Chronology of Planning and Development in Vancouver

A project of the Vancouver City Planning Commission

What is a Milestone?

The Chronology of Planning and Development in Vancouver is a project of the Vancouver City Planning Commission that depicts watershed moments in the evolution of the city since the mid-1800s. This document describes the guiding principles for adding milestones to the Chronology.

In identifying milestones, the VCPC chronology committee has pinpointed events, policies and decisions that have been relevant in shaping Vancouver as a unique urban settlement. **A milestone can take the form of an innovative policy decision, action or program related to land use or social, cultural or economic matters.** A milestone event can originate as a decision in municipal government, in Vancouver city council, as a community initiative or in the non-profit or business world.

Guiding Principles

To qualify for the Chronology, the proposed milestone must meet all the following conditions:

(1) There is **a clear justification of how and why this event, policy or decision stands out as a transformative moment** in Vancouver's development or has potential to become a game changer.

(2) There is **a direct relationship between the event, policy or decision and the actions that flow from the event, policy or decision.** The representation of the milestone as a discernable action must be clearly established. This principle applies to all forms of planning. An event that concerns the city's social and cultural life that does not culminate in any form of action or decision will not qualify as a social-planning milestone.

(3) There is **a rationale for listing the milestone in the designated year.** Since pinpointing a year is sometimes difficult, the Chronology places new milestones on a list of emerging milestones that are re-evaluated after five years and then either confirmed or rejected. In some cases, the passage of time can lead to the re-interpretation of events and their significance. Hindsight and delayed consequences, as well as value shifts and attitudinal changes, can result in past events and decisions being viewed differently and more importantly or significantly. What is seen as a milestone today may turn out to be insignificant in the future; and

(4) There are **verifiable sources for all information related to the event's back/current story.** Primary source material is preferred, although secondary sources could be used to identify the significance of a milestone.

Templates for Milestones
Some obvious examples: the founding of the city in July 1886; the amalgamation of Vancouver, South Vancouver and Point Grey in January 1929; and the establishment of a planning department at Vancouver City Hall in 1952.

Other excellent examples include the decisions described by authors Mike Harcourt, Ken Cameron and Sean Rossiter in **City Making in Paradise** (2007). For more examples, see the evolving list of milestones on the website and on the wiki **Milestones** page.

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