



Vision of a Sustainability Centre for Victoria

Victoria has a substantial and vibrant community of non-profit organizations, businesses, and educational institutions that are civically engaged, environmentally conscious, and socially minded. BuildGreen Developments, acclaimed for its green building design and development, and VanCity Savings Credit Union, with its strong community-centred mission and expertise in socially responsible real estate development, have joined forces to explore community interest in the creation of a “Sustainability Centre” for Victoria. Many organizations and businesses have talked over the years about their desire for purpose-built space that is ecologically, socially and financially sound. BuildGreen Developments and VanCity would like to help community organizations and businesses come together to co-create a vision that results in the development of an exciting new Sustainability Centre featuring state-of-the-art green building design.

Many environmental, community, and international non-profit agencies working in Victoria are currently located in sub-optimal office spaces that do not reflect their organizational ethics and values. A significant number of environmentally and socially conscious companies and educational institutions are also in this situation. They are spending their limited funds leasing office spaces, where they have little or no control over how their spaces are managed or maintained. Some of these organizations are currently exploring different options for meeting their space requirements, making this an optimal time to begin discussing the idea of a jointly created space that will meet all of these needs.

The Sustainability Centre is envisioned to be an innovative and dynamic, state-of-the-art green building that provides ecologically and socially responsible working space for a range of organizations. It can also be a living and breathing building that constantly educates its users and visitors about the efficiency of its functions, and can adapt and evolve over time to meet changing needs. The benefits of such a building would include:



- Budgets spent on green building infrastructure, or potentially even building ownership, rather than on rent.
- Many organizations with complementary mandates and programming would work in a shared, collaborative space.
- Financial, human, and other resources could be pooled to create a leading edge green building with design features that would not be possible if each organization were to try and do it alone.
- Bringing together the non-profit, research, education, and business communities in a common space for cross-sectoral collaboration.
- Creates the opportunity for shared equipment and back-office infrastructure, further reducing operating costs.
- Jointly share in the rewards of the green buildings’ success, perhaps through co-operative ownership and management of the Centre.
- Encourages collaboration on projects and initiatives through creating a hub of innovative thought, action, and education.

This vision is a reflection of the ideas and values of the project sponsors, described below. We recognize the need for the ideas expressed here to evolve as the concept becomes further articulated, and will welcome the ideas of new partners as they are brought into the project.

Project Sponsors



The BuildGreen Developments team is dedicated to the creation of ecologically sound, healthy, and economically efficient developments. All of our projects are conceived, designed and constructed to protect and enhance the local community and its ecosystems. We strive to create projects that are healthy and vibrant models of sustainability.

BuildGreen Developments is committed to bring an exceptional breadth and range of professional expertise to every project that we are involved in. We are committed to working closely with our clients throughout North America to understand their needs and intentions, their local issues, identify opportunities, and analyze project economics.

Joe Van Belleghem, President of BuildGreen Developments Inc., is a development professional with a strong track record in green building projects. As the development consultant for the Vancouver Island Technology Park, he was instrumental in achieving Canada's first gold level certification under the "Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design" (LEED™ 2.0) program. The project was also awarded the 2002 BOMA BC Earth Award and the UDI Sustainable Development Award. Joe is a founding member and current board member of the Canada Green Building Council. He also currently serves on the Board of Directors for the United States Green Building Council.



VanCity Savings Credit Union has a mission to help people and communities thrive and prosper. With a full-service Victoria branch that is being relocated to 3075 Douglas at Finlayson in the fall, we also want to play a significant role in Victoria by investing in community and environmental initiatives that reflect our commitment to sustainability.



VanCity Enterprises Ltd. is a VanCity subsidiary that works in partnerships with local groups and societies to successfully build projects that are financially viable and meet the needs of the surrounding community.

Jacques Khouri, President and CEO of Vancity Enterprises, is a pioneer developer of non-profit co-operative housing in Vancouver. He initiated and built 30 housing co-operatives comprising 1,200 residential units. Many of these co-operative developments are recipients of heritage awards or have been recognized for excellence of design across Canada. One of these co-ops was the first passive solar townhouse project built in Canada in 1979. Jacques is a founding member and current board member of the Canada Green Building Council. He has served as president of the Real Estate Institute of B.C., and was also on the board of the B.C. Housing Management Commission.

Features of the Sustainability Centre

By bringing non-profit, business and educational communities together, and by sharing ideas, resources and inspirations we will be able to build the most innovative green building project ever created in Victoria, and perhaps even in the entire country. This Centre might include some of the following features and innovations:



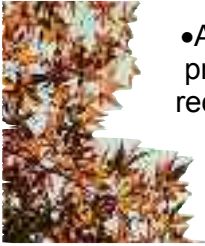
- LEED™ platinum certified.
- Ecologically restorative.
- Be a net energy exporter using only green energy sources.
- Design to utilize salvaged and reused materials.
- Promote the local economy through preferential purchasing of locally harvested and manufactured building materials.
- Procurement policies that give preference to suppliers with demonstrated social and environmental objectives.
- Design to have a clean and healthy indoor environment.
- Demonstrate that innovative green buildings can be highly cost-effective.
- A living green building designed to be an educational, hands-on showcase of green building design, technology, and operation.



- Utilization of shared resources like electric hybrid fleet vehicles, board rooms, educational and meeting spaces, libraries, kitchens and washrooms, recreation facilities, accommodations, retail and social gathering spaces so as to eliminate duplication and use space and resources efficiently.
- Opportunity to consider the integration of other costly back-office functions.
- Showcase new and innovative green building technologies through their installation in the centre.

Development Options

Community and education organizations and sustainability businesses are being invited to explore these ideas further with the project sponsors. There are many opportunities ahead to design and shape the purpose and function of this building to best meet the needs of its potential users. The proposed Centre will be further shaped by the siting options and opportunities that will become apparent as the project progresses. The current sponsors have identified several possible options, including:



- A mixed use, and mixed user building that includes non-profit agencies, educational organizations, progressive businesses, potentially some retail and residential spaces, and community and recreational space.
- A centre for environmentally focused non-profit organizations and businesses.
- A centre for socially and/or community focused non-profit agencies.

Next Steps

The project sponsors are currently in the exploratory stages of this initiative. They are contacting potential partners to determine the level of interest in the proposal and to seek interest in attending a preliminary meeting with others to consider the opportunities of proceeding.

Two meetings are planned for mid to late July, one with potential non-profit partners and one with potential business partners to further understand the level of interest in the project and to determine how to move forward. If you are interested in exploring the idea of a Sustainability Centre for Victoria, or have some ideas and innovations to contribute to this project, please be in touch with us.

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