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Workshop 03 Living and New Urban Planning

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Planning for the Cultural Creatives

Cities that aspire to attract new economy jobs must offer a milieu or a city with a "buzz" that is attractive to the cultural creatives. The cultural creatives are made up of a number of professions and communities including writers, performers, artists, those employed in the new economy industries as well as film, video, television and new media. In particular, it is important that cities be able to attract youth to their communities. Vancouver has undertaken a number of initiatives to ensure that many cultural creatives will call Vancouver their home. Beginning in 1988, Vancouver changed its by-laws to foster the development of artist 'live/work' studios leading to the development of more than 2 000 studios. The city's planning initiatives have also favoured streets as the focus of public life and discouraged malls. Outdoor patios, cafes and public gathering areas are also encouraged. The City's Office of Cultural Affairs takes an active interest in all aspects of the creative arts and has recommended funding for a wide variety of galleries, performing art groups, cultural institutions and other facets of the creative scene. Considering the perspectives of youth has been pursued through initiating opinion surveys oriented to youth and meeting with youth groups. Recently, the police and City staff has begun working closely with Vancouver's burgeoning skateboard community to identify a wide variety of "skate spots" in the downtown for street skaters to practice the art of "shredding" ledges, riding railings and jumping stairs. Planning for the cultural creatives is not without its challenges as the downtown has doubled in population since 1991 to more than 80,000 and another 60,000 are expected in the next two decades. Temporal dysfunction where the cultural creatives work and play in a different time frame has resulted in some conflicts particularly with new residents who have never lived downtown. However, Vancouver's downtown planning team, headed by Michael Gordon, has taken a number of initiatives to minimize conflicts. For Vancouver's downtown planning team, part of the art of planning is the balance between order and disorder.