The Origins Of Traffic Calming
In Vancouver’s West End

by
Adrienne Kinzel
B.A., (Geography), Simon Fraser University, 2006

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Approval

Name: Adrienne Kinzel
Degree: Master of Urban Studies
Title: The Origins Of Traffic Calming In Vancouver's West End

Examiner Committee:

Chair: Meg Holden
Associate Professor,
Urban Studies and Geography

Anthony Perl
Senior Supervisor
Professor,
Urban Studies and Political Science

Karen Ferguson
Supervisor
Associate Professor,
Urban Studies and History

Nicholas Blomley
External Examiner
Professor
Department of Geography
Simon Fraser University

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Abstract

This thesis argues that an evolving understanding of the concept of livability was integral to the historic development of traffic calming and mini-parks in Vancouver’s West End. Traffic calming was pioneered in the early 1970s by progressive planners who wanted to improve livability in the newly densified West End by getting rid of unwelcome traffic and creating new park space and pedestrian amenities to combat resident feelings of alienation. In the late 1970s and early 1980s, traffic diversion also became a key policy in a civic drive to remove street prostitution from the West End, a struggle that invoked discourses of ‘livability’ which were used to justify exclusion of socially undesirable people from valued space on the streets in this downtown neighbourhood. Although I conclude that traffic calming is a means to create a more walkable, green and sustainable city, I also find that it contributed to heightened social divisions in the neighbourhood and across the city.

Keywords: Traffic Calming, Mini-parks, Livability, Prostitution
Dedication

I dedicate this thesis to my partner Geordie, my children Julius and Georgia, and my parents Sharon and Jim.
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I could not have finished this thesis without the support and encouragement from many people in my life.

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List of Acronyms

ASP          Alliance for the Safety of Prostitutes
CPR          Canadian Pacific Railway
CROWE        Concerned Residents Of the West End
ITE          Institute of Transportation Engineers
NPA          Non-Partisan Association
STJ          Shame The Johns
TEAM         The Electors Action Movement
UBC          University of British Columbia
VPD          Vancouver Police Department
WELD         West End Livability Directions Project
Preface

This thesis argues that an evolving understanding of the concept of livability was integral to the historic development of traffic calming and mini-parks in Vancouver’s West End. Traffic calming was pioneered in the early 1970s by progressive planners who wanted to improve livability in the newly densified West End by getting rid of unwelcome traffic and creating new park space and pedestrian amenities to combat resident feelings of alienation. In the late 1970s and early 1980s, traffic diversion also became a key policy in a civic drive to remove street prostitution from the West End, a struggle that invoked discourses of ‘livability’ which were used to justify exclusion of socially undesirable people from valued space on the streets in this downtown neighbourhood.

Although I conclude that traffic calming is a means to create a more walkable, green and sustainable city, I also critically investigate at how it contributed to heightened social divisions in the neighbourhood and across the city.

This paper traces the origins of traffic calming, street closures and mini parks in Vancouver’s West End and critically examines the discourses of livability that supported their implementation amid conflict. My thesis shows that the policy transition in the West End from streets to parks was not smooth; planners had to navigate resistance and opposition on many fronts including from residents, property and business owners, politicians, the police and fire departments, and the intermittent support and disapproval from the city’s engineering department.
Chapter 1.

Question and Justification

For my capstone project, I will ask this question: “what are the origins of traffic calming in Vancouver’s West End – when and why was traffic calming implemented at this time and place?”

At its most basic level, traffic calming represents a response to the pervasiveness of the automobile in cities; it involves imposing restrictions or limitations on the free movement of traffic. For the purposes of this project, I will be using the definitions of traffic calming provided by the City of Vancouver and the Institute of Transportation Engineers & Transportation Association of Canada:

Traffic Calming is the combination of mainly physical measures that reduce the negative effects of motor vehicle use, alter driver behaviour and improve conditions for non-motorized street users.

(ITE definition in Rasthorne, 2007)

Traffic calming involves slowing the speed or reducing the volume of traffic on neighbourhood streets to increase safety and livability in the neighbourhood.

(City of Vancouver, 2011)

The ITE definition focuses on physical measures that impact mobility, while the City of Vancouver’s definition encompasses the community and livability dimension of streets. Traffic calming and re-appropriating street space for non-automobile use is a hot topic of debate these days, both locally and globally, for example in Vancouver with the recent decision to temporarily close Robson Street to cars on the block of the Vancouver Art Gallery during the summer, or famously, New York’s decision to close parts of Times Square to traffic in 2009. Some authors such as Jan Gehl (2010) and Chris Turner (2011) have argued that cities today, in many diverse parts of the world, are in the process of a radical shift that is altering our conceptions of the ‘proper’ uses of the urban
street, that there is a currently a pedestrian and bicycle “re-conquest” of the city occurring. Traffic calming is one policy (among several others, such as building new bike lanes,) that is fostering this change, both in busy downtowns and also in quieter residential neighbourhoods.

The West End was the first neighbourhood in Vancouver that was targeted for traffic calming. Indeed Vancouver was one of the first cities in North America to complete a neighbourhood traffic calming plan. Because it was an early adopter of traffic calming, the experience in the West End can be seen as a paradigmatic case that marked a turning point in Vancouver’s planning history, leading the way for the current policy paradigm of traffic calming throughout most parts of the city (City of Vancouver, 2011). The advent of traffic calming in Europe since the 1960s and Vancouver since the 1970s represented a progressive shift from the pro-automobile planning that dominated city planning regimes during the mid 20th century towards policies to limit and restrict automobiles in cities that are familiar in contemporary 21st century discourses of urban sustainability and livability.

By undertaking a detailed case study of the West End, this M.Urb project provides unique and valuable insights into some of the dynamics of producing a livable city, and specific traffic policies that contribute to walkable neighbourhoods. While several books and articles mention traffic calming as one of the key factors contributing to livability in Vancouver, none of them go into much depth about it, leading me to identify a research gap.

In this thesis, I also document the evidence connecting certain decisions to implement traffic calming in the West End and the history of the sex trade on Davie Street, which was displaced from the West End in the mid 1980s. This side of the story connects to broader urban studies literature on the social “power/space” aspects of urban planning and municipal power, for example debates about the use of physical changes (like traffic barriers) to displace unsavoury activities such as street prostitution from particular areas to make way for gentrification.

I have chosen to focus on the West End program because according to Zein et al, it was “one of the earliest and largest neighbourhood traffic-calming projects
implemented in North America, and is considered to be one of the most successful” (Zein et al, 1998, p.3-4). I wanted to do more thorough research about the definitive facts that support such as statement, one of which for example is, when exactly were traffic diverters installed? I also wanted to understand why they were installed, in order to determine precisely how the neighbourhood arrived at its present situation where most of its streets are cut off. A major purpose of this thesis is to critically evaluate several conflicting narratives or theories about the reasons traffic calming was introduced in Vancouver’s West End that are put forward by authors such as Punter (2003), Price (2012), Macdonald (2008), Lowman (1992) and Ross (2012). The first theory is that starting in the early 1970s traffic calming was introduced to restrict the external nuisance of cut-through traffic from the Lions Gate Bridge by implementing the “Chilco street cut-off” in 1973 (Rawsthorne, 2007). Another theory, that the purpose was to foster neighbourhood livability, is supported by social planning documents from the late 1960s and early 1970s that reported that rapid high-density residential growth had transformed the historic neighbourhood into an overcrowded concrete jungle lacking open space and park space (Patillo, 1969, Collier, 1970); traffic calming was an innovation that allowed planners of that era to implement much needed public realm improvements, making space for gardens and micro-parks that fostered pedestrian and cycling activity in the West End. The other major narrative I will explore is that the West End’s extensive traffic calming was mostly installed in the early 1980s to deter and displace street prostitution (Punter, 2003; Lowman, 1992; Ross, 2012).

What I found is that while there is truth behind each of these theories, each of these accounts contain omissions; the complete story as documented in this thesis is based on a detailed review of archival planning records, revealing a much more nuanced and complicated narrative than these authors have described. I strove to contextualize this archival data with consideration of the historic socio-economic and political conditions that led to the innovation of traffic calming in the West End in the 1970s and that influenced the processes of planning and implementation.

My exploration of the implications and impacts that accompanied traffic calming in the West End contributes to a critical understanding of the role that planning interventions have played in shaping neighbourhood change, urban livability, and
sustainability in Vancouver. Although many aspects of this case study are locally specific, this thesis also addresses broader policy lessons of interest to cities elsewhere that are considering traffic calming as a solution to traffic problems and social conflicts in urban neighbourhoods.
Chapter 2.

Literature Review

2.1. Introduction

In any city, the streets are enormously important public spaces. For many urban theorists, ranging from Jane Jacobs to Jan Gehl, streets are perceived as spaces that are central to notions of “urban livability”. Vancouver generally is well known for its ‘livability,’ and for this reason, it provides a good ‘laboratory’ to study the idea of livability. In this vein, several authors have written about the unique planning history of the city, seeking to examine the historic path and series of decisions about urban design of Vancouver’s public realm that led the city to its ‘livability’ achievements (Berelowitz, 2005; Harcourt & Cameron, 2007; MacDonald, 2008; Punter, 2003). Some of these authors mention traffic calming as a factor that contributes to livability in Vancouver, but none of them go into much depth about it, so I have identified a gap that needs to be filled by looking in more detail at the origins of the West End’s traffic calming and the influence of this discourse of livability that was developing in Vancouver around the same time.

The system of traffic diverters and the nine micro-parks that were installed at several ‘reclaimed’ streets in the West End could be framed as examples of Appleyard’s ‘livable streets’ theory and also by Gehl’s planning philosophy that promotes ‘life between buildings’ through high quality outdoor spaces. On the other hand, the implementation of neighbourhood-wide traffic calming in the West End was connected to the displacement of the Davie street sex stroll and its near total erasure from public space and public memory, where the actual traffic calming is one of the only visible reminders (see Appendix Figure 20); this relates to a whole other set of literatures by writers such as Leonie Sandercock (1998), Delores Hayden (1995), Nick Blomley (2004)
and Norman Klein (2008) that document forgotten planning histories. These scholars utilize feminist, postcolonial, antiracist and queer epistemologies, seeking to put marginalized voices back in the forefront in order to challenge dominant narratives of urban history. Through this thesis, I will ask whether livability is one of those dominant hegemonic narratives of contemporary urban planning that also should be challenged.

2.2. Livability

Livability is a concept that at a basic level signifies “quality of life” of a neighbourhood, city, or region. Livability can encompass broad concepts of economy, ecology and equity that are also the pillars of sustainable development (Whelan, 2012), or be more narrowly associated with specific aspects of public space, (Banerjee, 2001), transportation systems, (Litman, 2011; Vuchic, 1999) or building design (MacDonald, 2005). The organization “Partners for Livable Communities” defines livability in the broad sense as: “the sum of factors that add up to quality of life, including the built and natural environment, economic prosperity, social stability and equity, educational, entertainment and recreational opportunities” (Partners for Livable Communities, 2012). However, the precise meaning of the term is often elusive and relative, depending on the place, time, purpose of assessment and values of the assessor. Robert K Whelan argues that the task of defining livability is similar to US Supreme Court Justice Stewart’s definition of pornography in the 1960s, in that “he did not know exactly what it was, but he knew it when he saw it” (Whelan, 2012, p.1). Similarly, David Godschalk (2004) writes that “livability does not come packaged in a single accepted definition,” however according to Godschalk, urban livability is strongly related to everyday physical environments and placemaking (Godschalk, 2004, p.6). This accords with Sanders’ 1966 definition that: “livability is the sum total of the qualities of the urban environment that tend to induce in the citizen a state of well-being and satisfaction” (Sanders, 1966, p.102).

The presumption of the power of design to materialize a “good city” is a common historical thread that runs from ancient urbanism to the City Beautiful movement to modernist ideals of Le Corbusier and the Charter of Athens, on to New Urbanist planning (Hall, 2002). In this vein, urban livability is framed and understood as a form of spatial
determinism that assumes that the built environment is the primary determinant of human behaviour and satisfaction. As an example, The Congress of New Urbanism provides guidelines for a livable environment as list of physical characteristics; these include livable streets with compact, walkable blocks, mixed-use neighbourhoods that provide a range of housing choices with walkable access to shops, school and work, and a ‘human-scale’ public realm (Whelan, 2012). Jane Jacobs (1961) also prescribed physical conditions that foster livability or in her words “neighbourhood vitality” which include mixed land uses and historic buildings, but she describes social preconditions as well such as: cultural diversity, social cohesion and busy activity on the street which lowers crime by providing “eyes on the street.”

Perhaps due to influence of Jacobs, or perhaps due to the energy crisis of the 1970s that led to a belief that rising gas prices would see people move back into the central city, livability came to be associated with downtown living in the late 1960s and early 1970s (Whelan, 2012). During the 1970s, cities such as Vancouver and Portland officially adopted livability as a strategy for urban revitalization that addressed concerns about the ‘hollowing out’ of downtowns and inner city neighbourhoods due to suburbanization (Ley, 1980).

Over the years, the shifting meanings of livability and the varying purposes for which livability research has been employed emphasize the power-laden and subjective political quality of livability as a hegemonic discourse (McCann, 2004). Reflecting eight years after Vancouver’s TEAM regime swept into office in 1972 on its ‘livable city’ platform, Ley argued that: “except in special circumstances, it seems the ideology of the livable city is rarely compatible with criteria of social equity or economic efficiency” (Ley, 1980, p.238). In 1990 he noted:

One important form of power is the ability to define the terms of public discourse, and an eloquent example of this form of power is the career of the term ‘urban livability’. Over its twenty years of widespread usage, the term has served a range of masters. (Ley, 1990, p. 34)

McCann (2004) argues that the contemporary master of a large body of popular media accounts and academic research on urban livability is the dominant neo-liberal vision of the city as a branded and marketable commodity situated in a broader politics
of interurban competition. Holden & Scerri (2011) also problematize the livability rankings published by groups such as *The Economist*, Mercer and the OECD, arguing that the choice of livability indicators glosses over important issues of sustainability and inequality.

Nevertheless, many other authors such as Harcourt & Cameron, (2007), MacDonald, (2008), Newman, (2007), and Punter (2003) discuss livability in a positive light as a useful concept to measure the successes of Vancouver’s urban design and planning. One factor that is often cited is the 1960’s citizen opposition that caused the city to reject a plan for a major urban freeway through the downtown (Harcourt & Cameron, 2007; Price, 2012). Another historic feature is that Vancouver began densifying the central city starting with high-rises in the West End during the late 1950s, and this pattern influenced the later development of mixed income high density pedestrian oriented neighbourhoods of South False Creek built in the 1970s, as well as more recent high density development of Yaletown and Coal Harbour built in the 1990s and 2000s with their characteristic podium and tower style (Punter, 2003). Peter Newman (2007) discusses how the Vancouver’s downtown livability agenda has also fostered progress towards sustainable transportation objectives. “Sixty thousand people now live downtown and this has fostered a major mode shift towards greener transportation as more people live closer to work, cutting commuting times and de-emphasizing the need for the car” (Newman, 2007). Newman writes that:

In the city of Vancouver, the emphasis on high density walking-city redevelopment has been an economic success: over 50 000 people have moved to the area; there have been significant reductions in car use (31 000 fewer trips per day); and increases in walking and biking to 107 000 more trips per day. (Newman, 2007, p. 21)

MacDonald meanwhile, credits the physical characteristics of the public realm that support the modal shift to walking and biking described by Newman, arguing that Vancouver’s reputation for livability rests on public realm planning of streets and parks. MacDonald writes that:

Vancouver is consistently singled out as one of the most livable cities in the world, and when asked, Vancouverites point to aspects of the city’s physical public realm as being of central importance. Public realm
elements that both give a special sense of place to the city and add to the quality of everyday life include magnificent street trees; extensive waterfront parks; walks and bicycle paths; narrow and traffic-calmed residential streets; and numerous neighbourhood parks, community centers, and schools. (MacDonald, 2008, p.176)

For MacDonald, traffic calmed streets are one of the five public realm patterns that particularly contribute to the Vancouver’s sense of place and livability, a conclusion that is supported by the ‘livable streets’ literature documented in the next section.

2.3. Livable streets

Aside from their role as thoroughfares for car traffic, streets often serve as important public spaces. Urban streets are places where people walk, meet, shop, and engage in diverse social activities that provide meaning and enjoyment to urban living.

In his 1971 book (translated and published in English in 2001), Danish architect Jan Gehl studies the street and discerns three types of street activities: necessary, optional, and social, each placing different demands on the physical environment. According to Gehl, necessary daily activities are those that are more or less compulsory – going to work or school, running errands, waiting for a bus or a person. Optional activities are pursuits that depend on having time and a suitable place to do it – walking for leisure, sitting in the sun, standing and enjoying life. The optional activities are highly dependent on exterior conditions including weather. He argues that when outdoor areas are poor quality, only strictly necessary activities occur, but that “in a different environment a completely different broad spectrum of activities are possible” (Gehl, 2001, p.13). Gehl’s third category of street activity is spontaneous social activities that depend on the presence of others in public spaces. Social activities include children at play, greetings, conversations, communal activities and finally, the most widespread social activity, passive contacts, simply seeing and hearing other people. According to Gehl:

life between buildings is not merely pedestrian traffic or recreational or social activities. Life between buildings comprises the entire spectrum of activities, which combine to make communal spaces in cities and residential areas meaningful and attractive. (Gehl, 2001, P. 16)
This piece of research is very relevant to an analysis of traffic calming and livability because it explains the rationale of interventions that enhance the social potential of the urban street. Gehl is also an important figure in the history of traffic calming as I will discuss in the next section.

The term ‘livable streets’ however stems from the 1969 study by Appleyard and Lintell, published in 1972. This study is a classic piece of research, notable for its simplicity, and it still resonates today. Appleyard and Lintell compared volumes of traffic on three residential arterial streets in San Francisco and interviewed residents about their responses. They concluded that the greater the traffic volume, the less livable a street is. They found that heavy traffic is a barrier to social life, resulting in a withdrawal from the street, whereas they found that residents on the street with light traffic showed “an acute, critical awareness and care for the physical environment” (Appleyard and Lintell, 1972, P.97). This study had important implications for the practice of urban planning and outlined in concrete terms the concept of a livable street. According to Appleyard and Lintell’s definition, a livable street has a balance of owners and renters, and accommodates various sized households. A livable street fosters a sense of community and belonging because people know their neighbours and spend more time out-of-doors on sidewalks, on stoops, or in front yards. A livable street is also a place that residents know very well, take care of, and identify with as a part of their personal territory (Appleyard and Lintell, 1972). According to the logic of this study, traffic is an intrusion into residential neighbourhoods and is disruptive to quality of life.

Apart from the social impacts that were the focus of Appleyard and Lintell’s study, the concept of ‘livable streets’ also has a measurable economic dimension, confirmed by research on the ‘hedonic price effects’ of street design that document the existence of a price premium for pedestrian oriented and traffic calmed neighbourhoods (Bartholomew & Ewing, 2011). Two studies that compared traffic calmed neighborhoods with nearby neighborhoods possessing a similar or nearly identical street patterns that were left untreated both found that the neighborhoods with traffic calming appreciated at a much higher rate than the non-calmed neighborhoods (Bagby, 1980; Edwards and Bretherton, 1998). According to Batholomew & Ewing (2011) there are two theories of why this is the case: one is that traffic calming eliminates the negative externalities of
motor vehicle traffic as a nuisance and property values rise in response; another theory is that property values are more sensitive to the aesthetics and functionality of traffic calming measures. For example, Bartholomew & Ewing write that: “a series of over-marked and over-signed but unattractive” traffic calming devices may detract from the appearance of the street and advertise a problem, while “nicely landscaped devices that eliminate some or all through traffic from a street previously overrun are bound to enhance residential amenity” (Bartholomew & Ewing, 2011, p.26).

2.4. The History of Cars in Cities and the Innovation of Traffic Calming

The development of traffic calming in Vancouver's West End can be framed in the context of a broader literature that concerns the origins of traffic calming as an urban transportation policy innovation in both Europe and North America. This body of research addresses why at certain times in history, certain cities adopted traffic calming as a radical transport policy innovation, looking at the mechanisms, processes, and evolution of this policy. My rationale for including this literature stems from an analysis of planning documents about the West End, that demonstrate a radical shift in the neighbourhood’s transportation planning occurred sometime between 1969 and 1972. The 1969 plans indicate that a huge set of freeways were planned to cut through the fabric of the neighbourhood and ring the downtown waterfront on both sides. By 1972, the planning documents were recommending traffic diverters and advocated for better pedestrian amenities and neighbourhood ‘social spaces’. My thesis shows that in the West End experience, this policy transition was not smooth, meeting resistance from many fronts including certain residents, property owners, taxi drivers, the police and fire chiefs, and particularly the City’s Engineering Department.

In this section I will include some literature that outlines the history of the car and the city, focusing on work by urban historians describing a shift in urban planning paradigms, away from the models of the modernist automobile city to ideals of the post modern ‘livable’ city. I will also overview the idea of traffic calming that arose in the 1960s, looking particularly at the European example.
It is certain that the problems of automobility were well documented by the early 1970s when the first traffic diverters were installed in the West End; popular critical accounts of the impact of the car on cities were published by Jane Jacobs in 1961, and Lewis Mumford in 1963. While certain ideas around ‘taming’ the car were not new, traffic calming was an approach that was quite different to the transportation planning standards of the day.

Peter Norton, in his 2008 book “Fighting Traffic” describes the process of how the automobile came to dominate streets and cities in the early 20th Century. Norton argues that the major problems of the car were evident from the beginning and worsened as automobile use became more widespread, citing conflicts with other street users, accidents, and concerns about congestion. One response was an attempt to regulate and restrict the movement of the car with traffic regulations, signs, signals and speed limits, another was to remove other users from the road, for example enacting laws controlling jaywalking and rules prohibiting children from playing on the road (Norton, 2008). From the 1920s until the 1960s the major focus of traffic engineers was to facilitate increased speeds and flows by developing more road capacity and building highways (Norton, 2008).

The more contemporary concept of “traffic calming”, as we know it today, originates from Europe starting in the 1960s, where it arose in reaction to the negative impacts (congestion, accidents and parking woes) wrought by cars in the historic downtowns of cities. The philosophic roots of traffic calming can be found in the report by Colin Buchanan entitled “Traffic in Towns” which was published in Britain in 1963. Buchanan identified the contradiction between providing easy traffic flow and maintaining the “residential and architectural fabric of the street” (Ben-Joseph, 1995, p.505) and he recommended the redesign of certain streets to serve many users, not just cars; he also recommended pedestrianization of particular streets where appropriate. Buchanan’s 1963 report is also credited with introducing idea of “traffic calming” and “traffic integration” (Ben-Joseph, 1995). Unfortunately, many of Buchanan’s ideas failed to find acceptance in their day as they ran against the prevailing economic and development policies, which sought economic development by building high speed motorways and improving roads (Ben-Joseph, 1995). It is generally
accepted that the “Traffic in Towns” report had a significant influence on traffic calming innovations that were implemented in mainland Europe (Ben-Joseph, 1995; Haus-Klau, 1990).

Predating Buchanan’s report by one year, Copenhagen in 1962 was one of the first cities to experiment with pedestrianization when they closed off the Strøget, a popular retail street in the city centre. Retailers initially opposed the move, but the result was that the street became busier and sales increased. Over the years, the streets surrounding the Strøget were incrementally closed to cars to connect a large downtown pedestrian network. Jan Gehl, a Copenhagen architect and consultant who has studied and been instrumental to this process, dubbed “Copenhagenization,” argues that the initial decision to remove cars from this small shopping area was actually a big leap that set in motion a “pedestrian reconquest” of the city (Gehl, 2010). In the 1960s and 1970s, more than 200 cities in North America also experimented with downtown pedestrian malls as a strategy by downtown retailers to compete with the new threat of suburban shopping malls in an attempt to maintain downtown as the unchallenged metropolitan retailing leaders and to prevent businesses and consumers from fleeing to the suburbs (Robertson, 1990). In Vancouver, Granville Street was converted into a pedestrian and transit mall in 1974. Robertson writes that by the 1990s, a lot of these American pedestrian malls were failing because pedestrian traffic alone was not enough to sustain thriving retail businesses. However, there has been a recent resurgence in the idea of pedestrian streets in cities around the world, most notably with the partial closure of Times Square in New York to cars in 2009.

As an alternative to complete pedestrianization, “traffic calming” was a practice that was pioneered in the Netherlands in the late 1960s, where streets are not closed to cars, but designed to “tame” them. The idea of the Woonerf or living street was first implemented in the town of Delft in 1968. Kjemtrup & Herrstedt (1992) describe the process:

In Delft, residents lost patience with through traffic and alien parking in their local streets. Following the lead of the 1968 anti-authoritarian movement, they took the matter into their own hands. With the town planner Joost Vahl as their anchorman the narrow streets along the channels were reconstructed for “traffic integration.” The entire road area
was designed and organized as a leisure area with tables, benches, sand boxes, but leaving space for cars to travel through the area at walking speed. Speed was physically reduced by means of humps, staggerings, and narrowings. This solution, known as the “Woonerf design” was the first traffic calming initiative. The Woonerf idea swept through the whole of Europe, especially from the mid-1970s. (Kjemtrup & Herrstedt, 1992, p.58)

During the 1960s and early 1970s, a small number of cities in North America began to implement traffic calming as a response to the problem of automobile traffic that was negatively impacting the livability of urban neighbourhoods. Several sources state that Vancouver’s West End was one of the earliest North American examples of traffic calming with the advent of the Chilco Cut-off in 1973 (The City Program 2006; Price, 2012; Rasthorne 2007). However, I found that the first traffic calming in North America was in Berkeley, which installed its first traffic diverters in 1964 and 1965 to prevent traffic from running alongside San Pablo Park; Berkeley went on to complete a city-wide traffic management plan involving diverters and street barriers in 1975 (City of Berkeley, 1998). According to Ewing, (1999), Seattle was the first American City to implement an area wide traffic calming program in 1974 in the Stevens neighbourhood. This is contemporary with the West End’s first area-wide traffic calming plan for the Stanley Park neighbourhood West of Denman which was completed in 1974. An area-wide traffic calming plan comprising the entire West End was not completed until in 1981 (Zein et al, 1997; Lowman, 1992). Nevertheless, Vancouver’s West End traffic calming was both pioneering and experimental for its time and place.

Since the 1970s, traffic calming has been implemented in more than 350 jurisdictions throughout North America (Black, 1998). Traffic calming in contemporary North America is a standardized practice with numerous manuals and guidebooks available that help municipalities develop traffic calming from design templates issued by the ITE and the American Planning Association, (Ewing, 1999). While there is a fair amount of research about the history of traffic calming in Europe, there is not much written about the early origins and development of traffic calming in North America.

My thesis sets out to fill in this gap. I looked for evidence about whether the traffic calming in Vancouver’s West End was influenced by the work of British planners, or else by innovations in Europe or in Berkeley; in the absence of such evidence I think it
is possible that traffic calming in the West End was a local innovation. There is no evidence in the official planning record that Vancouver planners ‘borrowed’ the process from elsewhere, indeed planners and engineers described the initial phases as experimental, indicating that this traffic calming was an original, local invention. The West End predates many of the established theories and frameworks around traffic calming in cities.

My thesis asks why traffic calming was implemented in the West End, whether it was purely to address the problem of cut-through traffic, whether it was conceived as a way to create more park and pedestrian space, or whether it was deployed to curtail street prostitution, finding that it was animated by a combination of reasons. I believe that the decision to implement traffic calming was a significant turning point that enabled the West End to develop as a model high-density neighbourhood that is both walkable and livable. But this is an easy argument to make with the benefit of hindsight. This thesis provides evidence about the intended outcomes for traffic calming in the West End, showing that it was deliberate planning, rather than serendipity that the neighbourhood developed the way it did.

2.5. Inclusion, Exclusion and the Politics of Turf

Because traffic calming is a means to restrict access to a neighbourhood by general traffic, several authors have described it as creating a type of “gated community” (Blakely & Snyder, 1995; Grant & Mittelsteadt, 2004; Newman, 1995).

This raises a key theme in this case study: the dynamics of neighbourhood activism and politics of traffic calming in terms of Cresswell’s work about “out-of-placeness” (Cresswell, 1996) and also Cox’s idea of the ‘politics of turf’ (Cox, 1989). Both of these authors theorize about a politics of belonging, a politics of inclusion and exclusion, and their theories explain the urge to push out and exclude those deemed outsiders in a neighbourhood. In the West End, I can see how this framing of the ‘outsider’ nuisance, disrupting the livability of the neighbourhood, could have been applied both to the cut-through traffic and also to the sex trade that existed in parts of the West End.
Cox defines the politics of turf as a politics where the central focus is on collective consumption of living values such as physical amenity, local schools and parks, and of such disvalues as congestion and local taxation (Cox, 1989, p.63). According to Cox, collective consumption has spatial aspects and territorial imagery, notions of inclusion or exclusion that are articulated by territorially based coalitions of residents. He argues that it is a spatially competitive process and that the power of the state is of primary significance to achieving goals of inclusion or exclusion. However, Cox uses a political economy analysis to theorize about the importance of homeownership, and he posits that activism is mostly based around warding off threats to property values, but he also describes it as a politics of status. In his 1984 study of neighbourhood activism in Columbus Ohio, Cox demonstrates that homeowners are much more active than tenants in defending their interests against planners, developers and road builders because these struggles are class based (Cox, 1984).

The puzzle of the West End is that it was not a neighbourhood of homeowners; in the 1976 census it was revealed to be 91% renters, so how does this exclusionary dynamic apply? The standard political economy theory is that it would not be in the interest of renters to defend property values because their rents would eventually increase, but other values may be at play, for example the status or prestige of the neighbourhood and this ideology of livability. Ross, in her article argues that the main motivation of resident activist groups such as CROWE was to remake the image of the West End from a stigmatized prostitution stroll into a respectable “lifestyle oriented gaybourhood” (Ross, 2012, p.136). Ross’ claim is validated by the fact that the leader of CROWE, as a gay man, was a member of one minority, asserting his legitimate claim to the neighbourhood by scapegoating members of another minority, the sex trade workers. The discourse employed in CROWE’s campaign to remove the sex trade framed prostitution in the West End as a threat to both property values and the values of ‘tolerance.’ I found Cox’s theory as well as the literature described in the next section to be very useful in understanding some of the power dynamics that were at play in the planning and implementation of traffic calming in the West End.
2.6. Forgotten History

This thesis critically questions whether the ‘livable streets’ aspect of the ideology of urban livability was the only driver of change in the streets of the West End. Certain authors such as Lowman (1992) and Ross (2012) have argued that the traffic diverters were actually installed for the purpose of driving out prostitution from this neighbourhood. During the mid 1970s the West End gained notoriety for its tolerant social scene, which attracted beatniks and artists and a fledgling gay community. Also during this period a fairly prominent sex worker stroll was established around Davie Street, following police raids on two downtown nightclubs in 1975, where prostitution had previously been sited indoors (Lowman, 1992; Ross 2012). By 1983 a district of “some 18 to 20 blocks,” located not just on Davie street but throughout the West End, was cruised by prostitutes and their customers (Lowman, 1992, p.7). The 1984 NFB film “Hookers on Davie” states that Davie Street was the largest outdoor stroll in Western Canada (Cole, J. & Dale, H. 1984). Starting in the early 1980s efforts were underway to ‘clean up’ neighbourhood. As Ross writes:

West End prostitutes were fingered as scapegoats for renewed cultural indignation and anxiety that centred squarely within a three-pronged master frame articulated by “legitimate” residents: the promotion of urban livability, the defence of property, and entitlement to respectability. (Ross, 2012, p.140)

Actors included Mayor Mike Harcourt, and leaders of the CROWE neighbourhood residents group including Pat Carney and Gordon Price (Lowman, 1992; Ross, 2012). In 1981, in response to the demands of CROWE, the city installed comprehensive traffic calming in the area surrounding Davie Street, with diagonal diverters across many of the streets throughout the West End (Lowman, 1992). According to Lowman, this was not effective in displacing the prostitutes. He writes that:

Shortly thereafter, one of the local newspapers published a photograph of a women sitting astride one of the diverters waiting for a customer. Several other prostitutes were quoted as saying that the diverters were ‘good for business’ because they slowed down traffic nicely (Vancouver Sun, 23 November 1981). (Lowman, 1992, p.7-8)
Activists also began a “Shame the Johns” campaign (Davis, 2012). However they only prevailed with a July 4, 1984 BC Supreme Court injunction prohibiting prostitution and actions conducted "apparently for the purpose of prostitution" in the half of downtown west of Granville Street that included the West End (Hannant, July 5, 1984). The court found that prostitution in the West End "constitutes an obvious and serious public nuisance" (Hannant, July 5, 1984). The sex workers from the Davie Street stroll were displaced to then marginal areas including Yaletown, Mount Pleasant and the Downtown Eastside (Ross, 2012).

Despite the fact that the anti-prostitution drive led to one of the first widespread use of traffic diverters in the West End, this story is mostly omitted from accounts about the wonderful planning decisions that created Vancouver’s livability (Berelowitz, 2005; Harcourt & Cameron, 2007; MacDonald, 2008; Punter, 2003). Leonie Sandercock, in her 1998 book “Making the invisible visible” writes that:

professions, like nations, keep their shape by molding their members’ citizens understandings of the past, causing them to forget those events that do not accord with a righteous image, while keeping alive those memories that do. (Sandercock, 1998, p.1)

She argues that in revisiting planning history, we can find a heroic ‘official story’, which keeps being repeated (in her book, it is mostly the story of rational modernist planning as voice of reason in modern society, but in this case it could be the story of Vancouver’s livability agenda). But she encourages us to ask: “is it a true story? Or is it a myth, a legend? Is there a noir side to this story?” She argues that in uncovering or recovering, we are challenging the accuracy of the official story and exploring its underlying dynamics – political-economic, social, psychological, and cultural, and the power relations implicit therein. Her essays offer critical theoretical and methodological tools for re-examining the past and also includes numerous examples dating back to the days of Baron Haussmann of the power of urban planning deployed against racial minorities, gay and lesbians, prostitutes, and all those other

‘unlivable’ and ‘uninhabitable’ zones of social life which are nonetheless densely populated by those who do not enjoy the status of subject, but whose living under the sign of the ‘unlivable’ is required to circumscribe
the domain of the subject.  

This ‘forgotten history’ literature offers a way to critically unpack the concept of livability as an unquestionably heroic narrative, in order to understand the complex reasons why traffic calming arose in the West End during the 1970s and 1980s. This literature is helpful to interpret some of the power dynamics that underlie a seemingly ‘good’ policy like traffic calming that is justified by the laudable idea of livable streets and neighbourhoods. This thesis demonstrates that in Vancouver’s history, the ideology of ‘livability’ that was used to justify the need for traffic calming also correlated closely to other hegemonic discourses such as neoliberalism, ‘broken windows’ policing and gentrification, the dark sides of which are better known largely because of the work of the scholars cited in this section.

2.7. Conceptual Framework

These five literatures will form a conceptual framework for a case study of traffic calming’s origins in the West End that highlights the nuances, contradictions and implications of livability discourses that have evolved in Vancouver since the 1970s. A dominant narrative in recent research about Vancouver’s planning history places focus on the physical planning achievements of “Vancouverism,” a locally specific style of urban planning and design, described positively in terms of livability and sustainability (Punter, 2003; Harcourt & Cameron, 2007; MacDonald, 2005; Newman, 2007). The West End neighbourhood led the way for many of the built forms and road space allocations associated with Vancouverism, foremost because it was transformed by zoning policy into Vancouver’s first high density downtown neighbourhood. There is a noticeable gap in this literature about the details and impacts of neighbourhood traffic calming, which was also pioneered in the West End. Traffic calming is an innovation that contributes to livability in many ways: it made the streets more ‘livable’ by restricting traffic, as described by Appleyard & Lintell’s (1972) theory; also, when viewed through the lens of Gehl’s (2001) work concerning place-making through improvements to the public realm, it fostered livability via the closure of certain streets to make space for gardens, mini parks, and pedestrian amenities such as walkways and benches, creating
community social space. But this story also contributes to a critical analysis of livability as a neoliberal discourse that contributes to processes of social and spatial polarization in the city. The forgotten history of how prostitution was pushed out of the neighbourhood with force of the law and physical traffic calming measures disrupts the heroic narrative told by planners. It unsettles the notion that the quest for livability is purely a physical process of transforming unlivable environments, because it is equally a project to cleanse urban space of ‘unlivable’ people. My thesis illuminates complex answers to Ley’s questions: which master does livability serve, and who and what is livability for?
Chapter 3.

Methodology and Research Design

In order to answer my research question, I decided to take a multiple methods approach, using two qualitative methods, field observations, and historical analysis of primary official documents. While my overall project methodology is a single case study research design (Yin, 1994), this case study could accurately be described as a planning history because of its historical focus which seeks to understand why the West End developed the way it did (Abbott and Adler, 1989).

In my research design, I chose to do some of the methods sequentially, so they informed the other methods, while some can be done concurrently. I started the first stage of my research with a review of secondary sources that deal with the subject of traffic calming in Vancouver, traffic calming generally, and the history of the West End, to provide a strong contextual understanding and framework for this topic. Next, I looked in libraries (SFU, VPL and UBC) and the Vancouver Archives for primary sources that specifically deal with traffic calming in the West End with dates from between the mid-1960s to the mid-1980s; these included mostly public documents such as studies, surveys, traffic reports, engineering reports, city council minutes, public correspondence, as well as visual sources such as maps, renderings of the physical designs, local newspaper accounts and photographs. Concurrently with the search for primary documentary sources, I conducted field observations to document qualities of particular traffic calming features in the West End neighbourhood.

I ultimately chose to focus the majority of my energy on archival research to construct a planning history by paying specific attention to the planning records, the engineering department records, the parks board records, the police board records and the city council records. I found the record to be rich and detailed, and official, providing
a good way to study the way a city works. It also included letters between citizens and various officials at the city expressing a diversity of opinions about the topic of traffic calming in Vancouver’s West End. My most important sources came from two major fonds in the City of Vancouver Archives, the ‘official’ City of Vancouver Fonds sourced from the Office of the City Clerk, and the “Gordon Price Fonds’ also located at the city archives, but sourced from the personal files of Gordon Price, which provided a rich but possibly biased source for documents concerning the activities of the residents group CROWE. As a qualitative researcher, I am aware that almost all of my data was biased, and I as the researcher add bias. In this case, I was deliberately looking for both facts and opinions to craft a compelling narrative of events. As I critically examined this mountain of evidence in the archives, I continually framed my inquiry around several important questions: What are the origins of traffic calming? Where did the idea of traffic calming come from? What were the reasons that traffic calming was implemented? Was it controversial at the time? If so what were the arguments made for and against? How did the decision to implement traffic calming relate to this concept of ‘livability’? What does livability mean in the Vancouver context? Looking back, how has it influenced/impacted the West End’s development over the past forty years? Is there anything surprising here?

I employed the case study principle of triangulation to ensure the accuracy of the data I collected, combining the masses of documentary data with data gleaned from field observations, in order to reach a very rich understanding of the answers to my questions. The next chapters detail my version of the historic development of traffic calming in the West End, based on my original research. I have divided my findings into three sections based on chronological order, different political administrations, and dominant ideas about the nature of livability from each time period. Chapter 4 sets the stage by exploring the historic context in which traffic calming arose, looking at West End planning documents in the late 1960s up to 1972. Chapter 5 deals with the TEAM era and the traffic calming and mini-parks that were implemented between 1972 and 1978, while Chapter 6 deals with traffic calming plans and neighbourhood activism against street prostitution between the years 1978 and 1984. Although I have chosen to focus on each issue in one time period when key events and decisions were made, I have also tried to identify precursors and earlier interactions.
Chapter 4.

The West End before 1972 – Historic Context and the Shift in Planning Paradigms During the NPA Regime

4.1. Traffic and Development in the West End

The West End is one of Vancouver’s oldest residential neighborhoods. It was first opened for development in the 1880s as “Lot 185”, a parcel of land which was given to the Canadian Pacific Railway in exchange for extending the western terminus of the railway to the Granville town site on Vancouver’s downtown peninsula, with streets laid out in a grid system by the CPR’s surveyor L.A. Hamilton (Davis, 2011). By the 1890s the West End was filled with grand Victorian homes, forming a residential enclave for CPR elite and other wealthy Vancouverites (MacDonald, 1992). When the CPR developed Shaughnessy in the 1910s, the community’s role as an elite enclave declined and a new stage of development began as a more working class streetcar suburb with the construction of apartment buildings, the conversion of mansions into rooming houses, and homes redeveloped into shops along the streetcar lines of Robson, Denman and Davie (City of Vancouver, 2012b). This layout of the West End as a streetcar suburb still exists today as a ‘palimpsest’ that supports its contemporary form as a livable, walkable and transit oriented neighborhood (Berelowitz, 2005, p. 80; Punter, 2003, p.5). During the 1930s and 1940s, more low rise apartments were built in dramatic Art Deco and Tudor Revival styles, however it was not until a 1956 city council decision to rezone the neighborhood for high-rise redevelopment, with zoning bylaw 3575 (City of Vancouver, 1956), that the West End began its transformation into a forest of low-rise and high-rise apartment buildings. According to Davis, the decision to rezone the West End was in response to downtown business’ concerns that they were losing customers to suburban shopping centres (Davis, 2011, p. 293).
This was during the height of the post war era of “urban renewal” when cities across North America were targeting “blighted” areas in the central city for massive redevelopments in order to stave off downtown decline (Hall, 2002). Urban renewal is often associated with modernist public housing projects, but it also encompassed “efforts by cities to attract private interests to clear and rehabilitate slums and blighted areas and build new modern housing, commercial and institutional complexes in postwar central cities.” (Zipp and Carriere, 2013, p.359). Unlike some of the large-scale publicly funded ‘master-planned’ urban renewal projects such as the one that was planned for Vancouver’s Strathcona neighborhood (Anderson, 1991), the West End was an experiment in ‘laissez faire’ urban renewal, driven by private market developers with no cohesive area-wide or neighborhood scale planning. Between 1962 and 1975 more than 220 high-rises were built (City of Vancouver, 2012b), transforming the West End over the course of little more than a decade into Canada’s most densely populated neighborhood by 1973 (Boddy, 2004). The West End’s population doubled between 1961 and 1981. MacDonald writes that by 1971 over 97% of dwelling units in the West End were rental apartments (MacDonald, 1992, p.55). The West End emerged out of this period of rapid laissez faire development as a model or prototype of a new urban form in Vancouver: the downtown high-rise residential neighborhood.

In the late 1960s, the West End began to receive attention from city planners, scholars and developers who looked at the neighborhood as a laboratory to investigate the implications of this new form of urbanism, particularly in terms of population demographics, quality of life, and issues related to transportation and land use planning. These studies focused on problems that had arisen from rapid development and lack of planning, chiefly, traffic problems, lack of park space and public amenities, and social alienation. The following sections trace the evolution of planning in the West End during this era, from a very technical style in the early 1960s to a more radical progressive ideal by the early 1970s.

4.2. Transportation Planning in the West End

During the 20th century, all parts of Vancouver including the West End were impacted by the steadily increasing use of the automobile, which gradually supplanted
the streetcar and later bus system as the dominant form of transit (Pendakur, 1972). The popularity of the car led to demand for bridge construction for automobile travel, and fostered suburbanization in the region. Because of its location, nestled between traffic generators such as Stanley Park, the English Bay beaches and the Downtown Core, the West End provided an obvious route for cut-through traffic between crossings such as the Granville and Burrard bridges over False creek and the Lions Gate crossing of Burrard Inlet. The neighborhood’s efficient gridded road system allowed these car drivers the choice of driving on its narrow residential streets as well as the busier arterials of Georgia, Robson, Davie, Denman and Burrard (Rawsthorne, 2007). The end of Burrard Inlet ferry service in 1956 likely increased traffic on the Lions gate route (MacDonald, 1992).

During this period of the automobile’s growth, transportation planning was framed as a highly technical and rational practice, rather than a social or political matter requiring citizen involvement or consultation (Pendakur, 1972). Pendakur (1972) notes that Vancouver’s first sixty years were characterized by the expansion of public transportation facilities, in drastic contrast to the next 20 years: “1952-1972 were spent worshipping at the altar of the private automobile” (Pendakur, 1972, p.1). In the 1950s and 1960s, the city planned a series of freeways that were supposed to wrap around the downtown waterfront and also to cut through the fabric of the West End connecting to a third crossing at Brockton Point (Gutstein, 1975; Pendakur, 1972).

Exemplifying this era of auto-centric planning is a file in the Vancouver archives titled “Traffic plans: West End and Downtown” (Vancouver Planning Department, 1960), issued by the planning department that consisted of lovely hand colored planning maps that outlined data such as traffic counts and forecasts based on anticipated growth in traffic volumes with existing street and parking capacities. One series of maps showed the growth of parking lots with data from 1954, 1959, and projected large increases for parking locations and demand in 1976 (see Appendix Figures 1,2 &3). In this map series, the street network of the West End was depicted accurately, except for seven or eight blocks in the northeast corner, which the maps showed sliced off by a freeway and converted into parking. Another map documented the locations of downtown gas stations in 1960 with the surprising count of 43 gas stations in the small area of the CBD.
(see Appendix Figure 4). A map entitled “A circulation pattern for pedestrians,” (see Appendix Figure 5), laid out early plans that would separate people on foot from car traffic: “The areas shaded indicate streets, squares, malls and arcades in which the movement of vehicles is not permitted at all or is restricted. The pedestrian precincts are intersected across some streets by means of over or underpasses” (Vancouver Planning Department 1960). However there is no evidence this plan was implemented.

Another document published by the Civil Engineering Department in 1965, “The West End Parking Study” identified parking as a major problem in the West End, describing how the neighborhood’s streets and lanes were congested by parking while off street parking was underused (City of Vancouver, 1965). This echoes many concerns that exist in the neighborhood today (City of Vancouver, 2013, p.66).

In 1968, a Vancouver Sun Article entitled: “Traffic Strangles Area” identified traffic as the biggest problem in the West End, making the case that cut-through traffic woes would be alleviated by the construction of a Third Crossing of Burrard Inlet at Brockton point and a downtown freeway system that would bypass the neighborhood (Traffic Strangles Area. September 23, 1968). This article makes it clear that traffic calming and street closures were not yet on the radar at this time, but the problems of heavy traffic were looming large.

In 1969, a report to council by the City Engineer echoed these concerns about traffic and parking, recommending a large capital project to widen all the streets in the West End to double the available street parking (Thompson, 1969). The engineer also wrote that: “When completing the first narrows crossing, all traffic to and from it as well as the present bridge, should be routed to provide a minimum amount of commuter traffic so generated through the residential West End area” (Thompson, 1969, P. 7). According to the report, the streets of the West End were in quite bad repair, having not been resurfaced since the 1920s, and they did not “match the quality of the area”. The engineer argued that the present street width of 24 ft. was inadequate in meeting the functional requirements of multiple dwelling residential streets and that a minimum of 32 ft. standard was needed or preferably a 36 ft. standard was desirable. Funding for the street widening program was approved in 1970 (City Council Minutes, August 25, 1970).
Citizens in the West End reacted strongly against the plan to widen the streets according to engineering standards for traffic and parking. A report from City Clerk’s Office about traffic and parking problems dated November 20, 1970 describes a heated public meeting held 10 days earlier on September 30, 1970 at the Vancouver Public Library, attended by 300 people (Thompson, 1970). Thompson reports that: “The following resolution was passed unanimously: “That trees not be removed from West End boulevards, that streets be retained at the present width, with two lanes of traffic and one lane for parking.” (Thompson, 1970, P. 3) On same day (Sept. 30) Mayor Tom Campbell sent a telegram ordering no trees to be removed, despite his own council adopting a report regarding tree removal one month earlier (Thompson, 1970, P.3). The City Clerk reported that:

While perhaps oversimplified, the issue of “trees-vs.-parking” greatly aroused the emotions of the residents at the public meeting. Some solutions by officials seemed to be negative from the point of view of ecology and economics. Residents are already frustrated by the lack of green space in the WEST END, which is, in fact, decreasing with each new development. Further anxiety arises from an increasing crime rate and lack of facilities for groups such as pre-school children, teenagers and senior citizens. All these factors contribute to a poorer environment for a large segment of the population. Some of the solutions suggested by the Engineering department are thus seen as aggravations of the problem of the WEST END. (Thompson, 1970, p. 3)

The Clerk’s report also conveyed specific opinions that were gathered from West End residents concerning parking and traffic, chiefly that:

1. West End remains residential in character
2. Trees and boulevards are two of the West End’s few environmental assets, therefore, all trees should be kept and the streets should be retained at their present width, which in most cases is 24 ft. wide.
3. The money spent on street widening and tree removal should be spent on youth centre, community centre and day care facilities. (Thompson, 1970, p.3)

The report also presented the conclusions of the planning department who agreed with the residents that “maintenance of boulevards should be improved and more suitable trees planted and treated when diseased”. Planners also identified considerable parking and traffic problems including congestion, concerns about pedestrian safety and
“intolerable” noise and exhaust pollution on “all West End streets”, as well as the perception that “local vehicles do not cause a traffic problem on the West End streets… any traffic problems in the West end are caused by cross town traffic” which “creates bottlenecks, especially at the entrance to the Lions Gate Bridge” (Thompson, 1970, p.4). Planners recommended limiting the number of cars, arguing that “some restriction to discourage through traffic should be implemented” (Thompson, 1970, p.4). They also stated that: “A significant proportion of West End residents, principally senior citizens and handicapped people, do not own cars and their transportation needs have been ignored” (Thompson, 1970, p.4). For these people they recommended that: “Pedestrian and cycling paths should be provided” (Thompson, 1970, p.4). They were not in favour of the idea of street widening as proposed by the engineers, writing that:

Although the West End streets are not in good condition we see no urgent need to rebuild them because traffic speed is to some extent checked by the rough surface. We have had complaints about noise and excessive speed from residents of Harwood street which recently was rebuilt and widened. As short trips only are possible in the West End, we see no need for speeds in excess of 15-20 miles per hour. (Thompson, 1970, p.4)

Finally, the planners argued that:

Any recommendations considered or action taken in the West End should be done only with careful consideration of the following reports:

A) social development report on the west end (Collier report on social development)
B) Burrard Inlet Crossing
C) Rapid Transit
D) Downtown Development

(Thompson, 1970, p.4)

The reaction to the proposed street widening plan in 1970 (Thompson, 1970), as well as citizen protests against the Third Crossing in 1971 (Gutstein, 1975; Pendakur, 1972), were key precursors to the eventual development and of traffic calming that began to be implemented in the West End starting in 1973, as detailed in the next chapter.
Among the justifications for the Third Crossing was that through traffic was a nuisance in the West End residential district (Thompson, 1969). The freeway plan was almost like a modernist form of traffic calming designed at least in part to reroute high-speed through traffic away from the West End (Thompson, 1969). However the same data collected by engineers regarding the problematic traffic volumes on West End streets employed to justify the freeway plan was reinterpreted by social planners to support a case for street closures and diverters (Thompson, 1970). The paradoxical result was that instead of massive increases in automobile traffic that would have accompanied a freeway and Third Crossing, traffic was eventually limited. Similarly, the street widening project, also put forth by the Engineering Department, which would have entailed the removal of most of the mature street trees, was vociferously protested by residents; a folder in the archives contains a large quantity correspondence on this issue between citizens voicing their opposition, the mayor and council, and the engineering department and Mr. Sutton Brown the City Manager and Director of Planning (City of Vancouver fonds. West End Traffic 1965-1970. S476 Box 114-B-4 folder 60. City of Vancouver Archives). However, because council approved the budget to remake all the roads of the West End in 1970, this opened the possibility for experimentation with traffic calming using portions of this same funding. Eventually this resulted in not only saving all the street trees, but also with the construction of street closures and mini-parks, more parks, gardens and natural space were added to the area. The next section looks at how and why a shift in the planning paradigm between 1969 and 1972 contributed this reversal of priorities.

4.3. Setting a Social Planning Agenda in the West End

By the late 1960s, a different view of planning in the West End was emerging. A series of studies expounded on why the success of the West End was so important: it was a prototype of a new kind of urbanism that was fostering a revitalized downtown and had the potential to reverse the “hollowing out” of the inner city by increasing suburbanization (Patillo, 1969; Forbes, Goldberg & Kelly, 1970; Collier, 1971, City of Vancouver 1971a, 1971b, 1971c, 1972a, 1972b; Boughey, 1972; Pendakur, 1972). These ten studies illustrated what was different about the West End in terms of
population demographics, transportation preferences, and they began to identify problems such as heavy traffic and a lack of park space within the neighbourhood that could be rectified by better planning.

The first of these studies was a report by Robert Patillo commissioned for the City of Vancouver in 1969 entitled: “West End of Vancouver “A Social Profile.” Patillo’s focus was on the social conditions in the West End, but he also documented problems around traffic and lack of park space. Patillo studied the qualitative character of life in the West End, finding that residents valued the West End for its central location within walking distance to downtown, good public transit service, attractive boulevards and trees, excitement of constant change, ethnic diversity, and its cosmopolitan atmosphere summarizing the West End as “a swinging place” (Patillo, 1969, p.58). He writes that “if there is one characteristic feature of the West End it is change: change in the physical environment and change in the social environment” (Patillo, 1969, p.59).

He also noted many negatives including: heavy traffic, noise, overcrowding, absence of open spaces and neighborhood parks, problems of crime, delinquency, undesirables, drug use, prostitution, purse snatching, breaking and entering, and theft, characterizing the West End as “an overcrowded high-rise jungle” (Patillo, 1969, p.59). Patillo argued that the rapid development and poor planning in the West End had caused loneliness, isolation and alienation to become more widespread. Patillo found that within the neighbourhood there is a deficit of parks, and although the neighbourhood is proximate to the 1000 acre Stanley Park, he wrote that:

During the summer months traffic along Beach and Pacific, Denman and Chilco Streets is extremely heavy and has the effect of “sealing off” the beach and park area from the residents of the area. The residents of the West End are becoming increasingly aware of the adverse effects of heavy traffic on the amenity of their surroundings. (Patillo, 1969, p.18)

Patillo’s study outlined the planning challenges faced by the West End and laid the foundation for social planning programs that were emerging to address residents’ needs. It is worth noting that this was several years before the major landslide victory of TEAM in 1972, demonstrating that social planning to address quality of life in the West End was beginning to develop in the late 1960s under the NPA regime.
A major survey of the West End was undertaken by Marathon Realty in 1970 (Forbes, Goldberg & Kelly, 1970). Marathon was a big player in the history of Vancouver, it was the real estate subsidiary of the CPR, which had been granted large tracts of land in Vancouver in return for extending the railroad to the Granville town site in the 1880s. Marathon was the original developer of the West End in the 1890s. In this case, they were particularly interested in the West End's dramatic transformation over 15 years from an area of larger old homes to predominantly apartment accommodation, which they believed could inform future developments they were planning in False Creek and Coal Harbour (Forbes, Goldberg & Kelly, 1970). Over the summer of 1970, Marathon Realty undertook "a statistically valid survey of residential characteristics and attitudes" in order to "help them determine what features they should build into their future apartment developments." (Forbes, Goldberg & Kelly, 1970, p.3). The authors of the study explain that

A vital part of the planning process for Marathon's False Creek development was the determination of prospective tenants' needs and desires. Realizing that the initial stage would probably attract the typical West End resident, Marathon decided to undertake a study of the resident's attitudes toward West End living.

(Forbes, Goldberg & Kelly, 1970, p.3)

Among the key findings of the survey, it was uncovered that: "The West End population is bi-modal with lots of 20-35s and over 50s, it is mostly low and middle income" Forbes, Goldberg & Kelly, 1970, p.12). This makes sense because the West End's apartment stock comprised mostly 1 and 2 bedroom units that were suitable and affordable for childless young adults and retired adults. The survey also determined that:

The population is reasonably stable.... The population views itself as stable. They do however, quite generally ascribe to the widely held myth that everyone else is in fact a "swinger." It appears therefore that the people themselves are quite stable yet like the aura of activity and excitement for which the West End has come to be known.

(Forbes, Goldberg & Kelly, 1970, p.8)

Another significant finding about West End households was that:
49% own no car. An equally recent survey carried out in a middle class single family area of Vancouver (Dunbar) verified that 96% of the households had one or more cars (1/3 of these had 2). (Forbes, Goldberg & Kelly, 1970, p.4)

The study found that “the main leisure activity is walking (33%),” and also that “noise is the number one thing people dislike about the West End” (Forbes, Goldberg & Kelly, 1970, p.4). Of all their findings, the authors write that

Finally, perhaps the strongest conclusion we can draw is that the West End owes its success in attracting residents to its great centrality...
People like accessibility. It is in many ways, the place to be.
(Forbes, Goldberg & Kelly, 1970, p.8)

On the heels of this Marathon survey, in 1971, the City of Vancouver commissioned a report entitled: “Towards a Social Program for the West End” by Dr. Robert Collier that focused on the hows and whys of improving livability in the West End. Collier argued that the City needed to invest in public space improvements and social programming for West End residents. Among his suggestions, Dr. Collier proposed the West End be dotted with green spots and breathing spaces (Collier, 1971).

Both Collier and Patillo were professors and experts in the field of urban sociology at a time when the idea of ‘social planning’ was still very new in Canada. They provided a bridge between the new ideas of progressive planning that were becoming popular in academia and the City of Vancouver’s nascent Social Planning and Community Development Department, which was established in 1966. Influenced by the humanist turn in the social sciences of the 1960s which was all about maximizing ‘human potential’, these authors proposed planning changes to make the physical environment of the city into more welcoming ‘human scaled’ and ‘human oriented’ places where people could flourish, a significant departure from the ‘brutalism’ of modernist plans for massive freeways, high-rises and urban renewal, which were based on the design ideal of the city as an efficient machine (Hall, 2002). The early 1970s timing of these reports aligns with the advent of ‘barefoot’ planners’ discussed by Hall (2002), and has echoes in the work of other planners like Forester and Krumholtz (1990) who espoused an ideal that planners should leave their ensconced offices in City Hall to do
outreach among the communities they were meant to be helping, representing the needs and desires of the residents of these communities to the face of power.

Collier’s report was published in the same year as “The West End A Social Development Program,” an equally visionary report prepared internally by the Department of Social Planning/Community Development in June 1971 (City of Vancouver 1971c). This report not only articulated the social needs of the West End as outlined by the Patillo and Collier reports, but sought to create a more concrete plan to alleviate the worst problems within a time period of 18 months. This document contains a case for traffic calming and improvements to the pedestrian realm. It also proposes to engage West End Residents with a community outreach planning office.

The report proposed five ideals to guide the West End’s social development program:

- Ideal #1 “To maintain the physical amenities of the West end that will continue to attract a wide range of residents.”
- Ideal #2 “increase social services for poor, elderly, etc.”
- Ideal #3 “reduce the level of personal alienation among the residents of the West End.”
- Ideal #4: “increase the level of personal safety” in the West End through “an improved physical environment that is less conducive to crime i.e. improved lighting or increased street activity.
- Ideal #5 “to provide leisure time pursuits relevant to the wide range of persons living in the West End.”

(City of Vancouver, 1971c, p.5)

Taking a physically deterministic stance that framed livability as a problem with the built environment, the authors of the report wrote that: “the physical environment, by encouraging or stifling social activities is a prime determinant of the social character of a local area” (City of Vancouver, 1971c, p.5). The authors argued against using “rural or suburban values” and other anti-urban assumptions about quality of life in the center city, contending that “the city derives its strength not from the absence of irritants but from the sense of excitement, vitality and sparkling diversity – on the street” (City of Vancouver, 1971c, p. 13).
The section on transportation referred to a key recommendation from the 1970 report “Downtown Vancouver Development Concepts”: to improve pedestrian amenities and beautification on main streets, citing the statistic that 75% of people come to Davie, Denman and Robson on foot or by transit. It also states that West Enders walk for leisure, and thus an improved pedestrian environment will affect a large segment of the population, arguing that:

Plans to redevelop the central core should accommodate pedestrians – separate facilities for automobile and pedestrian – an efficient walkway or transit system – compact malls and children’s play areas as well as providing much needed play space would create informal meeting areas to help overcome some of the personal isolation. The resultant increase in street activity combined with good lighting and foot police patrolmen would also contribute to increased safety on the streets.

(City of Vancouver, 1971c, p. 13)

It also contains the first clearly articulated case for traffic calming in the West End, starting with the argument that automobile traffic was especially detrimental in such a high density neighbourhood because it impacted a larger number of residents:

the automobile more than any other single factor will determine the future of the West End. This area is home for almost one tenth of Vancouver’s population; and like residents in every other neighbourhood of Vancouver, they don’t want arterial streets running by their front lawns. The high density in the West End only heightens the problem. One block of arterial street here can damage the residential environment for over 500 people compared to approximately 50 in a low density area.

(City of Vancouver, 1971c, p.7)

The report identifies an injustice in that the traffic woes endured in the West End were largely not the fault of the residents, writing that:

Furthermore, the residents of the West End, more that other groups, are rejecting the automobile even for their own use. Almost half of the households in the West End do not even own a car; and those that do, use it sparingly for normal city activities. For example, only 31% of the residents drive to work or to shop downtown and only 27% use their automobile for shopping in the West end. The typical West End resident lives here largely because of convenience to downtown, and he has discovered the advantages of pedestrian or transit travel.

(City of Vancouver, 1971c, p.7)
It goes on to argue strongly for limiting traffic and building new parks in order to improve living conditions and to discourage people from moving out of the West End, writing that:

Approximately 33% of the West End is devoted to roads and laneways – a figure that has been reduced to 25% in similarly dense apartment districts in other cities. Given these facts, it is unreasonable to suggest further alterations to the West End during the next 18 months that will foster automobile use... Funds for widening streets to accommodate more cars should instead be diverted into projects to reduce the number of automobiles presently using the streets. For example: adequate bypass routes should be considered; some local streets should be closed off using cul-de-sacs to reduce the number of commuters filtering through the area; the amount of on-street parking should be reduced.

(City of Vancouver, 1971c, p.7)

On the issue of street widening, the authors took a clear stance:

The figures show that the numerous citizen protests have indeed been the voice of the majority of West End residents – and a justified voice. The widening of West End streets would use up land needed for other uses; it would encourage faster automobile travel presenting an even greater danger to the area’s pedestrians, and until bypasses are constructed it would foster even more use of these residential streets by through traffic.

(City of Vancouver, 1971c, p.8)

Among the proposals for action contained in the report: no widening of streets in next 18 months; develop a comprehensive transportation plan, and also:

that within 18 months one local street in the West End (to be chosen by the engineering and sp/cd departments) be closed to through traffic by means of a cul-de-sac or other similar device. The cost of this should be provided from funds within the present five year program.

(City of Vancouver, 1971c, p.8)

Finally, the report made a case for opening a storefront planning office on Davie Street to provide information dissemination services and engage citizens, modelled on the system of neighbourhood advice bureaus in Britain, Toronto, Halifax, New York and Boston. The authors write that:

the primary benefit to the West End however will be the effect of this service in reducing personal alienation... ready access to information about one’s community is a primary step in making new residents feel a
part of their community. It will serve as a focal point for the generation of community awareness and participation.

(City of Vancouver, 1971c, p.11)

All in all, this document really marked a break from previous planning record, in terms of a commitment to increasing livability and walkability while reducing the problems of automobile traffic and personal alienation. Even by today’s standards, think of how radical this concept is, that role of city planning should be to reduce ‘alienation’.

In 1971, the Social Planning Department also issued two other reports on the public realm planning of streets in the West End: “People and Streets.” and “Street Life Survey” (City of Vancouver, 1971a; 1971b). Both of these documents emphasize ways that planners could help the West End community develop a stronger ‘sense of place’ by mapping out a system of public walkways and adding more interesting features for pedestrians such as park-spaces, benches and gardens. These documents supported the City’s case for redesigning the streetscape with traffic calming, mini parks and pedestrian walkways.

In 1972, studies continued with the West End Public Opinion Poll, published in April 1972 (City of Vancouver, 1972b), and Sociologist Howard Boughey’s May 1972 report: Spaces into Places: A plan for the Civilization of West End Vancouver Street Life (Boughey, 1972). Spaces Into Places is a very interesting document that demonstrates anti-modernist ideas that were emerging out of urban sociology about pedestrians and city life. Boughey cites examples of reclaiming streets for pedestrians including the Kerrisdale Village Plaza and Yonge Street Mall in Toronto that may have influenced the development of the mini-parks in West End (Boughey, 1972). The West End Public Opinion Poll reported on the Planning department’s own mail-in survey of West End residents’ opinions about their quality of life, which again found that traffic and noise were the biggest nuisances to West End residents (City of Vancouver, 1972b).

A Transport Canada publication by UBC’s Setty Pendakur in 1972 entitled “High Rise Living” examined the connection between land use planning and transportation, hailing the West End as a model or laboratory to study new ideas about urbanism that counter the trend of suburbanization; for example, he found that there are more trips on
foot and less car ownership in a high density area with nearby commercial streets (Pendakur, 1972b). Now these findings seem obvious, they are part of the “New Urbanism” doctrine and foundations of our ideas about the good city, the sustainable city, but back in the early seventies, this was just beginning to be studied.

The most important or influential document from 1972 is the “West End Policy Guidelines” (City of Vancouver 1972a), which was approved by City Council on November 22. The Guidelines is an extremely visionary document that was created with extensive citizen involvement and consultation with many local community groups. It consisted of a series of policies that would guide a new community planning program centred in a storefront local area planning office located on Davie Street. Planners would work in the community to disseminate information and to receive citizen input as they developed new plans for the West End according to priorities identified in the previous studies. These guidelines would influence planning in the West End over the next decade. The four major priorities the planners would tackle were identified as: A) stem development and further densification, B) reroute traffic, C) reduce noise and D) develop new park space. Under each of these priorities, the document listed four or five numbered policy guidelines. The guidelines were not simply vague and visionary statements, (although some of them were fairly radical such as closing off rather busy streets to make parks), they listed a series of concrete actions that the City could take to achieve each of them. For example, Guideline 7, “to reduce through traffic and minimize its detrimental effect”, detailed who would be in charge of implementation, naming the department of Social Planning/Community Development, the Engineering Department and the Police Department, and recommended implementation starting with the closure of Chilco Street to through traffic and measures to redirect this traffic.

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1 The list includes: West End community Council, West End Resources Council, West End Community Center Association, United Community Services, West End Bulletin Board, Gordon House, Neighbourhood Services Association, West End Ratepayers Association, Family Services, West End Churches, Denman Place Merchants Association, Vancouver Board of Trade, Greater Vancouver Apartment Owners, other private agencies and or groups, citizens at large – Kiwanis Club of Stanley park, 300 occupants of self-owned apartments, and the Salvation Army
Two other guidelines were significant to the creation of traffic calming plans. Guideline 8, “to divert local traffic from residential streets to collector streets,” included recommendations to implement diverters to reduce through traffic on residential streets as well as the development of a walkway system for pedestrians and “perhaps bicycle lanes”. Guideline 10 recommended planning for additional park spaces and street level public spaces, seeking to “further increase public dissemination and receiving of citizen input concerning parks, open space, recreation activities, and future plans.”

The creation, adoption and publication of the West End Policy Guidelines represented a major turning point in the way the city conceived of transportation and neighborhood planning, away from the old technical style of planning and towards a more inclusive, “progressive” style. It is worth noting that the guidelines were created during the last years of the NPA administration, under the leadership of mayor Tom Campbell and the Director of Planning, Mr. Sutton Brown. This marks a key moment when the city decided to begin limiting cars in the West End, and instead prioritize pedestrians and creating high quality public spaces. The origin of traffic calming really traces back to this visionary document. Although it does not contain the phrase “livability” which would be popularized by the TEAM administration that swept into office in November 1972, the planning priority articulated in the West End Policy Guidelines was already focused on improving the quality of life for residents of the West End, seeking to reduce alienation by engaging citizens in the process of implementing innovative improvements to streets and public spaces.

In a letter to Mayor Tom Campbell supporting the adoption of the West End Policy Guidelines, architect William H. McCreery sums up why the planning agenda in West End was so important to the future of Vancouver:

The West End is much more than just another part of the city. It is, rather, a part of the very heart of Vancouver, and its well-being is essential to all the people of Vancouver. The beaches, shopping area and parks within and on the periphery of the West End together with its own unique skyline symbolize for many, not simply the West End, but Vancouver itself. (McCreery, October 31, 1972).

He also sums up the shift in planning paradigm that was emerging, conveying a view of the street as an important social space for residents, not simply a corridor
engineered for the movement of automobiles, but a space that could be improved with experimentation and creative new designs:

Lastly, perhaps the least effectively utilized part of the West End are the spaces between the buildings and particularly the street space. We must learn how to use our streets more creatively for conversation seating areas, tot-lots, landscaped paths and private patios. Our streets must be more than just a means of getting us in and out of buildings. They can become the park at our front door – our outdoor living room.

(McCreery, October 31, 1972)

It was during the final years of the old NPA regime, three years before the election of TEAM in 1972, that the West End was first targeted for a bold social planning programme that challenged the technical engineering approach to street planning. By 1972, instead of proceeding with street widening as was first proposed, the Vancouver City Council approved a ground-breaking set of planning guidelines to improve West End residents’ quality of life with traffic diversion, pedestrian paths, and small parks with benches. This is not to say that conflict between the engineering department’s impetus to widen roads and improve traffic flow in the downtown area and the social planning department’s agenda of making the West End a more ‘livable’ residential area was settled, indeed these conflicting goals would surface several times during the next decade. Nevertheless a major shift had occurred in the City of Vancouver’s planning paradigm. The next chapter details how these new goals and priorities were implemented by the incoming TEAM administration after 1972.
Chapter 5.

The West End under TEAM – Livability, Mini-Parks, and Implementing Phase 1 and 2 of the West End Traffic Plan

5.1. TEAM’s Agenda

When TEAM swept into office in 1972, voters wanted big change. Among the big issues in the election, was the promise to finally cancel the mega freeway and Third Crossing plans that the NPA and the Planning Department led by Gerald Sutton Brown had pursued for almost twenty years. Urban renewal and freeway plans, the decontextualized modernist approach to urban governance consisting of “a publicly inaccessible alliance of politicians and technically driven civil bureaucracy” (Ley, 1996, p.52) had completely fallen out of favour with voters. The new vision of the reform movement TEAM party that succeeded the NPA was a post-industrial city form with an emphasis on liveability, aesthetics, and heritage (Punter, 2003). TEAM promised to run a socially progressive administration that was more accountable and responsive to citizens’ needs and desires. Sutton Brown was fired, and his replacement, Ray Spaxman had a decidedly different style of planning that focused on neighbourhood livability (Punter, 2003).

We know from urban history that 1972 was a significant year, marked by the destruction of Pruitt Igoe and the “death of modernist planning” (Hall, 2002). David Ley (1980) argues that TEAM’s consolidation of power coincided with Vancouver’s transition into a service oriented post industrial city. He makes the case that the urban policy changes accompanying the “livable city” ideology were associated with shifts at the political, the economic, and the socio-cultural levels of society. Politically, the year 1972 saw elections that established centre-left governments at the federal and provincial as
well as in the city level. The city’s economy was also changing during this era due to rapid growth of the service economy, white-collar jobs, and an office boom downtown, occurring at the same time as the older industrial economy around False Creek was in decline. Ley described this process as a shift in urban economy from production to consumption writing that: “The transition to a post-industrial society in Vancouver was accompanied by a shift from blue collar to white collar employment and from an economy based on manufacturing to one based on services” (Ley, 1980, p.247). Ley argues that professionals were emerging as the new elite, and as such the new tastemakers, who became very engaged in remaking the central city. During this time, Vancouver was also becoming an important city within the “West Coast culture realm,” a diffusion of lifestyles and social movements emerging from Western American cities such as San Francisco and Los Angeles as well as Portland and Seattle, which has assumed a cultural hegemony (Ley, 1980). Ley defines the West Coast culture as: “a leisure society featuring a relaxed enjoyment of each day in casual indoor-outdoor living, with an accent upon individual gratification, physical health and pleasant exercise” (Ley, 1980, p.245).

During the 1960s and 70s Vancouver’s youth-led countercultural movements transformed the city into a key centre of ecological activism and thinking (Aronsen, 2010). Its role as the headquarters of Greenpeace, which was established in Vancouver in 1971, made it a significant northern member of “ecotopia.” (Callenbach, 1975; Garreau, 1981). Since in the 1970s, Vancouver has played a leading role in the emergence of environmentalism into the mainstream consciousness of North America (Demers, 2009). In more recent years Vancouver has established a solid reputation as a hotbed of influential environmental ideas, coming from people such as the scientists David Suzuki, as well as William Reese who co-invented the ecological footprint, the precursor to the ‘carbon footprint’ (Reese & Wackernagel, 1996); The ecology movement that emerged in the early 1970s still resonates in the city today, for example with current Vancouver Mayor Gregor Robertson’s “Greenest City” policy (City of Vancouver, 2012).

A good indicator of attitudes of the day is a 1972 Urban Futures survey that polled a random sample of 1,650 adults in Greater Vancouver showed that
environmental concerns were viewed as the most pressing urban problem. The questionnaire asked citizens to rate the level of importance seventeen urban problems covering a wide range of economic, political, and social issues. The three most serious problems were identified as: 1) air pollution from industry, 2) water pollution, and 3) air pollution from private vehicles (Collins, 1973 – quoted in Ley 1980).

TEAM’s political platform was in touch with the new mind-set of Vancouver voters. Key phrases from its platform included “the livable city,” “people before property,” “the quality of life,” and “for people, not concrete and asphalt” (Ley, 1980). Major elements of the platform included “participation, aesthetics, pollution control, more parks, neighbourhood preservation and mixed land uses” (Ley, 1980, p.250). Their vision was of a green and beautiful city with socially conscious population, that remains a dominant trope of Vancouver today (Demers, 2009).

In his 1972 nomination speech as the unopposed TEAM mayoralty candidate, Art Phillips identified the main campaign issue as people versus property:

There is a feeling that Vancouver’s growth is out of control… I don’t want more of the same. I want to put the people first… I want to make Vancouver a place to live in and enjoy. I want to see pedestrian malls and mini-parks downtown, not just solid concrete.

(quoted in Ley, 1980, p.250)

Coming out of the freeway fight, TEAM’s transportation focus was “people over automobiles” and they supported public transit, advocating for improvements to the bus system and the creation a new rapid transit system, while also proposing bikeways and walkways. They also embarked on a strong program of park expansion and civic landscaping and beautification. In just its first term, TEAM would add more park acreage to the city than any other administration since 1886. In the CBD, TEAM made plans to convert Granville Street into a landscaped pedestrian and transit mall. Of TEAM’s first term, Ley writes that:

In the central residential neighbourhoods densities were regulated through repeated down-zonings, streets were blocked to check commuter through traffic, trees and shrubs were planted, and new parks were added while encroachment on existing parks was strictly prevented…
Public spaces were protected, animated, and humanized; a more vital and even festive ambience was sought and to some extent achieved, most notably in a series of successful annual spring and summer festivals in the parks, beaches, and bays around central city, whose sponsors included the city’s social planning department. All of these initiatives flowed from TEAM’s policy that Vancouver should be “a city people can live in and enjoy.” The quality of urban experience, the satisfaction of the “higher needs” of human sensibility, became a daily preoccupation of City Hall. (Ley, 1980, p.251)

Under the rubric of the ‘livable city’, TEAM introduced a number of major political reforms. Under TEAM, the city adopted a new way of dealing with traffic problems, reframing traffic circulation not as an engineering concern, but rather as an unwelcome intrusion threatening the amenity and livability of inner city residential districts (Ley, 1980). Another major political innovation was decentralized local area planning. Part of the TEAM policy on planning and development was “to encourage participation in the planning process of persons and organizations,” and also “to give to the occupants of neighbourhoods as strong a voice as possible” in formulating neighbourhood policies and by-laws (Ley, 1980, p.252).

The ideals of the TEAM government were very much aligned with the spirit of the 1972 West End Policy Guidelines and the new council immediately set to work implementing the policies. During its first year in 1973, the new administration established the West End Planning Team with an office on Davie Street, commissioning them with the task of completing a community plan. The West End Planning team, which was composed of 5 members, including Social planner: Lynn Uibel, Civil engineer John Lisman, Planner John Coates, Planner Barbara Lindsay and Planner Myra Cristall, was established on March 8, 1973 to develop plans, consult and do outreach with the community and publish and disseminate public information (Vancouver City Council Minutes, March 8, 1973). In the same year, council amended zoning bylaw 3575 to restrict population growth in the West End, and they also began to implement traffic calming, starting in the area west of Denman that was receiving the worst of the through traffic bound to and from the Lions Gate crossing.
5.2. The West End Traffic Plan Phase 1 (1973)

On May 1, 1973, council approved Phase 1 of the “West End Traffic Scheme” which entailed blocking off Chilco Street and Gilford Street (Vancouver City Council Minutes, May 1, 1973). Phase 1 came into operation on June 18, 1973 following the installation of 3 modest temporary barriers (Vancouver City Council Minutes, July 24, 1973).

The reason they were temporary is because the engineering department planned to repave the streets only after they completed replacing the sewer system in the West of Denman area, after which the engineers were open to developing an innovative permanent redesign of the area’s streets involving traffic closures and mini parks advocated by the Social Planning department. In a memo to Maurice Egan, the head of the Social Planning Department, Gordon H. Lawson, the City Engineer suggested that the engineers study and experiment with different traffic measures during the course of the sewer reconstruction program:

We do not separate the traffic closure measures from the sewer construction program. Our intention is to implement a re-organization of the traffic pattern by means of operational measures (signing, etc.), this spring. We will not carry out any work on the street surface, except in the way of emergency repairs and the like, until the sewer programme has been completed. When this has happened, new pavements, diverters, cul-de-sacs, permanent mini-parks, and any other permanent physical features can be constructed without being disturbed by major utilities construction. The period between the institution of the traffic operational measures and the end of the sewer reconstruction will allow for experiment and design of the final physical street environment.

(Lawson, 1973)

The engineers proposed to use the road closures created by sewer reconstruction as a trial to see how permanent closures might impact traffic patterns. Following the implementation of the ‘experimental’ Phase 1 of the West End Traffic Plan, the West End Planning Team began extensive community consultations to assess resident’s reactions to the Phase 1 diverters.

During the summer of 1973, they also retained consultants to develop an “Open Spaces” planning framework for the West End (Hotson & Vaughan, 1973), which
dictated that the area needed more park space and suggested the city should be creative in how it acquired space for parks. The Open Space policy outline for the West End was quite radical, calling for extensive street closures and conversion mini-parks in 36 locations (see Appendix Figures 6 and 7). This document was never adopted by council, (City of Vancouver, 1974), but it did influence the design and planning of all of the mini-parks.

The team began consultations for Phase 2 of the West End Traffic Plan in October, 1973. Based on this feedback, combined with the proposals made by the Open Spaces consultants and studies done by the engineering departments, the planners sketched proposals for permanent street closures and the creation of small mini-parks, using the area West of Denman as a trial area (see Appendix Figure 9).

An October 31 1973 headline in the West Ender read: “West End to Get Fine Places for People.” A large public meeting was held on November 6, 1973 to discuss proposals for pedestrian paths and places for the Stanley Park neighborhood west of Denman street. The next day, the Vancouver Sun discussed the plan in an article: “Parks Pledge Given” (November 7, 1973) and the Province ran an article on titled: “West End Miniparks Under Study: Permanent Street Closures in New Concepts” (November 8, 1973). West Enders were invited to select from two alternatives (West enders select mini-park alternatives, November 13, 1973). Of the two options for street closures, one closed off streets both north south and east west, while the other left east west streets open for drivers (City of Vancouver, 1973); residents overwhelmingly chose the plan with maximum street closures (City of Vancouver, 1974).

Why was the Stanley park neighborhood targeted first? According to a brochure titled “Information Paths and Places Stanley Park Neighborhood” Issued by the West End Planning Team 1973:
This area was chosen as the first for implementation of the open space system due to the success of the first traffic scheme to remove through traffic and improve pedestrian activity and access to neighbourhood streets. The Open Space consultants in their report specified public open space as an established need in this area of the West end. They stated: “The traffic diverters represent a pedestrian improvement in terms of reduced vehicular conflicts… Complete closures rather than diversions create space for rest areas and local mini-parks.

(City of Vancouver, 1973, P.7)

So the planners saw the opportunity presented by the diverters to re-appropriate the street, transforming it from a space for cars into useable open space for pedestrians (see Appendix Figure 8). A brochure titled “City of Vancouver paths, Parks and Paving - Why?” issued by the West End Planning Centre in 1974 justified the need for parks so that seniors could have “outdoor space that is comfortable, quiet and conveniently close to home so that residents can meet with their neighbors” (City of Vancouver, 1974, p.1). The also explained the rationale for the planned pedestrian paths:

The special pathways for pedestrians are proposed as part of the overall open space system, to connect the parks and community facilities such as the community centre thereby producing a network of activities accessible from many parts of the West End by a pleasant pedestrian pathway. In one survey done in the West End, over 50% of the residents stated that walking was their first or second main leisure activity. The pedestrian paths will take the form of improved sidewalks along the preferred walking routes. (City of Vancouver, 1974, p.2)

The brochure also addressed the question “why are the streets being repaved?”, explaining to residents that:

All pavements and curbs were placed prior to 1929 with pavements being only a thin asphalt layer. This asphalt pavement and the curbs have subsequently, due to traffic and weather, deteriorated until they are in their present poor condition. (City of Vancouver, 1974, p.1)

On December 18, 1973, Vancouver City Council approved a Local Improvement Procedure for the area West of Denman Street (Vancouver City Council Minutes, December 18, 1973). The project was first designed and approved to have 8 new street parks and special paving, lighting, landscaping. The City’s Engineering Department worked in cooperation with the West End planners to develop final plans for the local
improvement plan for the neighborhood West of Denman as well as developing a plan for phase two of traffic calming East of Denman, but they continued to insist that their plan to widen the streets be paired with the process of completing the barriers and mini parks. The City Engineer’s report to council on December 14, 1973, describes the effectiveness of the barriers:

The present barrier system excludes extraneous and through traffic from the area, leaving the street systems to be used only by local traffic. The mini parks and further barriers being planned will continue the restrictive effect. The pattern of street closures combines the design requirements and principles of both open space and traffic needs. (Lawson, 1973)

This report also indicates the Engineering Department was also willing to scale down the street widening plan, recommending widening not to 32 feet as approved by council in 1970, but from 24 to 27 feet. But the report nevertheless contains a strong argument for the need to widen the streets, centred on safety, reduced accidents and emergency vehicle access (Lawson, 1973).

The Engineer’s view angered many West End residents who wrote to the Mayor in protest of wider streets (Correspondence, 1973-1978. “Traffic Scheme II”, S 648, Box 27-F-4 folder 4). A strongly worded example is this letter railing against street widening, written by resident Phillip G. LaMarche to Mayor Art Phillips on December 11th, 1973

I’m disappointed that your engineering department is so short sighted and cannot imagine anything beyond encouraging more traffic in the area. In 1930 they may have had a point but its 1974 now and the most cursory study of social conditions in crowded areas will tell you over and over again that the automobile is a thing of the past. We have to find new solutions to our traffic problems. More cars create more pollution, noise (especially at night) and less space for pedestrians to walk in peace and for children to walk in safety. We don’t need any more exhaust fumes. I’m not against people who are physically crippled using automobiles (there are enough cars to accommodate them) but I’m certainly against the mental cripples who make proposals similar to those of your engineering department….Why don’t you hire engineers who are aware of social conditions and not people who know nothing else besides widening roads?


In response to the concerns of residents and the opinions of West End planners, Vancouver City Council on January 15, 1974 passed the following motion: “That the
West End streets proposed for paving and set out in the City Engineer’s report of December 14, 1973, be constructed to the existing widths only” (Vancouver City Council Minutes, January 15, 1974). This decision to ignore the engineer’s recommendation is an example of TEAM’s ideology, discussed above, a discourse that centred on livability as opposed to the rational engineering mind. But this ruling applied only to the area West of Denman which was now green lighted for a complete street reconstruction project. The issue of road widening would resurface several times again.

5.3. Implementing The Mini Parks West of Denman (1974-5)

Construction was scheduled to begin on the first set of mini-parks during the spring of 1974. Landscape architect Don Vaughan was contracted to design the mini parks for a cost of $5,000 (City of Vancouver, 1974). The financing of the project was to come from a number of sources. The main budget was from the engineering department’s capital project funding for street surfaces and sewers that had been approved in 1970. The Parks board was set to pay for the landscaping of the mini-parks and ongoing maintenance. And the local landowners would foot a portion of the bill – paying for 75% of the difference between the cost of a regular street improvement (covered above by the Engineering Dept.) and the costs of upgrading entailed by the mini parks and special pavements along the pedestrian paths – to be paid in property taxes over 20 years (City of Vancouver 1974).

There were some protests from landlords opposed to the extra costs, and certain residents also opposed the plan, but many residents wrote letters in support of the improvements (Correspondence, 1973-1978). The issue of mini parks versus street widening continued to inspire controversy. On January 31, 1974, the West Ender ran an article titled: “Parks, Pathways Nearing Reality” describing the mini parks plan in a positive light, while on the same day, the Vancouver Sun wrote about opposition to the planned street closures from motorists (Concrete Jungles Find Some Favour, January 31, 1974). The controversy arose again in March of that year when the Fire Chief spoke out against the street closures (West End alarms Fire Chief March 9, 1974) expressing the view that the diverters would hinder response time and that street widening was needed to make room for emergency vehicles to park safely. In March, council
responded to these concerns by cutting the number of mini parks from eight to five and placing street widening back on the agenda, even in the area West of Denman (Wider Streets still on agenda, March 11, 1974; Mini Parks cut to Five, March 7 1974). The social planning department held a large public meeting at King George High School on March 27, 1974 to discuss street widening. The Vancouver Sun reported on the meeting the next day with the caption: “Residents protest widening: fire department, engineering reports rejected.” (West End Street Widening Blasted, March, 28, 1974).

Nancy Tillson, a planner with the West End Planning Team reported on the meeting in a memo to Alderman Marian Linnell (Tillson, March 28, 1974). Tillson refers to the heated meeting regarding street widening west of Denman street King George High School March 27, 1974, wondering if the “reaction of the residents to the street widening is due to the physical changes proposed, or is it a psychological reaction to further threat to their quality of life.” Tillson writes about the problems with the process: “To widen or not to widen has been going on for years, with citizen reaction and participation. City Council, the engineering department and citizens have often worked at odds with one another. Citizen participation is encouraged, but are the citizens listened to? They are skeptical and frustrated.” Tillson also discusses the problem of “West End deterioration”, summed up as an “influx of people, dogs, crime, litter, traffic, noise” which causes residents to “suffer from lack of planning of former civic authorities who had no foresight. Improvements are proposed, but will they take place? Denman Street, for example, is a slum area in a high rent district – littered and dirty.” Finally, she describes a “general fear among residents, particularly older and long-time ones, that their way of life is being threatened by excessive increases in rents, and apartments turned into condominiums with exorbitant purchase prices many cannot possibly afford” (Tillson, 1974). This is a paradox, that residents simultaneously feared deterioration of the area, but also worried about upgrading (now called gentrification) that could lead to increased rents and push them out. She ends the letter by expressing residents’ scepticism about fulfillment of the planning team’s proposals: “The mini-parks, improved street barriers and pedestrian ways will vastly improve the area, but are we assured they will actually happen? Will wider streets, for example, interfere with pedestrian ways?” (Tillson, 1974).
This unsettled issue of wider streets continued to irk West End residents in the spring of 1974, a state of affairs discussed in this West Ender article written on May 30 1974:

The trouble began when the first traffic barriers, forerunners to the miniparks, were installed last year. People apparently wanted mini-parks, but they were unwilling to relinquish a bit of roadway for the cause. Then street widening slipped onto the scene. And from the beginning, residents had opposed any street widening. Yet, City Hall somehow managed to tie the issue together; if you want mini-parks, you have to take wider streets with them. The result? Now many residents claim they don’t want mini-parks. Others just can’t decide. But it seems a shame to surrender these ‘breathing spaces’ because of a bureaucratic folly. We would hope that the dispute could be resolved to the satisfaction of the residents – so that the community can at last make a decision.

(Mini-parks Issue Remains Undecided, May 30, 1974)

The mini-parks themselves were also hotly debated, evidenced by several files of correspondence between citizens, politicians and planners on this issue that I found in the Vancouver Archives (Correspondence, 1973-1978). One resident, Robert Strachan wrote to the mayor on July 24th, 1974 to express his approval of the barriers because they reduced traffic noise, also writing that “I certainly feel that the idea of changing the somewhat unsightly barriers into mini parks is an excellent idea.” (Strachan, 1974 in Correspondence, 1973-1978). Strachan also argued that most residents wanted the mini parks. This contrasts with the view of another resident, W. Kaye Lamb who wrote a letter to the mayor on May 31, 1974 in support of the traffic closures but opposing the idea of mini parks, expressing fears that they will become hangouts for “hippies, purse snatchers and other vagrants.” (Lamb, 1974 in Correspondence 1973-1978). On the same day, council received a large petition against the mini parks (Correspondence, 1973-1978).

In a letter to Mayor Art Phillips penned on July 4th, 1974, resident D. Nation wrote:

I am very strongly in favour of these much needed improvements in the West End. Many elderly or handicapped citizens in this area are unable to walk as far as Stanley Park and would welcome a quiet and pleasant outdoor spot in which to rest or visit with friends. These parks need not be lavish in planting but pleasant with trees and grass and attractive
benches. Pedestrian paths are necessary for the same reasons. The traffic barriers already installed have been a good improvement and I hope they remain. It is quieter and one may cross the street in safety. As for the paving of the streets – one need only to look at them to realize the necessity for repaving. And trees – let us have trees and more trees.  
(Nation, 1974 in Correspondence 1973-1978)

Another resident expressed concern about the street widening for the following reasons:

1) The gross area of the West End is further reduced and covered with asphalt and concrete. 2) These streets if widened become future car highways and speed sections instead of enjoyable pedestrian walk areas.  
(J. B. Saunders, March 25, 1974, in Correspondence 1973-1978)

The resident also expresses concern for trees and states that access for fire trucks is not a problem with the current standard of the street (J. B. Saunders, March 25, 1974, in Correspondence 1973-1978).

Even though a poll conducted by the planning department indicated that a majority of West End residents supported the plan (Vancouver City Council minutes, July 1974), the archival record of letters and petitions opposing the mini-parks indicates the emergence of a vocal opposition lobby. A letter from Mrs. E. Ross-Rosenberger to the Mayor (September 3, 1974) points out the two most common objections to the mini park scheme, that mini parks were unnecessary and expensive:

To add mini-parks to this area would be like taking coals to Newcastle. But the sore point to us living here is the paying for these mini parks. The owners of the buildings will be charged the costs and naturally our rents will be raised. Since this will be quite a hardship to some of us, I would like to ask you to shelf this project indefinitely.  
(Ross-Rosenberger, 1974 in Correspondence, 1973-1978)

I have found several large petitions regarding the mini-parks from the year 1974, most of them submitted by apartment owners. The May 31, 1974 petition from Macaulay Nicolls Maitland and Co Ltd real estate management– owners of several West End buildings – was soundly against the parks, arguing that: “The construction of the proposed Pedestrian walks and Mini Parks would add to the increasing tax burden of property owners and would also necessitate a rent increase for tenants, including many
senior citizens living in this area who cannot afford more increases in rent.” It further argued that the mini parks were not needed because Lost lagoon and Stanley park are only a block away and “the building of a mini park in front of our building would make it a public recreational area and we would consider this an invasion of our privacy.” The petition ends with a request for the city to please reconsider this project and cancel it, because “A mini park is so unnecessary in this part of the West End” (Correspondence, 1973-1978).

A similar petition from Whitehouse Apartments at 2033 Comox Street dated May 7th, 1974 protested the proposed Mini-Park at the corner of Comox and Chilco, for the following reasons:

1) It is unnecessary with Stanley Park only a block away
2) The cost will be passed on to the tenants, thereby adding to their financial burden.
3) We fear that such a Mini-Park will attract irresponsible, undesirable youths causing harassment, and that vandalism and noise will destroy the peace and quiet of our neighbourhood

(Correspondence, 1973-1978)

Another similar one came from Ocean Towers at 1835 Morton Avenue emphatically protesting the construction of a mini-park in the 1800 block of Morton Avenue (See Appendix Figure 7). This petition included a list of every name and unit in the building with signatures, noting that there were "no refusals". The petition listed 6 reasons to oppose mini-parks:

1) Too close to Stanley Park
2) Why should we pay for mini parks?
3) A mini park would be for dogs and garbage
4) A mini park would encourage mugging and thieves
5) There will be no police protection similar to Stanley Park
6) Women are really concerned

(Correspondence, 1973-1978)
Another significant petition received with respect to the mini parks in the West End containing 164 signatures was appended to a memo from the City Clerk to City Council September 11, 1974. It stated:

WHEREAS the estimate cost to the tenants of the West End to build the “mini parks” will be at least $40,000 every month forever.

AND WHEREAS the sites selected for the proposed Mini Parks are close to Stanley Park.

AND WHEREAS the construction of the proposed Mini parks will eliminate forty eight parking spaces in an area already congested.

AND WHEREAS it was proposed two years ago to widen some West end streets, the Mini Parks will narrow them, and the difficulties thus caused will divert traffic into the lanes.

AND WHEREAS taxis have already refused to come into the West End, and fires services and ambulances could be withdrawn.

AND WHEREAS the proposed Mini Parks will be convenient places to dispose of rubbish;

WE, THE RESIDENTS of the West End, being convinced that the said Mini Parks are not desirable, and in fact, will be an unnecessary expenditure, HEREBY PETITION The City of Vancouver to rescind the decision to create the said Mini Parks.

(Correspondence, 1973-1978)

The grievances about heavy costs downloaded to residents were rebutted in a report from West End Planning Centre to Mayor Art Phillips dated May 29, 1974. It explains that of the total budget of $1,179,984.00, $722,490.00 is the cost for paving, curb and gutters with $457,494.00 for the cost of the mini-parks. The financial arrangement was that the city would pay 38% while property owners would pay 62% of the cost. The report maintained that rent would only increase between $.55 cents and $1.50 month per suite (Correspondence, 1973-1978). However of the eight planned mini-parks, three were eliminated on certain streets where residents had organized petitions.

Amid all this protest and opposition, including dissent from the mayor, Vancouver City Council approved By-law 4769 on April 23, 1974, a final revised Local Area
Improvement West of Denman that included 5 mini-parks and street widening (City of Vancouver, April 23, 1974) (see Appendix Figure 10).

The mayor expressed his concern about the plan in a letter to West End resident Judy Piercey on June 7, 1974, writing that:

I agree that it would be most desirable to try and separate the mini-park project from the street repaving program but I am not sure how this can be done. Obviously if you don't have mini parks the amount of street paving is different. When we first barricaded the residential streets West of Denman, a very high percentage of the population reacted favourably. However, they appear to be strongly opposed to the mini-parks. I am afraid that our West End Planning team has misread the public mood and will have to come up with another design that is more satisfactory to the residents of the area.

(Phillips, June 7, 1974 in Correspondence, 1973-1978)

The issue of mini parks continued to simmer over the summer of 1974. In another letter from Art Phillips to a West End resident Mary Green dated July 16, 1974, he writes that:

Council discussed the West End mini parks and repaving projects and voted last Thursday “I share with you the view that we should not be doing things that the citizens in the area do not want. In this case, less that half the residents objected to the project, but I felt that this was because the mini-parks were combined with the repaving. It is quite clear that virtually all the residents wanted the streets repaved and curbs and sidewalks rebuilt. (Phillips, July 16, 1974 in Correspondence, 1973-1978)

In several other letters, the mayor repeats that he did not vote for the mini parks, but Council approved them and “unfortunately, the project cannot be shelved” (Phillips to Mrs. E. Ross-Rosenberger, September 5, 1974, in Correspondence, 1973-1978). The mini-parks dispute continued through the spring, summer, and fall of 1974, finally settling down in 1975, when construction was complete (see Appendix Figure 14). In later records, only positive references to the mini-parks and traffic calming west of Denman appear in both official and citizen correspondence, indicating that the most heated debates occurred during the planning and implementation phases and that public acceptance increased once they were built.
Just as the mini-parks debate was ending in the Stanley Park neighbourhood, the same issues of street widening, street trees, traffic diversion and West End livability were re-emerging in new debates and struggles about the Eastern portion of the West End, as citizens learned about two other important plans that were also introduced in 1974: The West End Traffic Scheme 2 and the 1974 Downtown Transportation Plan.

5.4. The West End Traffic Scheme 2, Downtown Transportation Planning and the Ring Road proposal (1974-1978)

During the years 1974 and 1975, the West End Planning Team continued to pursue TEAM’s livability agenda by advocating against growth and traffic – this is reflected by the West End Official Zoning Development Plan (City of Vancouver, 1975), which imposed growth limits, and the West End Traffic Scheme 2 (City of Vancouver, 1974) that was developed in conjunction with the engineering department. At the same time, the engineering department was working on a transportation plan for Downtown Vancouver centred on the grand plan to pedestrianize Granville Street as a transit mall. Although both traffic plans did reflect TEAM’s interest in pedestrians and limiting the car, the engineers were reluctant to restrict traffic area-wide and wanted to offset any street closures with widenings on other streets, operating under the belief that any restrictive traffic plan could only succeed if there is an adequate arterial network for through traffic to be diverted to (Curtis, July 29, 1975).

The West End Traffic Scheme 2 was first approved by Vancouver City Council in the summer of 1974 (Vancouver City Council Minutes July 23, 1974). (See Appendix Figure 11). The idea was to continue implementing the West End Policy Guidelines and install an area-wide traffic calming plan for the West End neighbourhood East of Denman that would pave the way for future mini-parks. This was a larger scale plan than the one that was installed West of Denman and it drew similar controversy, so much so that implementation would be delayed for many years. In the first instalment, Traffic Scheme II proposed the installation of eight barriers, one cul-de-sac, two street closures, speed deterrent bumps in certain lanes and two-waying of Thurlow between Nelson and Pacific. The budget was set at $72,500. It also proposed increasing capacity on several
residential streets that would remain open to through traffic, including Nicola, Nelson, Jervis and Bute, upgrading them to “local distributor” or “collector” streets and also upgrading portions of Thurlow to “district arterial” and “main arterial” status (Vancouver City Council Minutes, July 23, 1974). Opposition to this plan arose from two fronts. One was from groups such as the Greater Vancouver Taxi Driver Employees association who opposed the traffic diverters, the other from residents who didn’t think the plan went far enough in restricting traffic and who were concerned about the upgraded capacity of certain residential streets such as Nelson and Nicola (Vancouver City Council Minutes, July 23, 1974). The implementation of this plan was delayed in 1975 pending further studies that were not completed until 1979, and the final version of an area-wide Traffic Plan for the West End east of Denman would not be approved until 1980, a lengthy delay that signified the Engineering Department’s reticence about the plan.

Although public consultation for Traffic Scheme II had begun in October of 1973 when the scheme was first publicized and a public meeting held, planners observed that “very little reaction occurred and this caused concern as it provided little basis for advice to council on the acceptability of the proposal.” (Vancouver City Council Minutes, July 23, 1974). It was decided to ask householders directly and a reply paid questionnaire with a map of the scheme and some explanation was distributed to all West End households, by the postman’s walk method. Of the 23,600 questionnaires sent out, 3,088 replies were received, representing 13.4% of households. Responses from car drivers were higher than those people without cars, perhaps indicating the greater interest by drivers in the proposal. The planners found that eliminating this bias made no significant change in the result. For the total replies the results indicated 56% in favour of the traffic scheme, 41% against and 3% undecided. Drivers were about 50:50 and non-drivers were 73% in favour. Replies from the area west of Denman were most positive, indicating 67% in favour. Replies from the area east of Denman street indicated 51% in favour, 46% against and 3% undecided. In this area, drivers were 44% in favour and non drivers were 77% in favour of implementing the proposed traffic diversion scheme. (Vancouver City Council Minutes, July 23, 1974).

The questionnaire also provided a place for comments, which were used by planners in order to determine driver needs and difficulties, and suggest modifications to
the pattern to make it more acceptable. This citizen input led to deleting the two barriers at Bidwell/Burnaby and Harwood/Cardero, and replacing them with one at Cardero/Burnaby, introducing two-way operation of Thurlow from Beach to Nelson, and the removal of daytime parking from the east side of Denman and the introduction speed bumps on certain lanes (Minutes of City Council, July 23, 1974).

The West End Traffic Plan 2 introduced a new style of barrier, “the temporary diverter”, that was designed to suit the Fire Department operation needs. The major feature is a wide step 8” high, which does not permit the passage of cars, but which does allow all fire trucks to cross, thus enabling fire trucks to travel all parts of the West End street system without the need to memorize routes. The Fire chief and Police chief both argued that although the traffic plan would slow down response time, they found the proposal acceptable due to this accommodation of emergency vehicles (Vancouver City Council Minutes, July 23, 1974).

The West End Planning Team advocated strongly for the plan. It fit their mandate to implement the West End Policy Guideline #8 “divert local traffic from residential streets to collector streets.” They also believed the scheme of temporary barriers could anticipate and provide necessary experience for the future development of street parks and permanent closures In the West End neighbourhood East of Denman. This fit with their goal to increase park space and open space in the West End. One of their strongest points in favour of the plan was the strong level of public support indicated by the opinion survey (see Appendix Figure 12), especially the high levels of acceptance by residents West of Denman Street, which according to the planners “indicates that on the basis of eight months’ experience the majority of residents approve of the barriers and suggests that familiarity increases acceptance.” They also argued that the consultation process of modifying the scheme in response to residents’ suggestions “will increase its acceptability to many people previously opposed” (Minutes of council July 23, 1974).

Nevertheless, some opposition did arise soon after. An article in the West Ender on October 30, 1974 “Nicola residents petition council,” describes a meeting between Mayor Art Phillips and two residents of Nicola street, Gary Bell and Geoffrey Traunter, in
which the residents submitted a petition containing 415 signatures and expressed alarm at the projected increase in traffic on Nicola as a result of the proposed opening of the street to through traffic from Georgia to Beach. They argued that this opens “a new route though the West End for the daily invasion of commuting motorists in their dash from bridge to bridge” (Nicola Residents Petition Council, October 30, 1974). On December 4, 1974, the Greater Vancouver Taxi Driver Employees Association wrote a letter to Alderman Walter Hardwick opposing the traffic diverter plan, demonstrating they were not appeased by the City’s offer to provide all taxi drivers with a map showing the location of diverters and the best routes through the West End.

By May of 1975, however, the plan was put on hold at the recommendation of The City Engineer, following a report that outlined several reservations and problems with Traffic Scheme II. In the report, the engineer disputes the social planners’ interpretation of the level of resident support for the plan, arguing that neighbourhood opinion is divided:

the purpose of guideline 8 is to reduce traffic problems in the West End (primarily East of Denman) and thereby improve liveability and amenity of the area. A trade-off against this improvement is a reduced level of transportation service to the residents of the West End. In a survey of West End residents it was determined that about half favour the environmental improvement and the other half are concerned about the inconvenience which this entails. Thus, there is no clear majority for either. It is not certain that the residents of the West End wish Guideline 8 to be implemented. (Curtis, May 9, 1975)

The Engineer also disputes the comparison between the areas East and West of Denman:

The through traffic problem was significant on streets west of Denman (Chilco, Gilford) but is virtually negligible east of Denman despite numerous references to it by various groups and individuals. There was considerable pressure during the Guideline preparations to “improve traffic conditions" east of Denman and Guideline 8 was the result. However, there was a very significant difference in traffic conditions between Chilco Street (10,00 vehicles a day; 90% non-local) and say, Jervis street (2,000 vehicles per day; 90% local). Considerable support (2/3 in favour) has been noted for the treatment west of Denman where traffic conditions have been altered drastically and living conditions related to traffic noise improved substantially with relatively little
inconvenience to local residents, service vehicles, taxis, etc. Traffic Scheme II received only a 50% favourable response in part reflecting the people’s realization that they were not going to benefit significantly in terms of reduced traffic volumes, noise, etc., but would suffer more inconvenience. (Curtis, May 9, 1975)

On May 13, 1975, Council passed a motion “that the City not proceed with the traffic barriers east of Denman Street” (Vancouver City Council Minutes, May 13, 1975). But the idea of mini-parks was not off the table because Council also moved that:

as recommended by the City Engineer, the West End Planners report back concerning possible locations for trial mini-parks east of Denman, taking into consideration: recommendations made by the West End open space consultant, the advice of the City engineer concerning traffic implications, the views of local residents, the advice of the park board and the fire chief, and preliminary evaluation of mini-parks west of Denman as they are completed. (Vancouver City Council Minutes, May 13, 1975)

So the implementation of this traffic plan was suspended pending further study. While the traffic calming and mini-parks in the area west of Denman had been rapidly implemented within two years, planning street closures in the area east of Denman was put on the back burner for five years longer, until it was re-prioritized in 1980.

The other major traffic planning that impacted the eastern portion of the West End was the Downtown Transportation Plan that was introduced with the Downtown Transportation Study in 1974, and was accepted by Vancouver City Council on July 29, 1975 (Vancouver City Council Minutes, July 29, 1975). This particular Downtown Transportation Plan was meant to reflect TEAM’s agenda for planning Downtown Vancouver centred on three basic concepts:

1) to encourage residents in close proximity to employment in the downtown core.
2) to de-emphasize the car, and emphasize transit
3) to pedestrianize the core and make it a pleasant place for people (Curtis, December 17, 1974)

Pedestrianization of the Granville Mall fit in with this spirit, as did limiting traffic in order to increase the “livability” of the West End which was the closest downtown residential neighbourhood. Among other things, the study examined possible pedestrian
improvements (i.e. wider sidewalks and ornamental pavements) for several other streets that were integral parts of a downtown pedestrian network, including Robson Street, Hamilton Street, Pender Street, and Water Street. This study also considered more intensive pedestrianization, including exploring the idea of creating another pedestrian transit mall on Hastings Street stretching between Main and Granville, and one on Robson west of Howe street. One can imagine how different the city centre would be today if they had proceeded with this plan. In July of 1975, the Vancouver City Council concluded that Hastings would not be good for a pedestrian mall due to "socio-economic conditions, declining retail and traffic issues" (Minutes of City Council, July 29, 1975). This is interesting because from the newspaper articles of the early 1970s, it appears that Granville Street was pretty run down as well, with problems of “drug dealing, prostitution, and petty crime” but they proceeded with creating the transit mall there (Punter, 2003, p.27).

For the City Engineer however, the conversion of street space for pedestrians and transit created a new problem of how to maintain the efficiency of the street system for cars travelling to and through the downtown. In his report to council about the Downtown Transportation Plan (Curtis, 1974), the City Engineer emphasized “the provision of a traffic system to circumnavigate the core area,” and the “provision of peripheral parking lots for commuters”. He argues that “a base period of traffic must be maintained otherwise the downtown will die.” He noted that downtown residents were important to the proposal, saying that “residents in the downtown will add much to the vitality of the proposals, however they will not be without cars and parking must be provided.” He also argued the need for rapid transit, saying that “the proposals require a drastic change from car to transit and can be achieved ultimately only with full scale subway systems.” Above all, he argued that Downtown Vancouver needed new roads and wider roads to replace street capacity which would be lost to surface transit and pedestrianization (Curtis, 1974).

In the 1974 Downtown Transportation Plan, an ambitious idea to pedestrianize Granville Street and possibly Hastings Street and Robson Street was coupled with the Engineering Department’s massive plans to facilitate traffic flow downtown (See Appendix Figure 13). Along with creating ‘collector streets’ through the West End on
Nicola and Nelson, the engineers proposed the idea of a downtown ring road system that would cut off the eastern part of the West End neighbourhood with a six million dollar tunnel running underneath where today’s Nelson Park exists, connecting to a pair of widened major arterials, the proposed Bute-Thurlow couplet (Vancouver City Council Minutes, July 29, 1975). The plan proposed to move Nelson Park one block south, demolishing the block of heritage houses known as Mole Hill. It also proposed the widening of Bute, Alberni and Melville to accommodate increased traffic. The ring road would be completed in the north with a high-speed extension of Cordova past Burrard (a route that looks similar to the previous plans for a waterfront freeway) and a south bypass from Columbia and Carrall to Burrard (a route that looks very similar to Pacific Avenue).

The justification for this ring road plan was that it would replace the capacity lost with the elimination of traffic on Robson and Granville. The Nelson Park tunnel was seen as a key piece of the plan to mitigate to potential impacts of the ring road on the West End. According to the 1974 Downtown Vancouver Transportation study:

all departments agree that the Bute-Thurlow couplet should not be implemented without the construction of the Nelson park tunnel. It also relates to the extension of Cordova beyond Burrard. While an on-street Bute-Thurlow couplet is operationally feasible and acceptable from the traffic point of view, the impact on the West End would be unacceptable. This tunnel provides a reasonable and practical means of resolving the conflict between traffic flow using a Bute-Thurlow couplet and the West End. (Vancouver City Council Minutes, July 19, 1974, p.3)

Initially, Ray Spaxman, the Director of Planning supported the plans for the ring road and tunnel. He was concerned about the impact on the West End, arguing that “ideally the tunnel should extend beyond Robson to the north and beyond Thurlow to the east, thus completely eliminating conflict with the West End.” The Director of Planning also noted that the street closures related to the tunnel would benefit the West End. He wrote that the Bute-Thurlow couplet would “provide an important part of the ring system to direct traffic to the perimeter of the downtown core and provide good access to the high density office areas in the northwest corner of the core.” (Vancouver City Council Minutes, July 19, 1974, p.3). Six months previously, in December of 1974, Spaxman
had felt that the plans were ‘too hasty’, and he pushed for further consultation and study on the issue (Curtis, 1974).

Right away, this plan sparked controversy and conflicts. In the 1974 report, the City Engineer notes that there are potential conflicts between ‘False Creek interests’, “Marathon”, and ‘waterfront interests’ about the south bypass and waterfront roads, as well as strong opposition from the West End about the effect on the neighbourhood of the Nelson Smithe couplet, the Nelson Park Tunnel, and the Thrulow-Bute couplet. The engineer also notes that, “the plan was not supported by the West End Planning Team.” (Curtis, 1974).

A letter to Mayor Art Phillips from Peter Grant, board of management at Gordon House written on July 7, 1975 eloquently sums up several major objections to the plan:

We sense a further erosion of the West End, now a high density residential area by forcing traffic from the downtown into a neighbourhood which has been traditionally residential streets, as this is unsuitable. Burrard street on the east side has already become a part of the downtown and Alberni on the north becoming a major artery, and with the proposed Bute-Thurlow couplet, and tunnel, these changes will destroy the existing physical shape and environment for that part of the West End. This is contrary to the intent of the guidelines adopted by you, and are seen by this group as undesirable. If these changes are implemented we see no reduction in traffic volume but rather an increase in noise and carbon monoxide levels. (Grant, 1975)

Grant outlines how the Downtown Transportation Plan would disrupt social development planning and worsen conditions in the West End for children, seniors and pedestrians, noting that:

Alberni street as a fast street is presently a low income family area and likely to be developed to greater intensity allowing more children. (Grant, 1975)

and also that:

property adjacent to the tunnel entrance on Bute and Haro is being planned as a senior citizen development. (Grant, 1975)
He also describes plans for the site where the tunnel entrance will discharge four lanes of traffic onto Nelson Street, writing that:

Nelson Park will contain a park, a school and a recreation area for senior citizens of that locality, all generating and increasing pedestrian traffic. To take downtown and North Shore traffic closer to the area is an absurdity. (Grant, 1975)

He ends the letter by saying:

We seriously ask that you not approve this nor any other recommendation which will encourage increased traffic in the West End. (Grant, 1975)

Opposition to the Downtown Transportation Plan continued to grow in the West End during 1975. A delegation of residents and community leaders met with the mayor on July 8th, 1975, to express their concerns (Vancouver City Council Minutes, July 29, 1974). Community dissent reached a crescendo three years later in 1978, when I have found a huge pile of letters from West End residents, property owners, community groups and churches opposing this plan (Correspondence, 1978). Specific problems included controversy about removing trees as part of the planned widening of Bute, Alberni and Melville streets, fears about increased traffic on Nelson if it was upgraded to a distributor street, and concerns about the Nelson Park tunnel proposal (Vancouver City Council Minutes, September, 26, 1978). It was during this period that residents became increasingly organized against traffic incursions, forming the West End Traffic Committee led by resident Carole Walker to lobby on their behalf at City Hall (Correspondence, 1978). She not only organized resistance to the ring road plan, but also advocated for pedestrian improvements such as a pedestrian signal at Denman and Haro in front of the community centre, a proposal that was first rejected by the City Engineer because it would hamper traffic flow, but that was eventually installed at the behest of the West End Planning Team (Correspondence, 1978). In the summer of 1978, residents of Bute Street and Nelson Street each sent in separate petitions with several hundred signatures, protesting against increased traffic and street widening (Correspondence, 1978). The Director of Gordon House wrote another letter concerning the plan, writing that:
many of our members have been here long enough to have seen the
arrival of the barrier and mini-park scheme west of Denman. The
resulting decrease in street noise and the freedom to use the streets and
parks has been commented upon by many of the residents in that area.
(Grant, September 21, 1978 in Correspondence, 1978)

By mid 1978, the Planning Director declared support for the desires of West End
residents and worked instead to persuade council to have the ring road plan nixed. In
his August report, Spaxman expressed concerns that plan would increase traffic in the
West End (City Manager’s Report, August 14, 1978). In September, Council voted to
put the Downtown ring road plan on hold (minutes of Council, September 26, 1978). In
the fall of 1978, another survey was conducted to determine levels of resident support in
the area east of Denman for additional diverters and willingness to pay for mini-parks
(Bowers, 1980), indicating that the planning department’s attention and priorities had
shifted yet again to realizing some kind of area-wide traffic calming plan in the West End.

5.5. TEAM’s Legacy

The TEAM government implemented the first traffic diverters and mini-parks in
the Stanley Park neighbourhood of West End in order to deter through traffic and create
new park space and pedestrian amenities. The process of implementing this vision was
pioneering, experimental, and encountered a host of conflicts, which were quickly
resolved for the area west of Denman, but not for the eastern area of the West End. The
success in rapidly implementing mini-parks in the westernmost Stanley Park
neighbourhood can be credited to the efforts of the West End Planning Team working
out in the community who were able to engage with residents, even to the point of
canvasing door to door to explain the City’s traffic calming plans. Of the lessons this
experience can provide to today’s planners, I would particularly highlight the explicit
focus on pedestrian needs, the precedence given to the idea of “livability” in both the
downtown living and livable streets senses as a guiding principle, and the importance of
citizen engagement in achieving successful implementation in the face of opposition.
The failure to rapidly implement the West End Traffic Plan 2 demonstrates that even
after TEAM’s election with the mandate of a ‘livable city’, there were still large conflicts
with this livability vision and the modern “engineering mind” as city engineers were
reluctant to give up their views about increasing or at least maintaining road capacity for cars in the West End and Downtown.

After an exhaustive review of archival records, I found that prostitution was never mentioned in any official planning documents as a reason for implementing traffic calming between 1973 and 1975. The Vancouver Police Department made no comment about prostitution in their communications with council regarding the traffic diversions (Vancouver City Council Minutes, April, 24, 1974; July 23, 1974). The only mentions of prostitution were in some of the residents’ letters opposing the initial round of mini-parks in the area west of Denman and a few newspaper articles about Davie Street (Correspondence, 1973-1978). In the coming chapter, I will discuss how and why a traffic diversion plan for the eastern portion of the neighbourhood was finally implemented, amid the politics around prostitution that came to dominate the debate around traffic calming and livability in the West End by the early 1980s.
Chapter 6.

The West End from 1977-1984 - The Crusade against Prostitution, Shifting meanings of Livability, and Implementing Phase 3 of the West End Traffic Plan

This chapter describes how a civic drive to eradicate street prostitution influenced the process of developing and implementing new traffic calming plans for the West End. I have singled out the years between 1977 and 1984 as a time when anxieties about street prostitution in the West End increased. The archival record gives us clues about why: police reported increases in the absolute number of sex workers on the streets of the West End and noted that street prostitution had overflowed from the bounds of Davie Street onto residential side streets, which was intolerable for many residents (Forbes, 1977). But this shift in the geography of the West End sex trade was accompanied by an equally significant shift in the prevalent attitudes. In the early 1980s, there was a strong reaction against the liberal tolerance of the previous decade, giving rise to neoliberal forms of urban policy (Brenner & Theodore, 2002). This revanchism is marked by the advent of “broken windows’ policing (Kelling & Wilson, 1982), a popular criminological theory associated with regulatory practices of exclusion that are designed to “separate the desired from the undesired” across urban space (Brown & Herbert, 2006, p.756). In Vancouver, this meant that many of the progressive planning priorities of the livable city established by earlier administrations were superseded by a more entrepreneurial concern about “upgrading” and “cleaning up” areas of the central city where the sex trade was established, as part of the lead-up to Expo 86. Another important contextual piece is the AIDS crisis that arose during this period devastated the West End gay community at a time when it was struggling to gain mainstream respectability (Ryan, 2013). A particularity of the West End experience is that many of the leaders in the drive to expel prostitution from the West End were GLBT individuals, members of one marginalized group who were actively persecuting another even more
marginalized group, the sex workers (Ross, 2012). But the impetus to remove street prostitution from the West End began with a coalition of business owners and police that formed in 1977 with a push to ‘clean up’ the sex trade from downtown streets. My focus in this chapter is to show how this push against street prostitution in the West End changed the planning focus of the traffic calming, bringing about a reimagined conception of ‘livability’ based on exclusion of ‘undesirables.’

6.1. The Crusade Against Prostitution

It is clear that the West End had a certain amount of prostitution in the late sixties and early seventies, but it is unclear whether it was seen as a significant problem for residents, businesses or city officials. Prostitution was mentioned but not focused on in a few of those early West End planning documents I discussed in Chapter 5. For example, Patillo’s 1969 report documents problems created by “people who have opted out of society” including “crime, delinquency, undesirables, drug use, prostitution, purse snatching, breaking and entering, and theft” (Patillo, 1969, p.58). To address concerns about personal safety and crime in the West End, these early plans recommended such measures as increased police enforcement and some environmental modifications to prevent crime using the principles popularized by Oscar Newman’s (1972) book on “Defensible Space” (e.g. better lighting and locked parking garages), but they said nothing specific about prostitution.

The 1969 Patillo and 1971 Collier reports, the 1970 Marathon study (Forbes, Goldberg & Kelly, 1970), and the 1972 “West End: a Social Development Program” documents all refer to the popular trope of the late sixties that the West End was populated by “swingers”, that it was a “swinging place” full of excitement and vitality and “sparkling diversity” on the street, perhaps indicating that it was known as a tolerant area for people with alternative, non-conforming lifestyles. In the early 1970s, it also became home to an increasingly visible LGBT community, as well as a busy centre of downtown nightlife around Davie Street. On October 10, 1972, The Vancouver Sun published an article titled: “Sleazy elements rooted in quality area: worried Davie street looks for cure.” The article documented the “seedy decline” of the street, raising concerns about the 24 hour restaurants that “allow drug addicts, pimps and prostitutes to come in and hang
around.” Another undated article from the fall of 1972, titled “Businessmen meet police: Davie seeks new image,” states that “while Davie street may have its problems, it is definitely not a main street in sin city. In fact, due in no small part to development in the area, it has a glowing future.” It goes to say that “alarm was sounded about a blue movie house and pornographic bookstore” but it says that the merchants were most upset about the Vancouver Sun article from October 10 that “grossly exaggerates conditions on Davie street.” “Merchants can’t afford people to say, well this is a hooker area.” According to the businessmen, the worst area was 900 Granville Street where the pedestrian area had attracted drug users, open sex and “undisguised fondling of girls” (Businessmen Meet Police, ca.1972).

It is hard to conclude much about the extent of street prostitution in the West End based on these biased newspaper accounts. In 1972, changes to the Canadian criminal code, specifically the elimination of the “Vagrancy” section, weakened police power to enforce “community standards” about street prostitution (Forbes, 1977). It is debatable whether this resulted in a sudden increase in street prostitution in Canadian cities, but certainly by the early 1980s, street prostitution was identified as a significant problem by civic officials in a number of large cities including Vancouver, Calgary, Montreal and Toronto (Horgan, 1983). Exploring the parallels between the experiences of these cities and the events in Vancouver’s West End is beyond the scope of this paper; my focus is on whether and how these anxieties about prostitution translated into planning prescriptions for traffic calming.

Based on available evidence, it is most likely that the visibility of street prostitution in the West End increased during the second half of the 1970s resulting from the 1975 police raids of several downtown nightclubs, including the Penthouse and the Zanzibar, that pushed an indoor activity outside (Forbes, 1977; Bowers, 1977; Lowman, 1992; Ross, 2012). Shortly following these raids, prostitutes congregated on several downtown streets including streets in the elite business district. There is little evidence of a large “moral panic” about street prostitution in the West End before 1975. Beginning in 1977 however, there is a trail of evidence documenting a civic drive to push prostitution out of the area using a powerful combination of police enforcement, citizen activism and vigilantism, city regulation and traffic measures. My study of planning records for the
West End indicates that in Vancouver during the early 1970s, prostitution was handled as a policing matter, peripheral to the realm of city planning. In the West End, the issue of street prostitution does not show up as a central issue in the planning record until 1977, perhaps because it was not very prevalent, or it was not seen as the domain of the planners. In Vancouver, this stance shifted in 1977, when the first mentions of prostitution appear in the record of West End planning in several official documents, including a police report that was presented to Vancouver City Council, called “Street Prostitution in Vancouver’s West End” (Forbes, 1977), as well as a memo from the City Manager to senior staff, expressing his views on the issue.

The 1977 Police report prepared by Corporal G.A. Forbes provides the earliest depiction of the scale and location of street prostitution on Davie Street in the archival record, detailing geography of street prostitution in Downtown Vancouver and the West End (See Appendix Figure 15). The police argued that prostitution was becoming a severe nuisance and contributing to “area degradation” in the West End, reporting that:

The ever increasing street prostitution problem is of serious concern to local residents and businessmen in Vancouver’s West End. In three separate sections of the West End, area degradation has resulted from the presence of street prostitution. In these areas there is a noticeable increase in Criminal Code Offences, Such as Robbery, Theft, Assaults, as well as Morals and Drug offences. Other annoying problems created by their presence are: Traffic obstructions (consisting of emergency, local, clientele and tourist traffic), pedestrian obstructions and general disturbances of the peace and quiet. Generally, the community standards of the West End of Vancouver have visibly deteriorated.

(Forbes, 1977, p.1)

This detailed police report differentiated between male and female and juvenile prostitutes, discussing the price and locations of each. According to the report, in 1977, of an estimated 200 male prostitutes in the whole city “usually 25 to 30 hard core regulars make themselves available on Davie Street, from Thurlow to Denman, including English Bay and the Bath House at English Bay.... In some cases they can be found on side streets such as Pendrell, Bute, Jervis and Broughton” (Forbes, 1977, P. 2). The report also claimed police had identified 80 juvenile prostitutes plying their trade on Davie Street. As for female prostitution, the report claimed that of 500 to 600 street prostitutes in the whole city, “approximately 250 in number, work three separate areas of
the West End.” The police characterize the three different strolls, ranging from the “heroin” area, with “100 prostitutes on the East Side of Granville between 1000 and 1100 block of Granville,” to the “high end” area on West Georgia near the Hotel Georgia. The report describes 80 female prostitutes working on Davie Street, but warns that street prostitution is growing in the area: “recently the area used by the girls has expanded to include Davie Street from Thurlow to Nicola, as well as Pendrell, Jervis, Broughton and Bute streets” (Forbes, 1977, p.2). This indicates that street prostitution was expanding onto residential side streets in the West End.

The report communicates the Police department’s extreme frustration of being powerless to “deal” with the open prostitution in the West End. The police report ends with recommendations to various regulatory and governance bodies, including the Liquor Control Board, Vancouver City Council, the City Licensing Department, the Engineering Department and the Social Planning Department, to urgently develop a plan to upgrade areas of Granville street and Davie Street that “appear to be deteriorating” (Forbes, 1977). This report was accepted by Vancouver City Council on September 9, 1977 (Vancouver City Council Minutes, September 9, 1977).

On September 13, 1977 City Manager Fritz Bowers expressed his reaction to the police report in a confidential memo sent from City Manager’s office to several senior staff including C. Fleming of Legal Services, M. Egan Director of Social Planning, K. Dobell, Assistant to City Manager, and H. Bryson, Director of Permits and Licenses (Bowers, 1977). Bowers states that:

It looks like we are about to embark on another moral crusade. Should one not draw the following conclusions from this report:

1 No evidence of organized crime being involved.

2 The number of female prostitutes does not seem to be increasing. What has happened is that since our righteous closing down of the Penthouse (etc.), is that the trade is more out in the open.

3 The “higher class” prostitutes seem to be as much of an asset to the convention and tourist business as high-class restaurants (and about equally expensive!).
Part of the justification for the crusade must lie in our finding that this is an objectionable use of our sidewalks (like sandwich boards). Although there are some vocal objections, is the average citizen upset about this? Given the resilience of the “trade”, if we drive it away from present location, where is it likely to pop up instead? When ‘vagrancy – c’ laws were available to us, they clearly did not eliminate prostitution. What was their main effect, and what were the undesirable side-effects that caused the repeal of the laws? What City by-laws is it proposed to use instead?” (Bowers, 1977)

Even though the tone of this memo is almost mocking, and it expresses reluctance about whether the city should get involved in a “moral crusade”, this memo marks a shift at City Hall towards policies and politics influenced by fear and alarm about prostitution in the West End.

The City’s power to control the downtown street prostitution trade was limited; nevertheless, city staff were ordered to report on the varied actions the city could take in regard to street prostitution in the West End. Over the next seven years this crusade would come to dominate the City’s planning agenda in the West End, super-ceding the social planning agenda and involving several city departments including departments for engineering and planning, parks board and police. Starting in 1978, the city first looked at changing traffic patterns and also regulating liquor licenses and business permits, enforcing noise and nuisance bylaws, engaging the city’s legal department to research drafting a anti-prostitution bylaw, and finally, lobbying the federal government to change the criminal code. None of these strategies would prove to be effective because street prostitution persisted until the 1984 BC Supreme Court civil injunction that prohibited the public sale of sex in West End (Hannant, 1984).

Over the summer of 1978, under pressure from downtown merchants and hotel owners, the City decided to study installing traffic control devices or turn controls off Davie Street. This is the first time in the official record that traffic measures were discussed in relation to prostitution in the West End, marking an important turning point in my study. During a June meeting about “disruptive traffic conditions caused by West

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2 On June 27th, 1978 the Mayor also met with federal Justice Minister Ron Basford to raise concerns about prostitution in the West End and to lobby for a more effective solicitation law. “Basford, Volrich to meet.” (June 27, 1978) Vancouver Sun.
End prostitution”, the police and city officials (including the directors of the traffic and engineering, legal, and health departments) adopted a recommendation:

That the city engineering department commence a study into vehicular traffic on Davie Street and lanes adjacent to see if additional traffic control devices, i.e. one-way lanes could be installed so as to have a restrictive effect on this traffic. City engineering will undertake a study of the traffic in this area to ascertain the feasibility of instituting additional traffic control devices.  

(Standing Committee, June 20, 1978)

In June of 1978, Council rejected turn restrictions off Davie Street, but they wanted further study on the possibility of more barriers to address the problem. The engineering department, which still had the plans for the 1975 West End Traffic Scheme 2 sitting on the shelf, but they had been created for a different purpose, requested more time to study the problem and adjust the plan  (Vancouver City Council Minutes, June 27, 1978). A month later, City Council approved a “three phase strategy” to attack “problem of prostitution in the downtown core”, consisting of:

Phase 1) Police efforts to control annoyances.
Phase 2) Remove liquor store at Davie and Bute or limit its hours.
    Impose 2am curfew/closing hours for other stores and businesses.
Phase 3) Calls for a change in the law 
(Standing Committee, June 20, 1978)

In response to this decision, the Social Planning department conducted their own research on the problem. Social Planners were among the first to express scepticism about the City’s new crusade against prostitution in the West End, and their reports would oppose the city’s plans to close the liquor store and to restrict traffic with barriers.

A series of handwritten notes written in 1978 by Harold Olson of the Social Planning Department contain a set of street observations of the “Davie Street Liquor store” (which is actually located on Bute) dated August 3, 4 & 5, 1978. The observations were taken from the front of the store and from the intersection to the laneway behind it. Olson was sent out to document levels of traffic around the liquor store and to take notes about the presence of “prostitutes, loiterers and pan-handlers.” He reports there is “no sign of weirdoes, prostitutes, heavies, drunks or what have you.” He reported that walkers comprised the wide majority, 90%, of the traffic he observed. Olson also talked
to many people in front of the liquor store and administered a short survey. Olson concludes that the Davie Street Liquor Store is “a normal liquor store from this viewpoint” and also that: “people I’ve talked to don’t want to lose their liquor store- and that is to a man not a majority” (Olson, H., 1978).

Olson’s survey is mentioned in a report to Council dated August 9, 1978 written by G. Douglas Purdy, Deputy Director of Social Planning, titled “Review of traffic conditions at Davie and Bute”. Purdy notes that based on their department’s field research,

The Director of Social Planning observes that disruptive traffic conditions referred to in this report are directly related to observing or soliciting prostitutes. This traffic moves wherever prostitutes are located. The Director of Social Planning is of the opinion that traffic conditions are symptoms of the problem related to prostitution and will continue until prostitutes are forced to work more discretely as a result of pressure from police on instruction from the Attorney General. (Purdy, G.D., 1978)

The report argued that superficial plans to reroute traffic or close the liquor store would never address the roots of the issue, which centred on enforcement and provisions in the criminal code (Purdy, G.D., 1978).

Three weeks later, a memorandum signed by the City Clerk titled “Phase II: City Initiatives re Prostitution” details another meeting about prostitution, held between police and social planners and representatives of downtown hotels, downtown merchants and West End residents on August 28, 1978 (Office of the City Clerk, 1978). It states that the social planning department worked with police on phase 2 of the report that went to city council regarding environmental factors – the hours of closing of cafes, etc. The report states that: “there was discussion with the police department, and the social planning department felt the store hours and particularly the liquor store hours were incidental to the actual problem” (Office of the City Clerk, 1978, P.1). It goes on to note that three recommendations made by the social planning department were approved at the meeting last Tuesday of City Council:
1. Store hours remain as is.
2. Traffic situation be looked at by the Engineering department.
3. Establishments be warned they will be brought before City Council
   (Office of the City Clerk, 1978, P.2)

The years 1977 and 1978 set the wheels in motion for a civic campaign to attack street prostitution downtown and in the West End. As the city began to explore possible ways to regulate or remove the sex trade from downtown and Davie Street, it was constrained by the city’s narrow powers to control this illicit activity. Social Planners worked in cooperation with police and other departments to research and make suggestions about the prostitution issue and liaise with concerned residents and businesses. This new ‘crusade’ somewhat diverted their efforts away from implementing the social visions of the West End Policy Guidelines but this agenda was not entirely abandoned despite the concerns about street prostitution. After Council ruled out closing the Davie Street liquor store or restricting permits for the 24 hour restaurants, developing an effective traffic engineering solution was prioritized (Office of the City Clerk, 1978).

6.2. Planning Mini Parks East of Denman, 1980

By 1980, the Engineering Department was ready to proceed with a new plan for diverters and mini-parks in the West End East of Denman, which was basically a revival of the older Traffic Scheme 2 plan. Although the City’s nascent prostitution agenda had prioritized implementing temporary diverters to limit the traffic problem of johns cruising around the side streets near Davie, there were other important reasons to expedite a more holistic and permanent area-wide plan, including a need for additional park space, pedestrian improvements and also repaving the streets. A City Manager’s report on May 15, 1980 cited a 1978 survey of residents East of Denman regarding their opinion on additional diverters and willingness to pay for additional mini parks (Bowers, 1980). According to the City manager, 61% of residents strongly supported new mini parks, but they were less supportive of diverters of the type that were suggested to curb the curb crawling. In his report, Fritz Bowers concluded that:
the majority of residents east of Denman support alterations to existing traffic patterns provided that these changes are accompanied by a permanent form of usable and aesthetic developments. Implementation of traffic scheme II prior to mini-parks is not recommended for the reasons described above. (Bowers, 1980)

For Bowers, a key justification for the plan was the goal of increasing park space in the West End:

The West End has a significant deficiency of neighbourhood open space (0.207 acres/1000 population) in comparison with the City average (0.574 acres/1000 population) even when planned but yet undeveloped Nelson Park and Park site 19 are considered. The lack of local parks has been a major concern of residents east of Denman over the years, and the higher land values in this area place a considerable constraint on the City’s ability to meet this need through traditional means of acquiring additional park land. Due to these constraints the Director of Planning recommends approval in principle of the partial use of City streets for open space purposes east of Denman, pedestrian pathways and basic street improvements subject to analysis of mini-park locations and a number of alternative mini-park design concepts in order to ensure adequate emergency vehicle access, clarification of funding sources and other criteria. (Bowers, 1980)

During the 1970s, the park board had been working on various strategies to increase park space in the West End. They had developed a policy of buying any available parcel of land even if they were not suitable for park space, in the hopes that they could trade or amass enough property to create new parks. This is how the city came to own the block of Mole Hill or “Block 23, District lot 185”, which was planned to be the site of a relocated Nelson Park as the existing park site was planned for redevelopment into new social housing for seniors and families (Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation Fonds, “Park Site, Mini, East of Denman” S93, Box 242-C-4 folder 3-4. City of Vancouver Archives). The Parks Board also acquired a block of properties at ‘Park site 19’ which is now called Barclay Heritage square, again with the idea of demolishing the heritage houses to clear a block for a park (City of Vancouver Fonds “Diverters – Mini-parks, West End, Parksite 19” S17-4 Box 117-A-6 folder 11. City of Vancouver Archives). Due to activism of citizens and heritage advocates the houses on both of these blocks were eventually renovated and preserved, and they have become important ‘gems’ in the neighbourhood. Budget constraints, the high land values in the West End and the influence of the heritage preservation movement that emerged in the
1970s meant that by 1980, the ‘streets to park’ concept became the City’s only viable way to establish new parks in the West End (Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation Fonds, “Park Site, Mini, East of Denman” S93, Box 242-C-4 folder 3-4. City of Vancouver Archives). The engineering department strongly objected to this strategy for a variety of reasons that were outlined in Bowers’ report:

The city engineer is opposed to the concept of street closures to make up a deficiency in park space. In view of the concerns of: - delays to emergency response – interference with neighbourhood travel patterns – neighbourhood opposition to the concept of collector streets – increased cost for utilities – the city engineer recommends that streets not be closed for mini-parks but that street improvements and pedestrian pathways proceed. (Bowers, 1980)

Despite these concerns, on June 17, 1980, City Council approved in principle of the installation of mini-parks in the West End east of Denman Street, subject to further design work between staff and residents (Vancouver City Council Minutes, June 17, 1980). Over the summer of 1980, planners and engineers consulted with a ‘citizens subcommittee’ to devise options for mini-parks, street improvements, pedestrian pathways and traffic controls (Curtis, 1980). They met with a group of ‘citizen representatives’ seven times through the summer, including a July 16 community walk with interested residents to identify traffic problems and park requirements. Planners also surveyed and counted pedestrians to determine the best routes for pedestrian pathways, finding that Bute Street had the most north/south foot traffic and Nelson Street had the most pedestrians travelling east/west. It is worth noting that two years earlier, these same two streets were proposed components of the arterial ring road plan that residents had rallied against. The consensus of the subcommittee was that it was not possible to design a workable mini-park which allowed general traffic access, but they were able to develop a mini-park design that enabled emergency access. They also considered locations, based on parameters that included: reducing deficiencies in neighbourhood park space, discouraging potential through traffic, maintaining emergency and local access, preserving mature trees, maintaining driveway access, and providing equitable distribution throughout the area (Curtis, 1980).

Three possible options for an area-wide traffic plan were developed. A large public meeting was held on October 20, 1980 to provide information to a broader swath
of West End citizens and receive their input on the designs and planning process. An engineering report summarizing the results of this meeting was sent to Council on October 30, 1980 (Curtis, 1980). This report offers a good insight into the views of residents, the Director of Planning, the City engineer as well as the Police Chief and Fire Chief.

According to the report, 250 people attended the meeting in which three mini-park systems (A, B, and C) were presented, representing progressively increasing degrees of traffic control. Over 60% of the speakers preferred option C and fewer than 20% of the speakers were against mini-parks. Little or no support was voiced for options A or B. According to the report, “speakers continuously raised concern with the excessive traffic volumes on West End Streets, in particular the perceived large amount of through-traffic” (Curtis, 1980, p.2). It also states that “speakers referred to the role and benefit of mini-parks principally in the context of through traffic control with considerably less emphasis on the park space function” (Curtis, 1980, p.2).

A lot of the planning repeated discussions and decisions that had previously been made in the area West of Denman. While there was general staff agreement on the need for basic street improvements, which included the repaving of deteriorated streets, the repair of damaged sidewalks, and the installation of new curbs, the issue of street width was again debated. Engineers pushed for the same standard as was implemented in the area west of Denman Street (8.5 metres or 27 feet versus 7.3 metres or 24 feet) to provide on-street parking and emergency access subject to all healthy large trees being preserved (a 0.6 metre minimum rear of curb clearance be applied to preserve trees). The Director of Planning’s agreement to street widening was premised upon “the concurrent implementation of an effective scheme to discourage through traffic”; the citizens sub committee also ‘reluctantly accept the street widening to 27 feet recommended by engineering, but only if the program includes option C (quoted in Curtis, 1980, p.2).

There was also agreement on the need for and location of pedestrian pathways incorporating decorative sidewalk treatment and other amenities such as landscaping, benches, etc. According to the report, “the pedestrian pathways would be designed in a
manner similar to those installed in the area west of Denman Street" (Curtis, 1980, p.2). The Citizen’s sub-committee reported their strong support for option C, “the only option that does the job,” writing that: “Protection of our community is our number one concern. Protect our residential community from steadily rising automobile traffic. The traffic problem is serious now and will become considerably worse with the further development of Downtown,” referring to development plans for “B.C. Place stadium, Pier B.C., and more downtown office buildings” (quoted in Curtis, 1980, p.2). The issue of excessive traffic volumes and through traffic again exemplified a disconnect between the views of engineers and the views of residents. Many of the speakers at the public meeting expressed concern with what they perceived to be the excessive volume of traffic and in particular the large amount of through traffic. Local residents found the volumes of traffic especially those on Bute and Nelson streets, to be unacceptable. Residents opposed the creation or continuation of traffic collectors or local distributor streets. But the engineers studying the issue disagreed, writing that:

The West End street system has been organized to accommodate both heavy local traffic generated by the high population density of the West End and through traffic on a hierarchical system of streets. This system forms a conventional pattern of arterial roads, collector-distributors and local streets. The present traffic volumes are consistent with what can be expected for streets performing these functions... In summary, traffic volumes do not exceed standards used by the Road and Transportation Association of Canada and by other cities. About a quarter of the through traffic travels on residential streets (including distributors). At issue is the degree to which traffic controls are needed to address the traffic problem identified by the citizens. (Curtis, 1980, p.4)

In his own comments, William Curtis, the City Engineer and author of the report, argued against the mini-parks because they would be “an impediment to fire and emergency access”, and would “disrupt legitimate local vehicular traffic”, and he reiterated uncertainty about the level of support in the community. He reluctantly endorsed Option A, which involved 6 mini parks, a system of local distributors, and one diverter. Option B was an extension of option A, but included traffic circles. Option C provided the greatest number of traffic controls (e.g. cul-de-sacs, 7 mini parks, circles, islands and diverters) and reduced the number of local distributors to one: Nicola Street north of Nelson. This option provided the greatest restriction to emergency and local access, as well as to potential through traffic (Curtis, 1980, p.4).
The Fire Chief rejected options A, B, and C, and expressed particular concern about traffic circles. In the report, he stated that

The fire department is opposed to any measure which restricts or hinders access and delays response time for emergency vehicles since it hinders our function of safeguarding life and property.

(quoted in Curtis, 1980, p.5)

The Police Chief Constable had even stronger words, arguing that not only would mini-parks and diverters lengthen police response time, but “the parks will act as a hiding place for the molester and an escape route for the fleeing criminal” (quoted in Curtis, 1980, p.5). He believed that the mini-parks would create more work for the police, writing that:

If the design allows for emergency vehicle access it is reasonable to expect that other vehicle drivers will also take advantage of this convenience. This proposal from the police point of view would be counterproductive in that it will place greater demands on the force, particularly in the area of traffic activities connected to parking and moving violations and accident investigations and complaints arising out of loitering by street people and their associated night time activities. All this will be occurring at a time when there is mounting crime and traffic problems in the city. (quoted in Curtis, 1980, p.5)

Ray Spaxman, the Director of Planning countered the strong views of the police and fire departments, agreeing that while “Any traffic control scheme is virtually certain to create some impediment to local and emergency access,” in his opinion the plan would “improve aspects of the residential environment” and he listed other points in favour, including the precedent set by area west of Denman, and resident support for option C (Spaxman, quoted in Curtis, 1980, p.4).

Council agreed with Spaxman and the residents, and on November 4, 1980, they approved in principle option C for the “Mini-parks east of Denman Street” project (see Appendix Figure 16), which included seven mini-parks and pedestrian improvements in the area bounded by Denman, Robson, Thurlow and Pacific Streets (City of Vancouver, 1980). The specifications included preservation of all healthy trees, allowing fire equipment street circulation and pedestrian pathways located on the east side of Bute between Robson and Davie streets, the east side of Jervis Street between Davie and
Beach avenue and the south side of Nelson Street between Denman and Thurlow streets. The Vancouver Park Board was responsible for preparing designs for the mini-parks which would include benches, decorative water fountains, drinking fountains, signs, litter receptacles, kiosks, planters, tot lots, lighting standards and fixtures and “the supplying and planting of trees, shrubs, herbs and grass therein and thereon” (City of Vancouver, 1980). The locations of the seven proposed mini-parks were described as:

Cardero Street from Comox Street to the lane south of Comox Street.

Broughton Street from Nelson street to the lane south of nelson street.

Bute street from Haro street to the lane south of Haro street.

Nicola street from Pendrell street to the lane south of Pendrell street.

Cardero street from Burnaby street to the lane north of Burnaby street.

Jervis street from Burnaby street to the lane south of Burnaby street.

The easterly half of Nicola street from beach avenue to the lane north of Beach avenue (City of Vancouver, 1980).

The project also included repaving all the streets in the bounded area. The total budget for the project was set at $6,100,000 with $4,692,183 to be supplied by the property owners and the City’s share comprising $1,408,117. Following this decision was a further round of public consultation in 1981, which involved a mini-parks concept plan that was circulated to all property owners within 66ft of each proposed park (City of Vancouver, 1980).

It is worth noting that the engineering department had begun looking at engineering solutions to curb crawling in 1978, although the planning record for this particular mini-parks and traffic calming plan as approved in 1980 was focused on debates about increasing park space and limiting through traffic. In this way, it seems like it was a continuation of the traffic calming process that was started in 1973 in the area west of Denman. The reason implementation was delayed until 1980, was largely due to the resistance from the police, fire department, and particularly the engineering department who opposed restricting traffic and using streets to make up for a deficiency of parks in this part of the West End and also pursued a grand plan for a ring road and
tunnel that would have upgraded Nelson Street and Bute Street to the status of district arterials.

As we shall see in the next section, it was during the following year in 1981 that a much more organized and vocal fight against prostitution in the West End emerged with the formation of CROWE in the first year of Mike Harcourt’s term as Mayor, and this would implicate the mini-parks and traffic calming plans that were set in motion in 1980.

6.3. CROWE and Mike Harcourt

While some objections to the traffic plan emerged that were mostly about traffic, for example a grocery store on Cardero objected to a mini-park in front of the store because it would lose business from drivers, (Barriers Bad for Grocery Business, 1981) when it was approved, the plan was not that controversial. Because it was a local improvement, from the city’s point of view, the only objections that mattered were from adjacent property owners who would be footing the bill, rather than residents (in any case, it appears the majority of residents were in favour of the plan). A memo from City Manager to City Council on August 25, 1981 states that they would need to receive objections from a “significantly large proportion of property owners” (Bowers, 1981).

But the issue of prostitution really came to the fore in 1981 as the city was just beginning to implement the mini-parks plan. As I mentioned in the first section of this chapter, prostitution had been around in the West End since at least the early seventies, and it was known as a tolerant area, attracting a significant gay population. But for many residents, street prostitution was seen as an overly explicit sign of liberal tolerance. The presence of sex workers in the vicinity of Davie Street was becoming an un-concealed ‘nuisance’ that the city and the police seemed powerless to regulate. Between January and June of 1981, City Hall received dozens of letters regarding street prostitution from frustrated West End residents complaining about noise, traffic congestion and harassment, with some expressing a feeling that quality of life was degrading on residential streets (Bowers, 1981). Bowers reported that West End residents have been “disrupted, intimidated and abused” because of the “presence of prostitutes, their customers and onlookers” (Bowers, 1981, p.1).
Over the summer of 1981, one very concerned resident, a young gay man named Gordon Price, founded a group called CROWE (Concerned Residents of the West End) to lead a campaign to drive the prostitutes out of the residential areas of the West End. This group made an unequivocal connection between the nuisances of traffic and street prostitution. They characterized themselves as a grassroots citizens organization that wanted to take back the streets with a range of strategies ranging from lobbying sympathetic politicians (municipal and federal) for new laws and increased enforcement to vigilante actions. A key justification for their campaign was the premise that prostitution was a threat to both property values and quality of life. In August of 1981, the group began their drive to attract members with the publication of their first pamphlet “What is CROWE? Why should YOU join?” a call to action that outlined their objective to reclaim “social peace” by removing street prostitution from “one of the most tolerant neighbourhoods in the country.”(CROWE, August, 1981). CROWE’s “founding resolution,” quoted below, explicitly outlined their concerns and objective:

Whereas: The West End is a residential neighbourhood with the highest concentration of citizens in Canada and contributes a significant proportion of property taxes to the City of Vancouver:

Whereas: West End residents have the right to peace, quiet and enjoyment of their neighbourhood to the same extent as other residents and neighbourhoods in the city;

And whereas: The West End is subject to considerable nuisance, disruption and even danger as a result of the influx of prostitutes and the practicing of their trade on our streets, specifically –

Increased vehicle traffic at all times, but especially late at night and on weekends.

A serious rise in the general noise level as a result of increased traffic, including the revving of cars at all hours and particularly late at night.

Loud, vulgar and abusive language at all hours by prostitutes and their customers and sightseers.

Consequent disruption of sleep and the general peace of the neighbourhood.

Increased litter and wear on the boulevards and on private property.
Increased crime related to prostitution, notably drug dealing, with potential danger to all neighbourhood residents.

Threats to personal safety and increased street violence.

Intimidation by prostitutes and pimps of passers-by.

Impact on property values due to such nuisances.

A deteriorating reputation of the neighbourhood, with a resulting loss in property taxation values to the city.

The threat of an accelerating spiral of decline of the West End.

And Whereas: There are no apparent attempts to enforce existing laws against these nuisances and disruptions of the peace or to amend these inadequate legislation to deal with them;

And Whereas: The situation appears to be getting progressively worse as it is realized that there are no effective curbs against these nuisances;

Be it resolved that: Governments and all political parties at all levels immediately undertake the necessary actions to remove these nuisances and disruptions from residential areas and the West End.

(CROWE, 1981)

The residents and community organizers behind CROWE and its vigilante affiliate “Shame the Johns” or STJ, which shared CROWE’s leadership and membership base (Bishop, 2013, p.33), effectively pressured City Hall to take action on their behalf by writing letters and organizing petitions. For example, this September 1, 1981 petition sent to Mike Harcourt stated:

We, the undersigned, residents of the vicinity of Jervis and Davie Street are extremely annoyed at the traffic, noise and aggression which are product of the presence of prostitutes.

Traffic Problems: We have become bottled in with cars on our streets and alleys who have come to see and harass the prostitutes.

Noise problems: The sound of breaking bottles, car tires, car stereos, yelling and screaming by both the prostitutes, and passengers in passing vehicles is constantly increasing. This noise is at its worst at 2:00 to 3:00 am.
Aggression problems: With the current level of aggression, i.e. beatings and throwing of eggs and bottles, we feel it is not safe to leave our buildings after dark. (Correspondence, 1980-1984)

A little more than a month after its inception, CROWE organized a one-day workshop on October 17, 1981, attended by more than 100 residents with a list of keynote speakers included Pat Carney MP, Mayor Mike Harcourt, and several aldermen (Bowers, 1981).

Harcourt’s speech at the meeting was transcribed in the CROWE briefing book. In his address to the audience of CROWE supporters, he outlined a “ten point program to deal with street prostitution in Vancouver”. The first point centered on drafting a ‘clever’ municipal bylaw that dealt not only with street prostitution, but also ‘street nuisances’ although Harcourt, a trained lawyer, said that he had ‘some grave doubts about its legality’ and did not think it would be a ‘panacea’. His second point notes that he had approached the provincial government for permission to amend the Vancouver Charter to give them emergency powers necessary to pass the bylaw, but that permission was refused. His other points involved approaching all three levels of government to ‘step up the heat’ particularly to amend the criminal code so that “you can have some peace, quiet and protection”. He mentions meeting with senator Ray Perrault, meeting with all the mayors of the big cities in Canada, as well as meeting with the attorney general, chief judge, and the police chief to ensure that “residents complaints are dealt with by the criminal justice system.” His final point was: “We are going to be looking at traffic diversions. Don’t let anyone fool you that Traffic Scheme C is going to increase the prostitution problem” (CROWE, 1981 – no page numbers.)

Following recommendations outlined in an October 31, 1981 City Manager’s report about the “West End Prostitution/Nuisance Problem” that noted that the City had received “a multitude of complaints and petitions from the West End residents requesting Council action to resolve the street nuisance problem”, (Bowers, 1981, p.1) on November 3, 1981, Vancouver City Council approved $28,000 to “set up seven temporary traffic diverters in the West End to discourage the prostitution trade.” Council also called for a “traffic enforcement strategy” to control traffic noise, approving increases in the police budget (Vancouver City Council Minutes, November 3, 1981).
Later that month, on November 21, 1981 Harcourt appeared before another CROWE meeting to repeat his commitment to their cause:

At the last meeting a number of us made commitments to you to take action in the areas where we could take action, As a result of your efforts, your reports – 1700 people who have written to myself or to the aldermen – the council was sympathetic and unanimously passed, first of all, the traffic barriers that are now in front of a number of streets... They are temporary barriers; they are there to prove a point. We have had mixed results. We have some people say they are terrible; a lot of people say that they haven’t had so much peace in a long time. It’s a controversial decision but what it shows is good faith by your city council. We are not just here to listen and to go away and not do anything. We have shown good faith with you, and we have done it unanimously, whatever our politics... We have also instructed our police, now that the barriers are in place, to carry out a traffic enforcement program.

(Mike Harcourt quoted in CROWE, 1981 pp. 3-4)

Harcourt’s statement provides evidence that these barriers were installed explicitly to curb prostitution. Harcourt’s comment about the 1700 letters also demonstrates that in its first three months, CROWE was remarkably effective in its efforts to organize a large angry faction of West End residents. But their campaign to drive out street prostitution was not confined to letter writing campaigns, they also began to organize vigilante foot patrols to harass and yell at prostitutes and johns on residential streets. On December 17, 1981 CROWE’s records report that a woman was doused with water on Pendrell Street by “overzealous West End vigilantes on the hunt for prostitutes” (CROWE, 1983. P.9). Four days later, on December 21, Conservative MP and CROWE supporter Pat Carney warned parliament of a looming vigilante battle, stating in her address that “if something isn't done, there will be violence and vigilante action in the West End next summer” (CROWE, 1983. P.9).

This comment about violence and vigilante action begs several questions. Is dousing someone you think is a prostitute with a bucket of water a violent act? It depends on your definition of violence. Also consider the uneven power relations between middle class residents (with access to the workings of power in all three levels of government) against powerlessness of these marginal street prostitutes; and do these marginalized people have a "right" to be in the West End.
We now often describe street prostitution as ‘survival sex work” (Oppal, 2012). This contemporary understanding on one hand is probably shaped by new awareness about the violence and risk associated with this vocation (sparked by events such as the Pickton case or the wider missing women tragedy), but it can also be seen as a continuation of older tropes about the marginality of prostitution as a highly stigmatized activity that imparts individual prostitutes with ‘outsider’ status (Sanchez, 2004). Lowman talks about a common “discourse of disposal” connecting early 1980s demands by CROWE to ‘get rid of prostitutes,’ to the stories of the missing and murdered women victimized as deviant ‘throwaway people’ (Lowman, 2000, p.1003). But we should be careful not to judge the 1980s stroll on Davie Street through the lens of current views on street prostitution, as a completely ‘down and out’ poverty-stricken survival activity. Although drug oriented ‘heroin’ strolls which conform with this image existed on Granville street and the Downtown Eastside during this period, there was also a very high end stroll downtown on Georgia Street between the Hotel Georgia and the Hotel Vancouver. Davie Street was its own social world. Hookers were attracted to the area because they could rent bachelor apartments to host clients and they could charge higher prices because of the location. They were probably also attracted to the liberal ‘tolerance’ of the ‘swinging West End’. The West End in the 1970s and 1980s was teeming with sexual activity, not limited to street prostitution, with public sex also occurring in bars, nightclubs, bathhouses, on beaches, and cruising trails in Stanley Park. It was also the niche area for gay and transsexual prostitution in the city. The 1984 film “Hookers on Davie” describes the stroll as a largely pimp free area where autonomous prostitutes looked out for each other’s safety (Cole, J. & Dale, H., 1981).

CROWE’s leaders quickly established an alliance with City Hall and the VPD to press for tougher laws that would enable police to “sweep prostitution from the streets” (Lowman, 2000, p.1002). Lowman (2000) has a very compelling analysis of how the outlaw status of street prostitution was and is connected with increases in violence. He sees this 1980s discourse to displace and remove prostitution as contributing to “a social milieu in which violence against prostitutes could flourish” (Lowman, 2000, p.1003). Lowman’s (2000) content analysis of newspaper articles about prostitution and violence against prostitutes between 1964 and 1999 demonstrates that reported violence against prostitutes did increase in Vancouver in the mid 1980s.
Along with this discourse of marginality was a real process of marginalizing street prostitutes in urban space with the powers of municipal planning and local regulation along with policing powers of surveillance and enforcement. This case exemplifies the 1980s neoliberal 'revanchist' city that a host of Urban Studies writers have written about (Mitchell, 2003; Blomley, 2004; Smith, 1996; Davis 1992.) The drive to expel prostitution from the West End fits with aspects of this literature, particularly where revanchism is defined as a reaction against the excesses of liberalism, involving punitive state policies aimed to criminalize the poor and homeless, contributing to deepening social and spatial divisions in cities. For these authors, the control and pacification of unruly urban streets is central to processes of gentrification and urban revitalization, because this “crusade to secure the city” (Davis, 1992, p.155) is designed to reduce the diversity on the streets in order to domesticate and render the city safe for reinvestment and resettlement (Lees, 1998). But the particularities of the West End experience can add nuance to this literature; for example that the West End and CROWE were populated by one marginalized group, GLBT individuals, who were persecuting another marginalized group, sex workers; also, most of the West End residents were renters, and would not reap the financial rewards of the social sanitation that was part of this gentrification.

My critical studies of planning history (Hall, 2002) have led me to understand that cities, and especially city governments, have often used their powers to maintain social divisions in order to protect private property and encourage capital investment. Municipalities accomplish this with their powers to control zoning, and to regulate behaviour in public space. This power is not passive. Throughout history, from the days of Baron Haussmann to the neoliberal urbanism of today, state policies and planning interventions are crucial to processes of economic and spatial polarization in cities. (Blomley 1994, 2004; Briffault 1990; Mitchell 2001, 2003). Thus I feel it is important to contextualize this case of the West End in the wider history of city planning.

Coincidentally, this struggle over prostitution in the neighbourhood occurred right around the time that the famous Broken Windows article was published in the *Atlantic Monthly* in 1982 (Wilson & Kelling, 1982). Price included a copy of this article in the CROWE files he donated to the Vancouver Archives. That the Broken Windows concept was an inspirational piece for CROWE is not surprising given the group’s agenda. In
CROWE’s second newsletter, dated from April 1982, Price discusses the Broken Windows concept, quoting municipal affairs minister Bill Vander Zalm who comments that “the Atlantic article could have been written for the West End” (Price, 1982, p.3). Price goes on to make a more detailed case about how the Broken Windows article applies to CROWE’s struggle to restore ‘civility’ in the West End, writing that:

The authors assert that conduct such as street prostitution is essentially a statement that order and peace cannot be maintained. Each prostitute is like a broken window that says “no one cares”. How, after all, can anyone care about a neighborhood that allows its streets to be commandeered by people who have no sense of mutual regard or the obligations of civility?... Soon such an area is no longer a neighborhood – a place of attachments and concerns – but simply a place where people live, apart from their fellows, alone and fearful in their apartments. Such a neighborhood is ripe for criminal invasion. (Price 1982, p.3)

There is an explicit parallel between CROWE’s crusade and Wilson and Kelling’s argument that police needed instruments such as vagrancy laws that allow them to enforce social order and protect the community from the fear of being bothered by disorderly people... not violent people, or necessarily criminals, but disreputable or obstreperous or unpredictable people: panhandlers, drunks, addicts, rowdy teenagers, prostitutes, loiterers, the mentally disturbed. (Wilson and Kelling, 1982, p.39-40)

The February 1982 CROWE article, “How we got to where we are or who’s responsible for this mess,” argues that street prostitution in the West End arose due to the elimination of the ‘Vagrancy A’ and ‘Vagrancy C’ sections of the Canadian criminal code (CROWE 1982). Under the liberal current of the early 1970s, Trudeau’s government had repealed the vagrancy laws in 1972 to reflect shifts in public attitudes about poverty, gender and civil rights (Ranasinghe, 2010). Before it was repealed, Vagrancy A allowed police to arrest anyone they found wandering in public without “a visible means of support”, while the Vagrancy C allowed police to arrest “any woman being a common prostitute or night walker” who was “found in a public place and [did] not, when required, give a good account of herself” (Bishop, 2013, p.2). However, the liberal climate of the seventies that pushed through these legal reforms was waning in the mid-eighties in the age of Thatcher, Reagan and Mulroney. By that time municipalities and police departments in several major Canadian cities were trying to get
back powers of social regulation afforded by the old vagrancy laws (Bishop, 2013). The City’s fight to expel “undesirables” and rid Vancouver’s West End from the “nuisance” of prostitution was a struggle over social-cleansing a valuable part of the city. The Mayor’s ready embrace of Wilson and Kelling’s advice, mere months after their article was published exemplified the neoliberal turn of the 1980s. However this particular case presents another paradox, in that Harcourt was simultaneously acting as a very neoliberal mayor in his desire to crackdown against prostitution, but he was very liberal in other senses, for example he visited gay bathhouses for handshaking optics during his 1980 mayoral campaign (Bishop, 2013, p.14), demonstrating that he believed that some types of public sexual behavior in the city were acceptable.

In the spring of 1982, Harcourt wrote to Justice Minister Jean Chretien to lobby for federal action and assistance in dealing with street prostitution in the West End. The Mayor also continued to pursue a city bylaw, on March 23, 1982 asking the city legal department to draft a bylaw “strictly as an interim measure” which was passed on April 6, 1982 by Vancouver City Council. The bylaw read:

No person shall, upon any street, sell or offer to sell to another person or purchase or offer to purchase from another person, sexual services.

(City of Vancouver, 1982)

Stating that:

every person who commits an offense against this by-law is liable to a fine and penalty of not less than $350 and not more than $2000.

(City of Vancouver, 1982)

Because of constitutional limits to their powers, bylaw infraction tickets were about all that Canadian cities could do to combat street prostitution. It is reminiscent of current accounts about police campaigns to ticket poor residents in the DTES for infractions such as jaywalking (Lee, 2014), and also with Safe Streets laws in BC and Ontario that outlaw begging and homeless people (Gordon, 2004). It is a kind of discretionary law advocated by Kelling and Wilson (1982) because it can be used at the police’s discretion to clear ‘undesirables.’ It outlaws certain types of people based on their economic status, behaviour or appearance in order to regain ‘civility’ and order or in this case, livability. During the early 1980s, several other Canadian cities were also
attempting to create anti-prostitution bylaws, including Calgary, Halifax, Victoria, Edmonton and Winnipeg (Gordon Price Fonds. S1449, Box 973-b4 folder 8. City of Vancouver Archives). Calgary’s bylaw was already under legal challenge around the time Vancouver’s bylaw was enacted in the spring of 1982 (”Anti-hooker bylaws put to the test”, 1982). Within a year of City Council approval, both Calgary’s and Vancouver’s anti-prostitution bylaws were overturned in court as unconstitutional (Gordon Price Fonds. S1449, Box 973-b4 folder 8. City of Vancouver Archives). The day after the bylaw was passed, the Vancouver Sun ran an article arguing that it was highly questionable if Vancouver’s anti-hooker bylaw was either legal or likely to be effective (Hookers shrug off bylaw, April 7 1982).

In Vancouver’s West End, the fight to cleanse the streets of prostitution grew out of an alliance between the city’s planning and engineering departments, a strong residents organization, the police, politicians and the courts. I want to point out that opposition existed, for instance from Gordon House, a respected neighbourhood institution that provided services to the West End community, with programs specifically targeted at seniors, families, the gay community, youth and the poor. In 1982, CROWE had attacked Gordon House for providing services and assistance to juvenile prostitutes. Arguably, Gordon House represented a much larger swath of West End residents than CROWE, but CROWE had found a sympathetic ear in City Hall with Harcourt’s pledge of support. The Director of Gordon House, Richard P. Morley wrote a letter, responding to Gordon Price and CROWE, ‘defending’ their “position as a community organization providing services in the West End” (Morley, 1982). Morley communicated that the Gordon House Board had recently adopted an official position on street prostitution, supporting “a comprehensive program involving health, social, educational and legal services”, reminiscent of today’s ideas around harm reduction. He explained that Gordon House was not in favour of a tougher criminal code, which was the major goal for the city and CROWE, stating that “strengthening the solicitation clause is inappropriate and would be ineffective in solving the existing “problem” in the West End.” (Morley, 1982).

Another group that emerged to oppose CROWE’s agenda was ASP, the Alliance for the Safety of Prostitutes, which formally organized in 1983 (CROWE, 1983). ASP
along with the Gordon House Board urged the city to pursue a socially progressive policy towards street prostitution, based on social inclusion and focussed on community health and safety. The avenue that the Mayor and Council decided to pursue was a characteristically neoliberal punitive drive to expel street prostitution, couched in a discourse of livability, directed by the charismatic leader of CROWE.

In 1983, Gordon Price was hired directly by the Mayor’s Office to work as the coordinator for the “West End Livability Directions Project,” or WELD, working to achieve a very narrowly defined vision of livability, namely to rid the West End of prostitutes. The Social Planning Director had refused to hire Price out of their department, stating he was against contracting an essentially political organizer (Bowers, 1983). The Mayor’s Office was sympathetic to Price’s suggestion of funding a ‘community organizer.’ Harcourt’s Assistant in the Mayor’s Office was Shirley Chan, another prominent community organizer whom he had teamed with to stop the Chinatown/Strathcona freeway during his days as a young lawyer (Harcourt & Cameron, 2007). Perhaps Harcourt liked the sound of Price’s idea “to establish street prostitution in a non-residential area with reference to Seymour-Richards Davie area, and have police move prostitutes to that area” (Price, 1983). Price was mostly paid to do legal research to continue his campaign against street prostitution.

A planning department report from August 9, 1983 offers the details of this job posting, which was developed by the Social Planning Director, Max Beck. The report states that

the city received a request from CROWE to fund a community organizer. The community organizer would continue the work of CROWE addressing the social problems of the West End particularly street prostitution and its impacts. (Beck, 1983)

The report details that in response to the demands of CROWE, the Social Planning department had organized several consultations with neighbourhood groups3: According

3 These groups included: The West End Community Centre Association, CROWE, West End Tenants Association, Gordon House, West End Traffic Committee, Vancouver Police Dept., the Seniors Network, St. Paul’s Hospital Employees, MHR, the Denman inn and Alliance for the Safety of Prostitutes ASP, Rental Housing Commission (Beck, 1983).
to the report, these stakeholders helped to identify the following priorities: street safety and increasing violence, street solicitation and harassment of local residents, noise and traffic. Those present at the meetings agreed that these problems were “seriously affecting the livability of the West End” (Beck, 1983). The rationale for hiring someone was that “although several special interest groups have developed to address specific problems, almost all are volunteers with limited time and energy” (Beck, 1983). According to the report, the proposed terms of reference for a West End community organizer included a six month term and a budget of $15,000. The report explicitly stated that: “Because of the diversity of the community the organizer would have to be seen as neutral to have credibility and cooperation from all sides.” (Beck, 1983). A key task of this position would be to assist various community groups to “make submissions to the Fraser Commission on pornography and prostitution” (Beck, 1983).

Several people wrote letters to protest the choice to hire Price for the position, attacking Price’s supposed neutrality and arguing that he was high-jacking the social planning agenda. The following two letters written to Mayor Harcourt in 1984 represent this view:

As you may know, the West End Advisory Council has been harassing both johns and prostitutes verbally and physically. These sorts of vigilante groups are not the way to deal with the prostitution issue. Their actions concern you directly. Gordon Price, who is employed by the city Social Planning Department to look at a number of West End issues, including prostitution, has taken part in the vigilante actions. What is he doing out there? Why is the city paying him 15,000 to do research on prostitution when he has already made up his mind about the issue?

We have not yet seen his report, but his actions cast a dubious light on all prostitution research he has done. We think that it is totally ludicrous that this man, known for his strong anti-prostitute stance, should ever have been hired to do this important work in the first place.

(Jones & Ken, 1984)

The authors of this letter demanded the immediate replacement of Price with someone possessing “a little more objectivity and fairness,” and they advocated for “serious consultation with the prostitutes themselves” through their organization ASP, writing that “all those involved deserve to be heard” (Jones & Ken, 1984).
Another letter from Bev Ballantyne of Gordon House to Mayor Mike Harcourt and Council members March 16, 1984 is also very critical of the decision to hire Gordon Price as coordinator of the West End Liveability Project.

A recent headline in the Westender quotes you as saying “I won’t give up on the West End.” Well Mike, you already have given up on the West End. You gave up on this neighbourhood when you hired Gordon Price to co-ordinate the West End Liveability Project last September.

(Ballantyne, 1984)

Ballantyne goes on to explain why she believed Price to be an inappropriate choice:

I have been concerned about the activities of Gordon Price for three years. Since he has been masquerading as the spokesperson for a one-member organization known as Concerned Residents of the West End (CROWE), paranoia has increased among residents and misinformation about my community’s liveability has been the order of the day. It would be naïve of me to say that there were no problems in the West End, indeed there are many, varied and complex. Street solicitation however is not the greatest among these and it is not as Mr. Price contends the sole cause of existing difficulties in the area. Prior to Gordon Price’s appointment as a city employee, he was a disruptive factor in existing community initiatives to improve social conditions, now he is in a position to do serious damage to the delicate network of community relationships that have been established and the public image of the area (business, social services, residential, etc.) must exert tolerance, creativity and compromise, the Advisory Committee under Gordon Price’s direction is advocating short sighted Band-Aid solutions and fuelling paranoia.

(Ballantyne, 1984)

Ballantyne is quite critical of Mr. Price’s community development skills, questioning his impartiality. She questions whether he has consulted with any community professionals in Health and Social Services, noting that neither she nor Gordon House received any correspondence or notice of meetings for his advisory committee until she contacted the Social Planning Department. She writes that:

The tone of the three meetings I have attended has been agitated and from my perspective, very uncomfortable… The prime focus of the gatherings is street prostitution with little consideration given to any other issue.

(Ballantyne, 1984)

She is also quite critical of this narrowly defined meaning of livability, writing that there are more pressing quality of life concerns for West End residents:
I and others have concerns about facilities for small children and single parents, juvenile prostitution, appropriate facilities for teens, slum landlords, deteriorating buildings and business fronts along Davie, 24 hour restaurants, traffic flow, parking and unsightly empty lots. How are these concerns being addressed by the Advisory Committee? (Ballantyne, 1984)

She closes her letter by arguing that:

As City Officials you have an opportunity to be innovative and possibly successful in tackling a multifaceted social problem, that of the residential inner city. The West End Liveability Project will not do it for you and neither will getting the prostitutes off the streets!

I beg you to take a longer, closer look at my neighbourhood. (Ballantyne, 1984)

As both these letters attest, sharp divisions were evident in the neighbourhood by 1984, centred on rhetoric about both street prostitution and the meaning of livability. The Mayor’s decision to hire Gordon Price to lead WELP indicates that the City’s goal of improving quality of life for the West End had moved away from the progressive and inclusive ideals of the early 1970s plans, towards a conception of livability based on exclusion.

It is also important to note that prostitution persisted despite all the efforts of CROWE and Harcourt, using a wide scope of the City’s regulatory, policing and planning powers; for example to limit business permits (during his term as director of the WELP, Price succeeded in fighting against the city issuing permits for a Burger King and a video arcade on Davie Street) (Price, 1984); and to involve other city departments including social planning and engineering to develop traffic calming plans. All of this really had little impact on the prevalence of street prostitution in the West End during these years, according to city records and newspaper reports with headlines like: “Takeover by Hookers Feared” (March 3, 1983); “Prostitution Swells in West End” (Goad, 1983) and “Taking a Walk in the West End Tenderloin” (Garr, 1983). It was only the BC Supreme
Court injunction issued at the end of 1984 outlawing prostitution in the West End that the crusade to rid the area of street prostitution was ultimately fulfilled\(^4\) (Hannant, 1984).

Price was elected to Vancouver City Council in 1984, beginning an illustrious career. He is now a renowned blogger and expert on sustainable urbanism with SFU’s City Program. Harcourt went on to become premier of BC and now is also an expert on sustainable urbanism with his own centre run out of UBC. He co-wrote a book with Ken Cameron about the nine decisions that ‘saved’ Vancouver. Price and Harcourt both actively propagate a certain popular narrative about Vancouver’s achievements as a green and livable city. The West End on its surface embodies this vision of the ‘urban ideal.’ Their combined crusade against prostitution in the West End is not emphasized in their stories about ‘livability’, even though it evidently dominated a good deal of their attention and efforts during the years 1981 to 1984.

6.4. Implementing the Mini Parks, 1982

I found that although the fiery conflict over street prostitution in the West End lasted until the civil injunction in 1984, the controversy over traffic calming peaked in 1982, with no record of opposition once the whole traffic plan and mini parks were finally finished. This was a time when neighbourhood politics were already animated by the activities of CROWE; 1982 was the year the City passed the anti-prostitution bylaw, and this was the year the Broken Windows article became popularized. This section looks at

\(^4\) This injunction, which established a prostitution exclusion area west of Granville Street, was quite unusual. In response to complaints that the West End was a “public brothel”, Attorney General Brian Smith successfully filed a writ with the BC Supreme Court naming 30 people as prostitutes and public nuisances, ordering them to refrain from buying or selling sexual services in the West End. But the people named were not the only targets, anyone who knew of the court order was also prohibited from buying or selling sexual services, publicly loitering, littering, fighting, screaming, swearing, harassing, or obstructing anyone, defecating, urinating or engaging in any kind of “carnal copulation”. Unlike a bylaw, violators could be charged with contempt of court, an indictable offense, and fined or imprisoned. In a statement issued minutes after the ruling, Attorney General Brian Smith declared “that the nightmare of intolerable indignities suffered by the residents of the West End has been brought to an end.” This decision was heavily criticized by women’s groups and civil liberties advocates such as BC Civil Liberties Association member Derek Corrigan who declared the injunction “a shocking turn for civil liberties.” (Hannant, 1984).
the nature of complaints and how the City responded to residents’ concerns as it installed the barriers, traffic circles, and mini-parks.

Construction of traffic circles, street improvements, temporary barriers and mini-parks east of Denman Street began in January of 1982 (January 14, 1982, Vancouver City Council minutes). This sparked a new round of debate and vocal opposition. Even though the final designs for the mini parks were completed in June of 1981, minutes of an October 1981 Council meeting indicate that the planning department was receptive to “discussing changes to the mini parks based on residents complaints” (Bowers 1981). An example of this was a discussion about whether to remove a tot lot from a planned mini-park due to the complaints of a neighbour and landowner who did not like children. Even though the planners considered her complaints ‘ridiculous’, the head planner for the project stated his view in this case that “considering residents privacy and noise concerns is important” (Bowers, 1982).

This flexibility to adapt plans smoothed over some of the objections about implementing the mini parks and traffic plan, but some people would not be swayed by mere amendments to the plan. The Province newspaper announced its view on the plan with the editorial on January 11, 1982 “Dumb Stuff: a City of Nowhere Roads,” that described: “prostitutes delighted by the barricading of some West End streets, so that triple the traffic can now go down the remaining streets, hence consolidating their clients” (Dumb Stuff: a City of Nowhere Roads, 1982). The West Ender on Jan 28, 1982 ran an article titled: “Mini Park Battle Still Rages” describing deep divisions in the community arising from traffic planning and the “debate about livability.”

Another letter published in the Province on Feb 4, 1982 under the heading “Survey the barricades,” stated:

As citizens of the West End we strongly object to the building of mini-parks and the installation of barricades. These are a tremendous inconvenience to those of us who live in this densely populated area and also a great deal of frustration to other citizens who must get around here as well. Lets take a survey. Lets see what the people of the West End want. They are the ones who should have a say in this matter since its their transportation, taxes, emergency services, crime rate… etc. that will be affected. (Survey the barricades, 1982)
A memo to council dated February 8, 1982 states that the city had received 167 letters opposed to the traffic barriers and planned mini parks in the West End (Vancouver City Council Minutes, February 9, 1982). City Council minutes from the next day, February 9, 1982 indicate that council discussed the issue of traffic diverters and the mini park at Cardero and Comox because “the owners of the Cardero grocery say business depends on car traffic”. In this instance, council decided to take no action instead of removing the barriers (Vancouver City Council Minutes, February 9, 1982).

The issue of mini-parks was debated again by council on February 24, 1982 in response to one of the most comprehensive attacks on the mini-parks, the well-organized drive to “Ban the Barriers” (see Appendix Figure 19) consisting of a persuasive pamphlet that was distributed door to door, and a 76 page petition with 2,176 signatures (Vancouver City Council Minutes, February 24, 1982). The “Ban the Barricades” campaign also organized a large meeting at the Greek Community Centre on March 29, 1982. The main arguments put forth opposing the traffic plan centred on access and inconvenience (Correspondence, 1980-1986).

Over the course of the spring and summer of 1982 with construction underway, the City continued to receive hundreds of letters a month about the traffic plan and the mini-parks, to many to quote at length in this paper (Correspondence, 1980-1986). A large file of correspondence labelled “West End Nuisance Problems” contains many letters making the case that the barriers slowed cars down to enable prostitution (Correspondence, 1980-1986). While campaigns such as “ban the barricades” were concerned with the whole project, many of the letters expressed concerns about specific mini-parks. I found that these complaints centred on design issues and concerns about who would use these new public spaces: noisy children, prostitutes and ‘undesirables.’ In a letter to the Mayor regarding the Bute Street mini-park, one resident complained that “noisy children are playing unsupervised until 10pm” and “people are drinking and smoking pot.” (Williams, J. Sept 5, 1982, in Correspondence, 1980-1986). A letter from a resident about the Pendrell and Nicola mini-park expresses opposition to a trellis because “street people are already congregating around cement planters.” (Butchart, A. September 13, 1982, in Correspondence, 1980-1986). Another example is a letter to the mayor from a resident complaining that “undesirables have taken over” the mini-park at
Burnaby and Cardero “with their wine drinking and garbage” (Morrison, September 14, 1982, in Correspondence, 1980-1986).

I found several instances where the mini parks were altered in response to these complaints. A letter from engineer D.H. Rudberg to a concerned West End resident, who had written to the mayor on to complain about people drinking and yelling on the benches by his window, states that engineers have modified the mini park at Cardero and Burnaby to address his concerns, moving benches away from his window, and installing shrubs to give privacy (Rudberg, August 17, 1982, in Correspondence, 1980-1986). The mini park at Broughton Street had the tot lot removed from the design, while a trellis in the a park at Pendrell and Nicola was removed due to a resident’s complaint about “male prostitutes defecating/urinating” and fears that it could hide ‘peeping toms’ (City Council Minutes September 14, 1982).

Yet other residents were unhappy about the city’s willingness to alter the designs over individual complaints, a view expressed in this letter from resident Barbara Brett to the Mayor and Council:

I live in the West End and I am concerned about what is being done to the mini-park at Pendrell and Nicola. The original design called for trellises, benches, and a drinking fountain. This is not taking place. The trellis was removed, apparently with the approval of City Hall. Now other things are disappearing from the design, apparently with no one’s approval. Apparently all that is needed is for one person to complain, and the design gets changed without any consultation of any one else living in the area. I think the mini parks are a terrific idea, but they won’t be much of a park with only paving stones and a token bush. Surely benches, etc. are necessary to the success of a park. I understand that some of the people in the area are afraid that the prostitutes will use the benches. I can sympathize with this. However, it is only a fear and not a proven fact that the hookers will take over the park. A possible alternative to gutting the mini-parks in the present style is to build the mini-parks as originally designed, and establish a six-month trial period. If the hookers take over, then make changes.

(Brett, November 30, 1982, in Correspondence, 1980-1986)

This echoes a letter written in the Fall of 1982 by Gordon Price on behalf of CROWE to oppose “altering mini-parks because of concerns about hookers”, arguing that it “would be like conceding defeat to hookers.” (Price, September 11, 1982, in
Correspondence, 1980-1986). Another resident made a similar case with stronger wording in his letter to the mayor, urging Harcourt to ignore the petitions of other residents seeking to alter the mini park plans:

If Eleanor Hadley and her small group of easily intimidated followers are successful in having these trellises removed it will be another glaring sign to the hookers that our community is still willing to let them claim what they wish. It will be another victory for those who have absolutely no social conscience and another step down the road of decay for this community. It is essential that we leave the trellises in place and focus on the disease, that being the hookers on our streets.

(Odegaard, September 14, 1982, in Correspondence, 1980-1986)

He was referring to the mini park at Broughton and Nelson, where the City Engineer reported he had received “requests from residents adjacent to the park objecting to a tot lot, water fountain, trellis and kiosk”. The engineer argued that the process of dealing with residents’ complaints was delaying construction. Council resolved to hold a meeting with residents and the planning and development committee on September 16, 1982 (Vancouver City Council Minutes, September 14, 1982).

In a memo to the city manager dated October 29, 1982, W. H. Curtis, the City Engineer details his frustrations in the way the city responded to citizens concerns regarding West end mini-parks.

During the West End mini-park construction program, various letters have been received concerning the project design and implementation process. These issues have been dealt with by the engineering department through discussions with residents and, in some instances, the design of the mini parks has been modified. In addition, some issues have been addressed by Council.

Now that virtually all of the mini parks are completed, the nature of the citizen complaints have changed. The concerns now raised by citizens relate to prostitution, drunkenness, noise and the use of park facilities by undesirables. In our opinion, these problems are not engineering issues in that they relate mainly to short term nuisance complaints to Social Planning.

In view of the above, I would recommend that the following guidelines be established relative to the processing of citizen complaints or concerns:

Issues that relate to design, construction or traffic be referred directly to the engineering department for investigation and follow-up
Issues of a short term nuisance nature concerning the use of the park by undesirables be referred to the police department. Social Planning should monitor the social complaints in order to determine if any long term solutions are appropriate. (Curtis, 1982)

Curtis is making a case that social problems such as prostitution are not engineering issues. However this view is contradicted by the weight of evidence presented in this chapter and in this thesis, which clearly illustrates that the street is a social space and engineers do contribute to the social landscape.

Despite this resistance from the engineer, I found several examples in Vancouver’s more recent history, after the installation of traffic calming in the West End, where the engineering department was again called upon to help the city curtail street prostitution, first in Mount Pleasant, then in Strathcona and Grandview Woodlands (Correspondence, 1984-1994). In Mount Pleasant in 1985, Mike Harcourt replied to a resident who had complained about street prostitution, saying the city will “put in better lighting in the area and install barricades” (Harcourt, October 31, 1985, in Correspondence, 1984-1994). This also occurred in Strathcona in 1989, where concerns about prostitution around the school triggered traffic calming to be installed. (Piper, 1989, in Correspondence, 1984-1994). Certainly this was the case in Grandview Woodlands in 1992 and 1993 where city records indicate that traffic calming was installed to address prostitution at Franklin and Semlin and also at Pandora and Lakewood, described in a February 18, 1993 memo advising Council that the police and engineering department were working together to “take a lead role in trying to corral the prostitutes in a commercial area and therefore less problematic to the area residents” (Spencer, February 18, 1993, in Correspondence, 1984-1994).

6.5. Traffic Calming, Livability and the Social Sanitization of the Central City

Between the years 1977 and 1984, the City of Vancouver continued to invest planning and engineering resources to work towards the goal of improving livability in the West End. But during this era, the City’s resources were increasingly dedicated to developing responses to the nuisance caused by the presence of street prostitution in
this extremely dense and valuable downtown residential neighbourhood. Traffic calming was one of several strategies that was deployed, at the behest of the Mayor, downtown business interests, the police, Gordon Price and CROWE. This coalition of interests worked tirelessly to achieve the goal of expelling the sex trade from the West End in order to preserve ‘livability.’ The drive to remove prostitution and ‘undesirables’ was not confined the West End, but was also focused on cleaning up or upgrading neighbouring areas of downtown where street prostitution existed such as the high end hotel district on West Georgia Street. The City of Vancouver’s crusade against prostitution in the West End coincided with the 1978 bid and subsequent preparations to host Expo 86, Vancouver’s first mega-event. In retrospect we know that Expo 86 was largely orchestrated by the city’s economic and political elite as part of an entrepreneurial bid to market Vancouver as a “world class city” in order to attract wealthy foreign investors with the means to redevelop Marathon’s dilapidated waterfront holdings on North East False Creek into a new high-rise residential enclave, its built form emulating the West End model.

However anxieties about prostitution play only one part of the story of how the traffic calming and mini-parks in the area east of Denman came to be. Planners, including Planning Director Ray Spaxman, who believed the plan was required to increase park space and walkability in the West End were fiercely opposed by the Chief Engineer, the Police Chief and the Fire department as well as citizens who wrote hundreds of letters and participated a campaign to ‘ban the barriers.’ There is no doubt that the installation of temporary diverters as approved in 1981 was one of the City’s responses to the specific problem of ‘curb crawling,’ however in a logical contradiction, traffic calming was installed both because of, and also in spite of, street prostitution. There was a strong case made against the overall traffic calming plan because of the presence of prostitution, with opponents arguing that traffic diverters would slow down cars to enable street prostitution and that the mini parks would provide a haven for ‘undesirables.’ Despite questions of its effectiveness in limiting prostitution, the City of Vancouver repeated the strategy of installing traffic diverters (but not mini parks) to displace and corral the sex trade from several other central city neighbourhoods in the 1980s and early 1990s.
Chapter 7.

Conclusion

This thesis uncovers the origins of traffic calming, street closures and mini-parks in Vancouver’s West End neighbourhood, based on a detailed analysis of archival documents from the 1960s to the 1980s.

‘Getting it right’ in terms of the West End’s urban form was a central priority for a succession of Vancouver governments in the 1960s, 70s and 80s. The West End was not only highly valuable neighbourhood in its own right, it also set a model for further downtown residential development.

I found that discourses of ‘livability’ were integral to supporting and justifying all of the stages of the planning and implementation of traffic calming in the West End, but the specific meanings of livability shifted over time. Three different understandings of livability influenced the planning process: in the late 1960s, the planning focus was on livability as ‘downtown living’ (Whelan, 2012); in the early 1970s, the focus expanded to include livability as ‘livable streets’ in the sense introduced by Appleyard, Gerson, Lintell (1981) and Gehl (2001; 2010), while an exclusionary and neoliberal invocation of livability based on the eradication of ‘undesirables’ emerged in the early 1980s.

Traffic calming was pioneered in the early 1970s by progressive planners who wanted to improve livability in the newly densified West End by getting rid of unwelcome traffic and creating new park space and pedestrian amenities to combat resident feelings of alienation. This was an experimental process that was extremely responsive to citizen input.

In the late 1970s and early 1980s, traffic diversion also became a key policy in a civic drive to remove street prostitution from the West End, a struggle that invoked
discourses of 'livability' used to justify exclusion of certain socially marginalized people from valued space on the streets in this downtown neighbourhood.

I was originally drawn to this topic because I thought it could shed some valuable light about the contribution of city planning efforts to develop the West End as a walkable and livable high-density neighbourhood. But as I learned more, I discovered this case can also tell us something interesting about the continued development of Vancouver as a divided, class polarized city.

In each of the three eras I discuss, the West End was targeted for planning improvements because it stood as a model for the ideal city. In the first era, up until 1972, the West End grew rapidly and embodied the modernist ideal of high-rise laissez faire urban renewal. But planners of this era also identified problems caused by lack of planning, including heavy traffic and an alienating public realm that harmed quality of life. Engineers believed that construction of a Downtown freeway system would divert traffic out of the residential parts of the West End to improve living conditions for residents.

After 1972 when the freeway plan was scrapped for good, the West End stood as a model for TEAM's ideal city, embodying the 1970s ideals of downtown livability and a more inclusive and humane urbanism. Because of its location and its apartment housing stock, the West End provided the ‘bedroom’ for a growing class of urban professionals, the original “yuppies.” The West End was a prototype of a new urban lifestyle, it had a tolerant population with environmental sensibilities and it was located close enough to walk to the city's best amenities including the beaches, the touted ‘excitement’ of downtown nightlife, and Stanley Park.

In the 1980s, the West End came to stand for the “image” of post modern Vancouver with its picturesque beaches and skyline of high-rises set below the mountain vista (Boddy, 2004). Today, the West End, along with its high-rise condo clones, Yaletown and Coal Harbour, still represents the image of Vancouver ‘livability” in the context of interurban competition (Grant, 2009). The West End has become everything we now think of as the ‘new urbanism’ that is particularly attractive to Florida's (2005) “Creative Class”: a predominantly rental neighborhood with density and “social mix”, plenty of street life, a gay village, access to beautiful amenities such as the seawall, all
within a short walk to work. But the story I uncovered, shows that this process of achieving this “urban ideal” involved displacement of highly visible and highly marginalized street sex workers. The late 1970s and early 1980s brought in a new kind of urban governance regime, the ‘revanchist’ city. The city’s power of planning, engineering and regulation were employed to produce a space that is mostly ‘cleansed of conflict,’ and thus our sparkling downtown high-rise neighbourhoods became ‘livable’ for the middle class.

The sex workers meanwhile, were forced to move into marginal areas of the city where the risk of violence was much higher. Two recent media stories that were reported over the course of researching this thesis struck me as highly relevant to my findings. One is the Missing Women Inquiry, headed by Commissioner Wally Oppal, into police handling of the murders of women from the Downtown Eastside (Oppal, 2012). The other is the more recent Bedford decision striking down Canada’s prostitution laws including against street solicitation, on which Chief Justice Beverly MacLachlin wrote: “Parliament has the power to regulate against nuisances, but not at the cost of the health, safety and lives of prostitutes” (Fine, S. December 20, 2013). MacLachlin described the prostitution laws struck down by the court as “nuisance laws. They were about trying to ensure that people in good, upstanding neighbourhoods were not exposed to the unsightliness of sex workers. These laws were never about protecting sex workers” (Fine, December 20, 2013). The court saw the harms caused to the life, liberty, and security of sex workers as grossly disproportionate to the laws’ objectives.

The implication of the strategy by the police and the City of Vancouver’s engineering department to ‘corral’ street prostitution with enforcement and traffic calming into serial killer Robert Pickton’s killing grounds in the industrial area of the Downtown Eastside was not discussed in Oppal’s (2012) findings. This policy was not looking out for public safety, instead it prioritized preserving property values, as it sacrificed the safety of one group for the comfort of a larger group of people in the name of ‘livability’. This policy began in the West End when prostitutes were forcibly exiled from the relatively safe area of Davie Street. The City of Vancouver did engage in a ‘crusade’ against prostitution employing a full range of regulatory tactics. But if the City’s’ crusade is responsible, so are the residents who fought for the streets, who lobbied, protested,
wrote letters and engaged in vigilante patrols. Although traffic diversion was only one contributing factor in the displacement of downtown and West End prostitution, the driving factor being the BC Supreme court injunction that permanently uprooted the Davie Street sex trade, the term “traffic calming” sounds calm and tranquil and belies the violence that was a serious long-term outcome of the policy to contain prostitution only in the most marginal, least valuable and most dangerous parts of Vancouver.

Despite this critical take, I also find that the mini-parks that resulted from these struggles to preserve ‘livability’ have become unique urban gems that illustrate the enormous potential of the street as an urban space in the city today. Streets and lanes occupy about one third of all space in Vancouver. This space is mostly devoted to moving cars and parking provision, but it presents a tremendous opportunity. Streets are a publicly owned resource, a collective good – is using it for car travel really the highest and best use? The experience of the West End and the development of the mini parks provides a model that demonstrates three important reasons to remake and repurpose urban streets as outlined by Bain, Gray & Rodgers, (2012): 1) for mobility, creating more space for pedestrians and bikes and supporting transit use; 2) for place-making, making neighborhood social space that people want to spend time in; and 3) for nature, increasing park space and making room for more gardens and nature in the city (Bain, Gray & Rodgers, 2012). Vancouver’s progressive planners of the 1970s not only dared to radically reimagine the gridded street system of the West End to create places for people, they actually got them built.

Completely closing streets to cars is a fairly radical alteration from the status quo, and the West End experience shows that conflict, resistance and opposition are almost inevitable in achieving this transition. One lesson is that it helps to have engineers on board with the process, working to achieve the same goals. In the West End experience, this was only intermittently the case, but planners navigated conflicts by thoroughly consulting with residents, adapting aspects of the plans to address specific concerns, and representing the desires of residents to counter the expertise of the engineers when decisions were put before Council. My hope is that this thesis, which details how the West End’s mini parks and traffic calming were realized, provides useful knowledge for present-day planners who aspire to transform streets into parks.
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Appendix.

Maps, Photos and Illustrations

**Figure 1: Parking as the major use of land in 1954**

This map is from a 1960 folder of modernist traffic plans for the West End and Downtown. The map shows the 1954 location of parking structures and parking lots while clearly depicting the path of a proposed freeway through Downtown and slicing off the north-east corner of the West End.

Note:  
Figure 2: Parking as the Major Use of Land in 1959

This map from the same series shows that in 1959 the amount of space devoted to parking had increased, an indicator that possibly confirmed the concerns of civic leaders and downtown business interests about dereliction and the 'hollowing out' of downtown Vancouver.

Figure 3: Parking as the Major Use of Land in 1976

The planning department used data about parking supply and demand in 1959 to make projections about future parking needs in 1976. This map is also proposing to ‘rationalize’ the chaotic distribution of parking as a major land use into a much more orderly grouping of parking structure superblocks the size of 6-8 city blocks, including on the corner of the West End that was proposed to be cut out.

Figure 4: Gas Stations Within the Downtown Area

This map of gas stations within the Downtown area shows "only those gas stations which are a principle use on any site". The authors note that of 43 gas stations, 37 are on corner lots. Today there are two gas stations in the Downtown peninsula and both are in the West End. With no freeway dividing the neighbourhood from the Central Business District, this map is more honest in its depiction of the road system connecting the West End and Downtown as it existed in 1960.

Note: Vancouver Planning Department. (1960.) Gas Stations Within the Downtown Area. City of Vancouver fonds. Traffic Plans: West End and Downtown. S445-3 LEG37.15 City of Vancouver Archives.
Figure 5: A Circulation Pattern for Pedestrians

This map shows a 1960 plan to create a circulation pattern for downtown pedestrians with a network of car-free streets, plazas, malls and arcades. “The areas shaded indicate streets, squares, malls & arcades in which the movement of vehicles is not permitted at all or is restricted. The pedestrian precincts are interconnected across some streets by means of over or underpasses.” This plan was never built.

Figure 6: West End Possible Pedestrian System

This map from the 1973 *Open Space Policy Outline for the West End*, a document that was never adopted by council, called for extensive street closures and conversion of roads into miniparks in 36 locations in order to divert traffic onto arterials and improve the pedestrian experience.

Figure 7: Proposed Morton Street Closure

An illustration from the Open Space Policy Outline for the West End showing a “view towards Stanley Park through Morton Street Closure – an urban meeting place.” The Morton Street closure was never implemented, likely due to resident opposition in the form of a large petition from the nearby Ocean Towers apartments at 1835 Morton Street.

Figure 8: 1973 West End Pedestrian System

This map envisions a pedestrian system for the entire West End neighbourhood that is very similar to Hotson and Vaughan’s designs, but it also proposes an ‘electric trolley or jitney bus’ running down Nelson Street connecting Granville street and Stanley Park. It was part of an information package that was sent to households in the area West of Denman during the public consultation process for the first set of road closures and mini-parks.

A September 11, 1973 sketch of a possible “Open Space/Pedestrian Path System” for the western area of the West End, proposed to widen sidewalks as well as converting streets into parks in more than 20 locations in a radical reimagining of the gridded street network. This plan was changed after resident consultation to something that was acceptable to the majority of the area’s residents.

Figure 10: 1974 Local Area Improvement West of Denman

This is the final traffic calming plan for the area West of Denman as approved by Vancouver City Council, showing “streets to be paved” as well as “mini park locations and pedestrian routes”. Five mini parks were built in this area.

Note: City of Vancouver (April 23, 1974) By-law 4769: A Local Area Improvement West of Denman. City of Vancouver fonds, West End Mini-Parks – S482 Box 46-E-4- folder 125. City of Vancouver Archives.
Figure 11: West End Traffic Scheme Phase Two

This map of the 1974 West End Traffic Scheme 2 shows the locations of three temporary diverters that were implemented West of Denman and two that were installed East of Denman in 1973. It proposed to install 9 additional barriers in the East of Denman area to experiment with traffic patterns in preparation for mini-parks. It also leaves Nelson Street and Nicola Street open to through traffic, which was controversial. This plan was approved by Vancouver City Council on July 23, 1974, but was delayed in 1975 until a full plan was created in 1980.

Note: City of Vancouver fonds. "West End Traffic Scheme II". S20 Box 27-F-4 folder 5. City of Vancouver Archives.
Figure 12: Traffic Scheme 2 Survey Results

This map compares survey responses to proposals to install diverters by sub-area from separate surveys done in 1974 and 1979. Planners interpreted these surveys as indicating strong resident support, while engineers disputed that conclusion. This dispute delayed approval of a final traffic calming plan until 1980.

Figure 13: 1974 Downtown Vancouver Scheme #3 Moderate Cost, Maximum Pedestrianization, West End Conflict Resolved.

This map displays the Engineering Department’s grand plan to pedestrianize not only Granville Street, but also Robson Street and Hastings Street between Granville and Main. Engineers wanted the city to build a new ‘ring road’ system to replace automobile traffic capacity lost on these streets including a 5 to 9 million dollar tunnel in the northeast corner of the West End, running through Nelson Park and streaming arterial traffic on Bute and Thurlow Streets. Between 1974 when it was introduced and 1979 when it was laid to rest, this plan was strongly opposed by many West End residents as well as planners from the West End Planning Team.

Figure 14: 1975 Mini-park

“Oasis in a tangle of highrises and concrete. West End street closures have afforded space for flower bases and round kiosks.” By the Fall of 1975, the first set of mini parks West of Denman were complete, as shown in the photo below.

Figure 15: Areas of Street Prostitution in Vancouver

This map by Lowman shows areas of street prostitution in Vancouver City Centre using the locations described in Forbes’ 1977 police report Street Prostitution in Vancouver’s West End.

Figure 16: 1981 Temporary Traffic Diverters

This map shows the locations of the 7 temporary traffic diverters that were approved as part of the City of Vancouver’s strategy to resolve the nuisance of street prostitution in the West End. Five of these locations were also precursors to mini parks.

Note:  Vancouver City Council Minutes, November 3, 1981, City of Vancouver fonds “Community and environmental protection, Prostitution and delinquents, prostitution/West End traffic diverters” Box 81-G-4 folder 4, City of Vancouver Archives.
Figure 17: Mini Park Locations Option C from the 1980 Traffic Plan.

This is the final traffic calming plan approving construction of mini-parks, diveters and traffic circles in the area East of Denman Street.

Note: Curtis, W. H. (October 30, 1980.) Engineering Report. Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation fonds “Park Site, Mini, East of Denman” S93 Box 242-C-4 folder 3-4 City of Vancouver Archives).
Figure 18: Ban the Barriers

Map from the well-organized 'Ban the Barriers' campaign against the 1980 traffic calming plan. This pamphlet was distributed door to door, and a 76 page petition with 2,176 signatures was sent to City Council.

Note: City of Vancouver fonds, West End Nuisance Problems. S571 box 717-b-3 folder 6. City of Vancouver Archives.
Figure 19: Haro and Bute Mini-park

This Mini-park at Haro and Bute was implemented in 1982. Today this park is a ‘gem’ that adds to the pedestrian realm, but as late as 1979 the City’s Engineering department wanted to upgrade this portion of Bute Street as an arterial and this site would have been near the entrance to a tunnel in a proposed downtown ring road system that was never built.

Note: Photo by Adrienne Kinzel.
Figure 20: Diagonal Diverter at Harwood and Broughton

This diverter at Harwood and Broughton Streets, installed in 1981, is a physical remnant from the City’s of Vancouver’s crusade against street prostitution in the West End.

Note: Photo by Adrienne Kinzel.