

**Olympism’s Third Pillar: Environment**

The Olympic movement, with one of the most recognizable brands on the globe, has the power to make a significant impact – an impact that reaches beyond sport into other aspects of our lives. The two central pillars of Olympism have traditionally been “sport” and “culture.” In the 1990s, the International Olympic Committee (IOC) officially added “environment” as the third pillar of Olympism. The IOC objective is “not only to see to it that the staging of the Games does not have a negative impact on the environment, but also to help improve the environment and leave a green legacy.” Although the Olympic Games are primarily about sport and athletes, the IOC recognizes that “the Games can also be used to provide sustainable environmental legacies, such as rehabilitated and revitalized sites,

increased environmental awareness, and improved environmental policies and practices.”

The Vancouver Organizing Committee for the 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games (VANOC) embraced this challenge by expanding beyond the environmental impacts and benefits of the Games to also include the social and economic dimensions of sustainability. The seeds of VANOC’s integrated approach to sustainability were sown prior to 2003, in Vancouver’s bid to host the Games.

**Vancouver’s Bid: Sustainability Commitment**

Determined to win the right to host the Games and demonstrate its commitment to a greener future, the City of Vancouver positioned itself as a sustainability trailblazer in its Olympic bid. Sustainability was

written directly into many of the Bid commitments and, ultimately, once the Bid was awarded, into the vision for the Vancouver 2010 Winter Games: “A stronger Canada whose spirit is raised by its passion for sport, culture and sustainability.”

**Sustainability in Action: VANOC**

According to VANOC, sustainability means:

“Managing the social, economic and environmental impacts and opportunities of our Games to produce lasting benefits, locally and globally.”

VANOC has demonstrated an unprecedented commitment to sustainability. Sustainability is integrated across all aspects of the organization, and performance is tracked, measured and reported upon in annual sustainability

reports. VANOC’s commitment to social and economic sustainability is demonstrated through its official partnership with the Four Host First Nations and its effort to make the Games accessible. VANOC has implemented programs aimed at creating economic opportunities for inner-city businesses and residents. In addition, VANOC has instituted a sustainable purchasing program called Buy Smart, which aims to create value through Games-related spending. A final example of VANOC’s proactive approach to sustainability is its commitment to green design and construction for all new venues, as demonstrated at Vancouver’s Olympic Village.



This illustrates VANOC’s comprehensive approach to embracing the three ‘legs’ of sustainability.

**Green Legacy: Vancouver’s Olympic Village**

In preparing its bid to host the Games, the Vancouver Bid Corporation (VBC) needed to identify a location for Vancouver’s Olympic Village. One option was to build a temporary village that would be erected and deconstructed for roughly \$30 million. As an alternative, the VBC explored the possibility of directing the available funds toward constructing a permanent village that would constitute a real and lasting development project. The village would remain as a legacy following the Games, offering permanent housing. The City of Vancouver saw an opportunity to use the allocated funds toward developing the first phase of SEFC. The City’s offer of the SEFC lands for the village was ultimately accepted and included in the bid.

“... The Vancouver Olympic Village will overlook the sparkling waters of the Pacific Ocean and the urban heart of one of the world’s most livable cities... Locating the Olympic Village here will contribute significantly to revitalizing this underdeveloped part of the city, and will serve as a catalyst for this sustainable community development.” — Excerpt from Vancouver’s Olympic Bid Book



An artist’s rendering of Vancouver’s Olympic Village with its spectacular view looking north to downtown and beyond the city’s limits to the North Shore mountains.