

S T A T E O F T H E
W A T E R F R O N T



Georgia Strait Alliance
Caring for Our Coastal Waters



Georgia Strait Alliance
Caring for Our Coastal Waters

A B O U T T H E

W A T E R F R O N T I N I T I A T I V E








The Waterfront Initiative has been an exercise in facilitating broad stakeholder conversation with one common goal - to create a comprehensive waterfront plan in the City of Vancouver to address the growing tension on how to manage the interface between land and sea. The work began in 2013, and to date has focused on relationship building and getting the right people to the table from across sectors. We also focussed on what areas of the waterfront should be examined in order to build a resilient and healthy waterfront. We've been inspired by the New York City comprehensive waterfront plan and other cities. We believe for the City of Vancouver to be globally competitive it needs to think comprehensively about its waterfront and its potential for healthy living, as well as thriving tourism, business, and ecological systems.

S T A T E O F

THE WATERFRONT

During a multi-year engagement process, our stakeholders chose working, living, access to nature, ecosystems, and transportation as their five areas of focus as well as a series of key indicators within each of these themes. GSA then commissioned a report to capture these indicators to create a baseline. This first ever comprehensive report is a snapshot of where the City is at so we can move into the next chapter - imagining what a thriving Vancouver waterfront should be.

In this snapshot you will find a high level summary of the forthcoming report, which will be publicly available in early 2018. We ask you, as key stakeholders, to review the content with the question in mind “what do we want for our waterfront?” The establishment of a baseline will help us take the next step as a group of stakeholders, moving to become prescriptive in what Vancouver’s waterfront plan should include. Some next steps to emerge could include:

-  Gathering of further data.
-  The creation of benchmarks.
-  Identifying areas for deeper conversations.
-  Growing stakeholder outreach related to key themes.
-  Doing further policy research from other waterfront cities.
-  Identifying “quick start areas” the City could act on in the next 1-2 years.
-  Thinking big on a few key pieces to set Vancouver apart globally.



City of North Vancouver

Burrard Inlet

English Bay

Burrard Inlet Waterfront

WEST END

DOWNTOWN

STRATHCONA

GRANDVIEW-WOODLAND

HASTINGS-SUNRISE

English Bay Waterfront

False Creek Waterfront

WEST POINT GREY

KITSILANO

FAIRVIEW

MOUNT PLEASANT

/ Electoral Area A

City of Burnaby

Fraser River (North Arm)

DUNBAR-SOUTHLANDS

Musqueam IR 2

KERRISDALE

VICTORIA-FRASERVUE

KILLARNEY

Sea Island

Fraser River Waterfront

MARPOLE

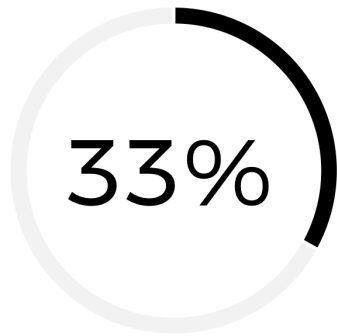
SUNSET

Mitchell Island

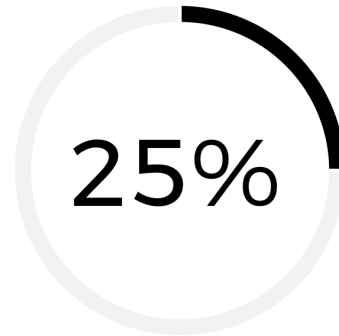
City of Richmond

S U M M A R Y O F
FINDINGS

Including Stanley Park, Vancouver's waterfront is:

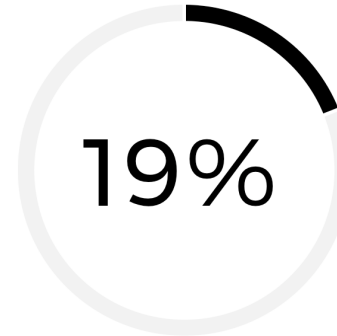


PARKS AREAS



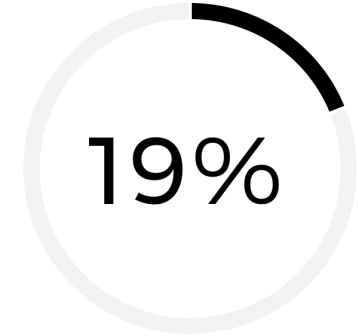
WORKING LANDS

(Port, Commercial, Industrial and
Agricultural)



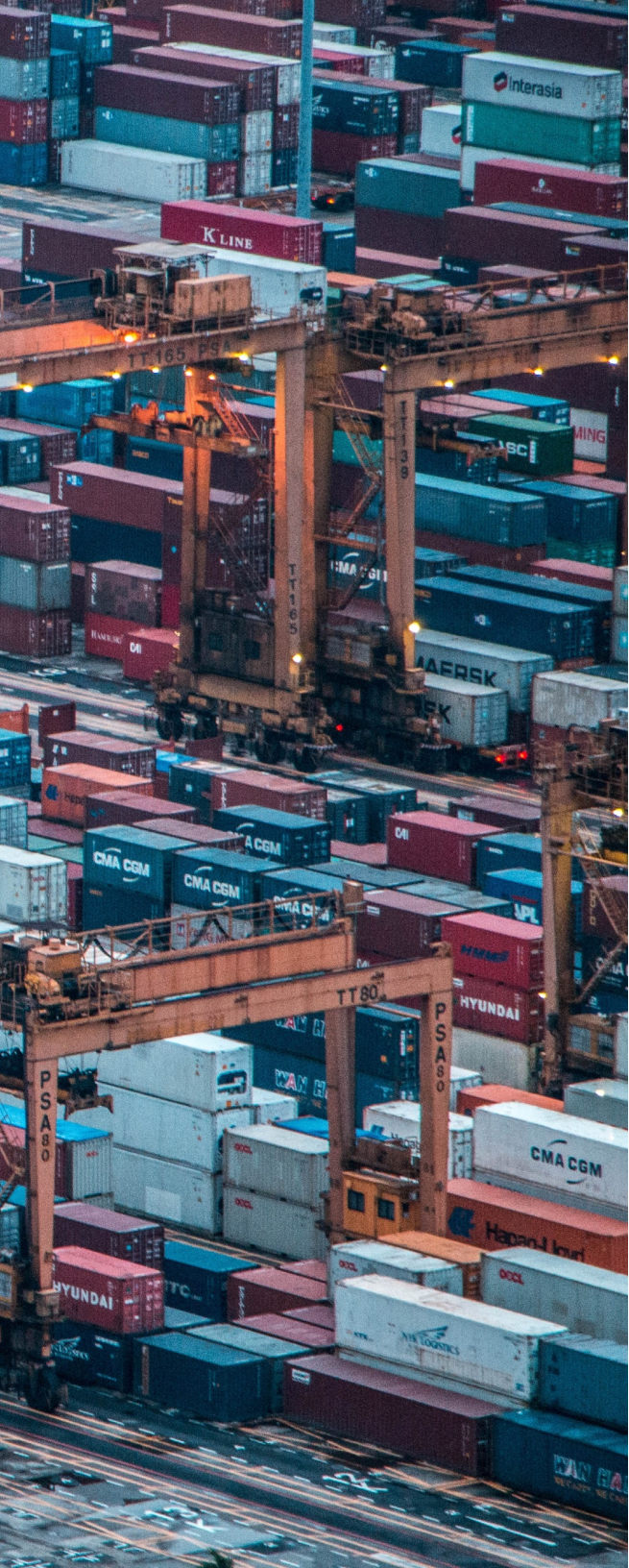
RESIDENTIAL

(Single Detached & Duplex, Townhouse,
Low Rise, High Rise, Mixed-Use)

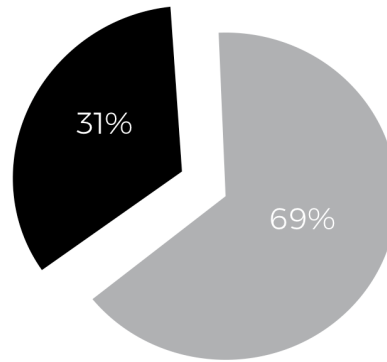


ROADS

5% undeveloped lands. Aside from Parks and Roads, the next largest land use type is Industrial lands at 9%



W A T E R F R O N T W O R K I N G



Of the approximately 315,000 private sector jobs in Vancouver, 96,500 (about 31%) are located on the waterfront (compared only 16% of the populace living along the waterfront).



Top Five Leading employment classes are Commercial Offices (21%), followed by Restaurant, Food & Beverage Industry (15%), Financial Services (8%), Storefront Retail (7%) and Trades, and Contractor or Construction (6%).



W A T E R F R O N T

WORKING

2X

Private employment density on the waterfront is roughly double that of the rest of city at 52 jobs/hectare versus 22 jobs/hectare in the rest of the city. 66% of waterfront employment is in the downtown neighbourhoods.



How does a waterfront help create a competitive working environment? How does this attract top employers and create good jobs, and is there a way to further enhance this?

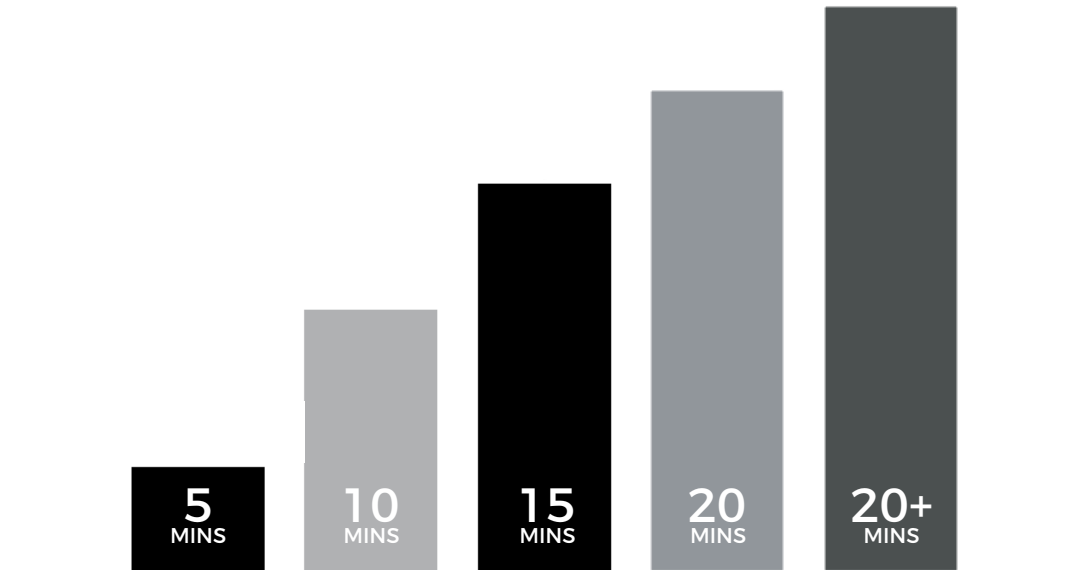


What industries bring the greatest economic good while balancing the other components of the waterfront? Are there any conflicts amongst industries? What kind of industries need to be on the waterfront vs those that don't - is the waterfront being taken by those who want to be there rather than those who need to be?



W A T E R F R O N T

LIVING



Of the approximately 631,500 people living in the City of Vancouver, about 10% or 65,500 live within a 5-minute walk of publicly accessible waterfront. 25% of Vancouver's population or 162,000 people live within a 10 minute walk of the city's publicly accessible waterfront. 37% can walk to the public water front in 15 minutes and 46% of the population can access the waterfront in 20 minutes. 54% of Vancouver's population lives further than 20 minute walk from publicly accessible waterfront.



W A T E R F R O N T

LIVING



Overall, Vancouver's waterfront is 84% multi-family dwellings, with 53% of homes being inhabited by renters. 39% of households along the waterfront can be considered in core housing need according to the standard CMHC definition. 7% of all waterfront lands is singled-detached and duplex, 3.5% is low-rise, 3% is high rise and 1.47% is townhouse. The largest populations living along the waterfront live in: Downtown (35%), West End (22%), and Fairview (11%).

24% of those living along the waterfront are 25-34 years old.

39% of those living along the waterfront are immigrants.

Of those living along the waterfront 20% qualify as low income and 34% are spending 30% or more of their after-tax family income on shelter.

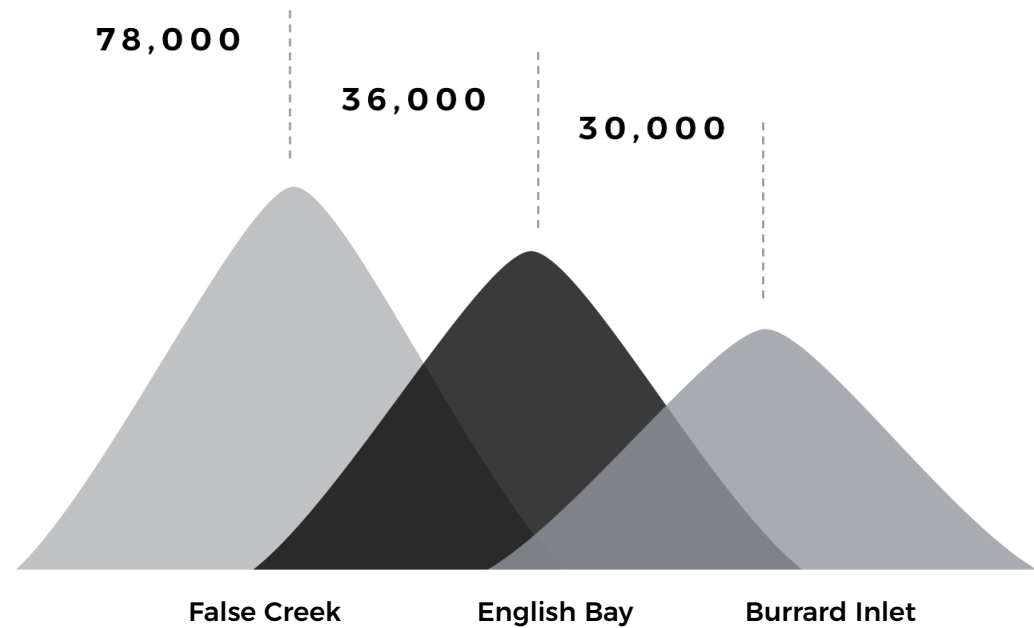


If living near the waterfront is more favourable, how does this impact Vancouver's housing market? Not all access is equal - does proximity always increase quality of life?

W A T E R F R O N T

ACCESS TO NATURE

Vancouver has 63 km of Shoreline of which 29.7% can be considered as natural areas. Stanley Park accounts for 13% of all waterfront lands.



The most highly accessible stretch of waterfront in Vancouver is False Creek, followed by English Bay and Burrard Inlet. The most highly accessible access point is David Lam Park which is the closest shoreline access point for 17,500 people at the 10 minute walk distance threshold.

W A T E R F R O N T

ACCESS TO NATURE



WEST SIDE

Reflecting the more residential nature of this area, the most common land use type (excluding roads) on the West Side would be parks at 41% followed by single detached housing at 7%.

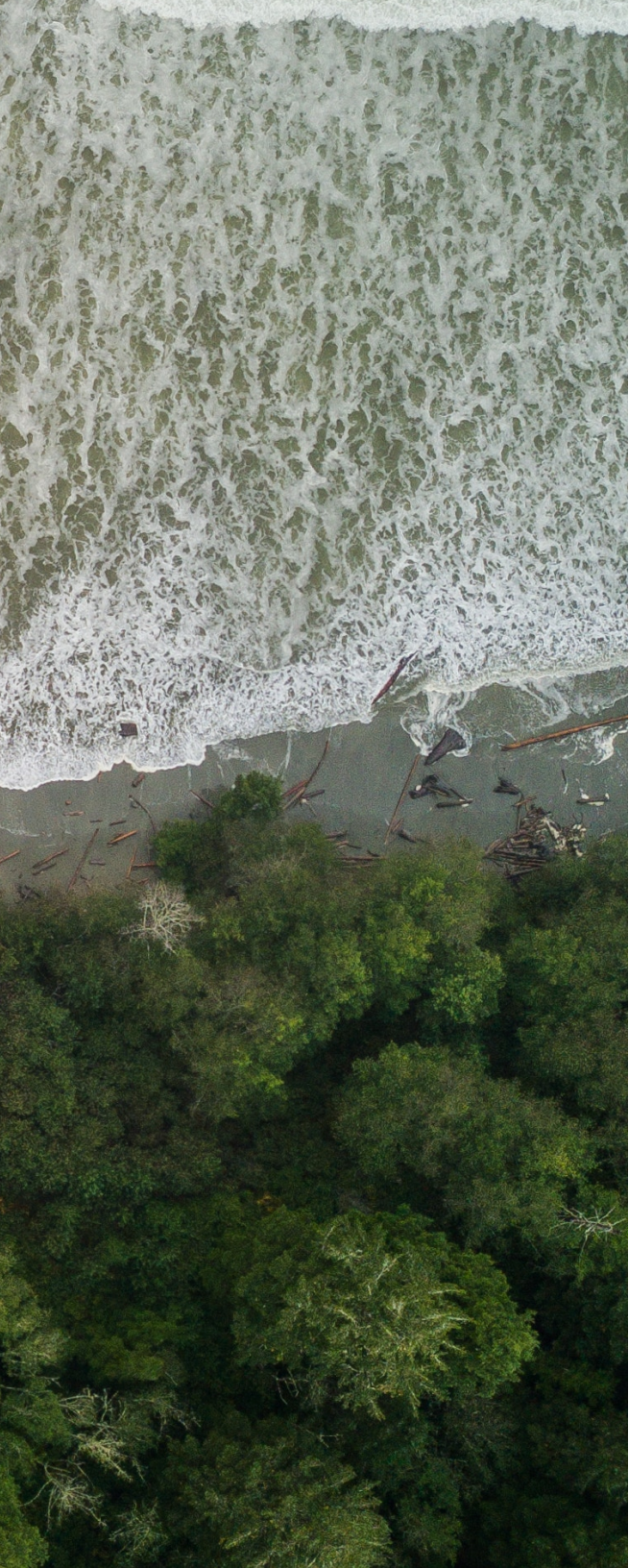


EAST SIDE

The more industrial East Side is 21% comprised of Port Metro Vancouver lands followed by Industrial Lands at 17% (again, excluding roads).

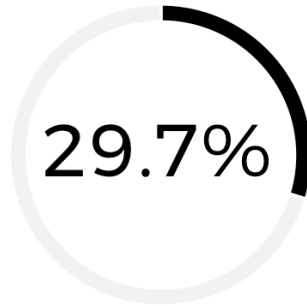


How is “nature” defined? Do we prioritize access for human health, or try to re-wild some areas prioritizing ecosystem health? Are communities getting equitable access to the waterfront?

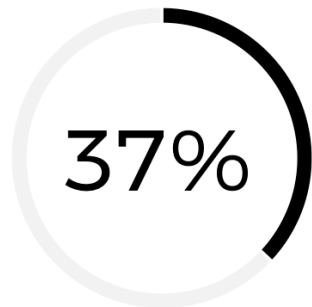


W A T E R F R O N T

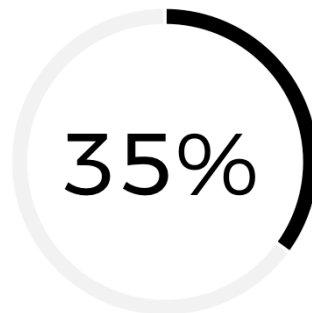
ECOSYSTEMS



Overall, 29.7% of the shoreline area can be considered as part of a natural shoreline (non-heavily-human modified environment).



Approximately 37% of the Fraser shoreline can be considered as natural shoreline.



Approximately 35% of the Burrard Inlet shoreline can be considered as natural shoreline.

W A T E R F R O N T

ECOSYSTEMS

Locations with the highest biodiversity potential (the greatest percentage of natural and semi-natural areas) on the waterfront include:



Stanley Park (82% natural shoreline area)



Dunbar Southlands (70% natural shoreline area)



Kerrisdale (68% natural shoreline)



Assuming a 1m sea level rise by 2100 during a 1 in 500 year event, approximately 33% of the waterfront area would be flooded to a depth greater than 50 cms.



How will Vancouver's waterfront prepare for climate resiliency? What kind of species are vital to the ecological health of the waterfront? What ecological systems are significant to the waterfront?



W A T E R F R O N T

T R A N S P O R T A T I O N

Transportation of people and goods in and along, within and over Vancouver's waterfront is a multi-faceted and multi-modal activity that falls under both federal and municipal jurisdictions and can be categorized into three major modes:

Water-based transportation (3 ferry services, 2 cruise ship terminals, 2 major container terminals, and numerous other port facilities);

Land-based transportation (8 bridges over the waterfront); and

Air-based transportation (Canada's busiest floatplane terminal as well as a helicopter terminal).

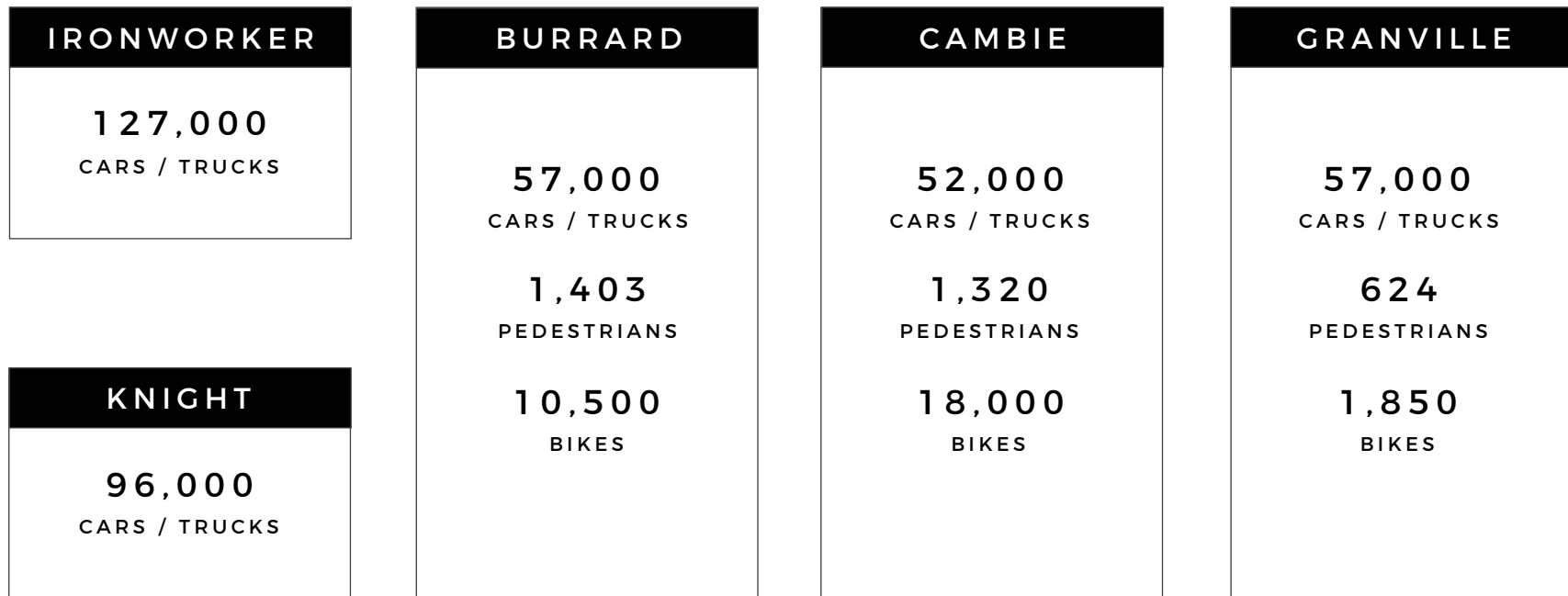
False creek ferries and Aquabus are very busy in False Creek with over:

144,000 passes a year under Burrard Street Bridge (municipal passing to federal waters), over 79,000 under Granville Street bridge and 75,000 under the Cambie Street Bridge.

W A T E R F R O N T

TRANSPORTATION

Vancouver Bridges



Average Daily



What challenges do different modes of transportation face? What balance of modes of transportation is ideal? What infrastructure does Vancouver need to create to optimize a balance in transportation?

S U M M A R Y O F R E L A T E D

EXISTING CITY POLICIES

Greenest City Action Plan:

The City's flagship urban sustainability plan that aims to make Vancouver the greenest city in the world by 2020.

False Creek Water Quality Working Group:

A multi-agency group within the City of Vancouver that is looking at ways to improve the water quality of False Creek, with the long term goal of False Creek being swimmable for people.

Vancouver's Waterway Recreation Strategy:

A draft strategy by the City to look at ways to improve non-motorized boating access and opportunities across the waterfront with a focus on understanding what Vancouverites need and value.

Renewable City Strategy:

The City of Vancouver's plan to transition to 100% renewable energy by the year 2050 in a way that promotes green economic opportunities.

The Biodiversity Strategy:

The goal is to increase the amount of and ecological quality of Vancouver natural areas to support biodiversity in the city.

The Park Board Strategic Framework:

The focus is to provide parks and recreation for all and to be a leader in "greening" and excel in resource management.

The Northeast False Creek Area Plan:

Will establish a high standard for habitat creation and enhancement of biodiversity from the marine and intertidal zones of False Creek to the urban fabric of City neighbourhoods.

Vancouver Bird Strategy:

A strategy to provide conditions for native birds to thrive in Vancouver, providing greater ecological benefits and greater access to nature for Vancouverites.

Urban Forest Strategy:

The plan for growing and maintaining healthy and abundant trees in the City of Vancouver providing cleaner air, rainwater absorption, animal habitat and well-being for all.

E X T E R N A L R E S E A R C H

S U M M A R Y

The most successful waterfront initiatives globally have all been human-centred, people-first working waterfronts. This includes traditional port cities like Cape Town, South Africa, who aimed to make the Victoria and Albert Waterfront “a very special place for all Capetonians” and newer cities like Auckland, New Zealand, who aimed to create “a world-class destination that excites the senses and celebrates our sea-loving Pacific culture and maritime history.” What makes Vancouver’s waterfront special is that it still has stretches of relatively natural landscape that Vancouverites value highly - people flock to see the beauty of the Pacific Northwest, which contributes to the character of our waterfront and city.

Recognizing that most waterfronts around the world are already developed, with industries and residents coexisting, many waterfront initiatives lead with a design-first approach aiming, like Malmö, Sweden, to be attractive, sustainable and innovative.

All involved leadership of cities or city councils, who provided expedited planning and permitting, or were able to change the permitting landscape to allow new/innovative designs and land use ideas, allowing the waterfront to be a sustainability lab.

Some utilized public-private partnerships, especially where the working port was already privatized and a strong working relationship with the port was key. Each city chose different leverage points depending on their strengths. New York focused on leading edge design and development scorecards, while Boston focused on the continuing role of the working port in their heritage and future economic success.

Each city had interagency/advisory groups that played a key role in making sure all stakeholders were informed, involved, and bought in to the goals of the project, which is a key leverage point for the Georgia Strait Alliance to both influence a waterfront plan and play a lead role as a convener of varied interests.

W A T E R F R O N T

FIRST NATIONS

This report was created within and about the unceded territories of the Musqueam, Squamish, and Tsleil-Waututh First Nations. The Georgia Strait Alliance continues to engage with our First Nations communities on this work, and view this project through the lens of truth and reconciliation that is so vital to repairing our relationships and ecosystems.

R E P O R T

DATA SOURCES

Page 5: Metro Vancouver's 2011 Generalized Land Use map

Page 6: City of Vancouver Business Licenses 2016 Employment Estimates ,2016 Canada Census of Population

Page 7: City of Vancouver Business Licenses 2016 Employment Estimates

Page 8: City of Vancouver 2002 Shoreline, 2016 Canada Census of Population

Page 9: 2016 Canada Census of Population

Page 10: 2014 City of Vancouver Biodiversity Strategy, City of Vancouver 2002 Shoreline, 2016 Canada Census of Population

Page 11: Metro Vancouver's 2011 Generalized Land Use map.

Page 12: 2014 City of Vancouver Biodiversity Strategy,

Page 13: 2014 City of Vancouver Biodiversity Strategy, 2015 City of Vancouver Coastal Flood Risk Assessment

Page 14: 2017 Port Metro Vancouver, 2017 City of Vancouver Open Data, 2017 Vancouver Harbour Flight Center, 2017 Aquabus

Page 15: 2015 Translink Screenline Data

T H A N K Y O U
O U R S P O N S O R S

GREENEST CITY FUND

