

**THE CHALLENGE OF CHANGE**

We've heard it all too many depressing times before: climate change, environmental ruin, peak oil, food insecurity. Despite the gloomy forecast, we find change difficult. We're challenged by the complexity, we aren't sure where to move. In the midst of the muddle, we just carry on.

That may be why "sustainability doesn't sell." We're not sure what it means – not sure what it holds for us. What *does* sell is health, happiness, comfort, light, fresh air, convenience, community amenities. Good relationships, a sense of responsibility, a place for children, opportunities for education and knowledge. What if we banned the word sustainability and simply focused on people and their well-being, and physical and spiritual health?

Start, then, with a city that is cradled in the arms of nature, nestled against majestic mountains, enfolding sheltered waters, framed by the depth and soul of an ancient forest. The setting provides strength, and suggestions for celebrating the values that have nurtured the landscape and its millennia of dependants. Learn the essential living ingredients that provide well-being and harmony, that reflect a balance of resource and need. From there, model and respect the delicate balance that sustains life across the planet.

Traditionally, we have developed our world by separating problems from each other. We have become experts at dividing our experts and expertise, at designing articulate solutions for isolated needs. What we

have not done is considered the connectivity of nature, its robust ability to adapt, grow and flourish. In particular, we have denied our own place within it – we have forgotten that where nature is healthy, so are we.

So, what *if* we banned the word sustainability and aimed for well-being, and physical and spiritual health? What if we built communities so that relationships are easy, landscapes are restored and most of what we need is close at hand? What if the fabric of the city actually nourished us as the landscape in the wilderness always did? What if we stopped dividing our expertise, and instead confronted the challenge of complexity with the joy of creativity? What if we solved multiple problems with elegant, integrated solutions?

We might combine a children's play area and an experimental garden in a restful green space that treats stormwater and provides habitat. We might fill buildings with daylight so that residents linger to chat and help each other navigate life. We might re-use energy already purchased and used once, by cycling it back into our homes for heat. We might plant our buildings with gardens that grow food, protect the structure, attract birds and nourish our yearning for green. We might celebrate water, saving it carefully and using it respectfully for the life-giving force it represents. We might need less material. We might experience more joy.

We might build our neighbourhoods like this one. Sustainably, because we're happy that way.

CONNECTIVITY

“What if we solved multiple problems with elegant, integrated solutions?”

This chapter invites us on the final leg of a journey that has toured us through the Millennium Water Olympic Village from infrastructure to exterior cladding, from early planning to final plantings. Though it is always risky to write about what has not yet come to pass, we peek at the future life of this community's residents by learning about their homes – the interior design, the intentions for health and activity, the opportunities for accessibility and aging in place.

We also dive into the world of Net Zero – the emerging concept that a building need not be an energy hog and a pollution emitter – but rather can incorporate design that serves residents' needs for heat, light and cooling without being a net consumer of energy. There is hope for the future here – in the efficiencies that reduce resource consumption, and the solutions that find resources where they were previously overlooked.

The Net Zero building in the Olympic Village is intended to show how one day all building should be designed and built.

From there, we launch into vision. Many people collaborated on building this state-of-the-art expression of community sustainability that could be accomplished within the constraints of time, money and current practice and knowledge. These people lived and breathed the challenge of sustainable development daily for two decades. Now, at the conclusion of the project, we collect and present their ideas and thoughts. Far from a statement about the present, however, these thoughts are intended to present inspiration and insight – a springboard for the next evolution of the places we call home. We hope you will take up the challenge.

