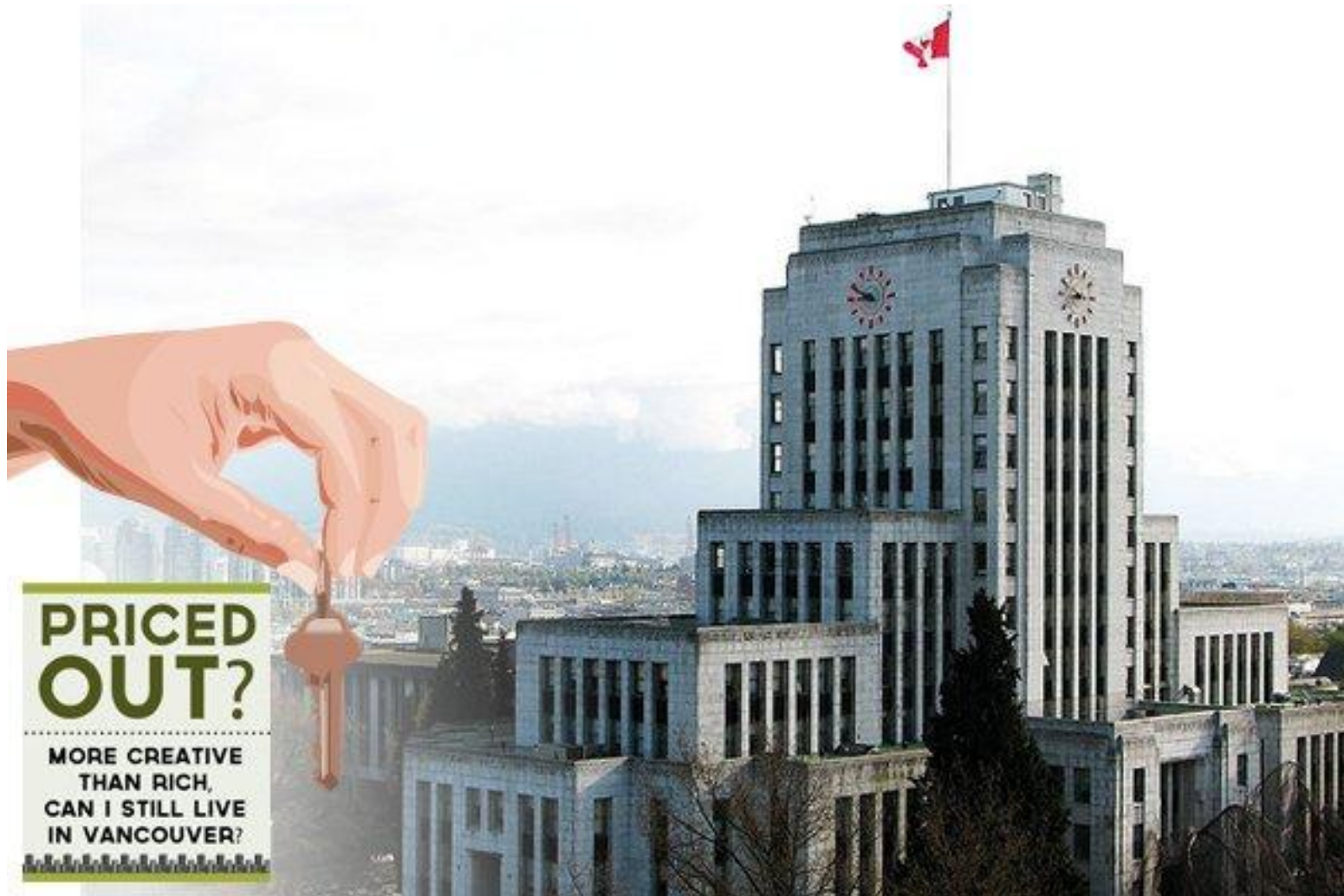
PLACES

- The Hive



Source: The Hive

Turning to public for fresh ideas



Source: The Tyee

<http://vimeo.com/44841618#at=0>

Fostering Cultural Identity



through community driven and created public art

Regenerate

“brings **progressive community groups** together to **collaborate** on a sculpture made from recycled/re-used/repurposed materials and greenery”

“respond to community needs by **engaging citizens** in art making, **provoking questions** about the **social** and **environmental impact** of re-using waste for public art”

“provide a **symbol of change** and **renewal** by demonstrating **new ways** of **occupying and celebrating Vancouver’s urban spaces**”

Source: Gen Why Media



Conclusion and Questions

