

This recording is an interview with New Westminster residents, Roland Guasparini, a retired medical officer of health, and Doug Whicker, a retired acoustic engineer. They are leaders of a group of residents who formed to Save the Parkade from demolition.

Interviewers: Pamela Stern, Peter Hall, Omer Rashman

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Sound Recording Length: 1:30:08

Save the Parkade is a group of New Westminster that was formed as a response to the city's plans to tear down the Front Street Parkade. This group has a variety of reasons why they feel that removing the Parkade would do more harm than good, including environmental, economic, and other reasons. They propose alternative ways to repurpose the parkade, such as building a park on the top level, or using the existing structure to build noise barriers.

Section 00:00 – 06:51

In the first portion of the interview, Doug explains how he first arrived in New Westminster. He worked for 30 years as a sound/acoustical engineer, and didn't like crossing the bridge to his home in Surrey. He moved to New Westminster in 2000, and had thought of New West as "simply a place to drive through" prior to moving there. He was the acoustical consultant for the Expo, Millennium, and Canada Lines on the Skytrain. He had to assess how much noise the Skytrain would make, and attempt to minimize the noise from each station. He frequently walks along the waterfront, and incorporates the parkade into his walking route.

Section 06:51 – 10:17

In this section, Doug talks about what he appreciates about walking along the waterfront. He enjoys it because it is quiet, has a "tremendous view", and he enjoys the fresh air. He says that you see far more from the top of the parkade than from Westminister Pier Park. Roland compares it to stadium seating, emphasizing the different perspective that you get from the parkade.

Section 10:18 – 13:34

In this section, Roland explains his background in public health, and recently retired as Chief Medical Health Officer for Fraser Health. He talks about how the views from the parkade encourages walking, tai chi, and more. He explains how natural views benefit public health. Doug also explains that people have voiced to the group that they do not go to Pier Park because it is inaccessible (this was prior to the opening of the Fourth Street overpass). They point out how the parking will be most necessary in this area due to the new park, and should be preserved.

Section 13:35 – 16:00

In this portion of the interview, Roland notes that his wife was born on Ewen Street in Queensborough, and had been trying to convince him to move to New Westminster for years. He was hesitant due to the traffic, but is glad he moved. He actually moved down the road (on

Carnarvon) from the building where he started his public health career, in 1983. He also lived on Cumberland when he was attending Simon Fraser University.

Section 16:01 – 18:24

Doug describes the activities that people do on the parkade. He talks about how mothers come with their strollers, and use the covered area when it is raining. He sees lots of walkers and joggers, many of whom use the stairs for exercise. He has heard that a lot of people use the parkade for wedding or engagement photo shoots, as it has a great view, and is conveniently located near the bridal shops on Columbia Street.

Section 18:25 – 25:45

In this section, the men explain how they first discovered the parkade would be torn down. They say that the plan had been hidden from the public, and has only really been discussed at meetings. Doug claims that the city has been providing misinformation to the public in terms of what removing the parkade will do, and he claims that it will be a “disaster” in terms of acoustics, based on his knowledge. There are 150 semi-trucks per hour on the road, and he says that you cannot create an “urban meow” comfortably in that area. He feels that the images of the proposed urban meows are misrepresentations of what the finished product will be. He feels the city has not listened to his advice about acoustics.

Section 25:46 – 35:55

In this section, Doug explains a little more about acoustical engineering, describing how the noise will disperse in a cylindrical form with the removal of the parkade. He explains how the more you block the line of sight of a noise source, the more the noise level drops. He feels that they are misinterpreting the parking study that was conducted, as they are removing the part of the parkade that is most utilized.

Section 35:56 – 43:16

In this section, the men describe the current usage of Front Street. They describe the businesses on the frontage, such as the new Old Crow Coffee Shop, a wine shop, the antiques store, and a military surplus store. They feel that removal of the parkade will negatively impact these businesses. They point out that the parkade does not block the sunlight, and actually provides shade. They explain which part of the parkade is proposed for removal.

Section 43:17 – 47:04

In this portion of the interview, the city’s view of why the parkade should be removed is described. The city’s stance has been that there will be no development without the removal. This is described as a loss by the Save the Parkade group, as they feel it is a great location that could be kept specifically for redevelopment.

Section 47:05 – 52:33

In this section, more reasons for the parkade removal are discussed. One is the “ugly factor”, which they say can be easily fixed. There are also claims that it is falling apart, which the Save

the Parkade group says is not true. They have had a structural engineer, who is a member of their group, look at it, and he says that it is perfectly sound, as long as it is maintained.

Section 52:34 – 1:00:00

In this section, the men describe their previous involvement in public issues. Roland talks about how understandings of public health issues develop over time. He talks about the high quality of water standards in New Westminster, and how public input was actually taken into consideration, in terms of spending more money for higher quality. Doug explains various previous city plans of dealing with Front Street.

Section 1:00:01 – 1:14:13

In this section, they describe Save the Parkade's proposal to convert the parkade into a park similar to the High Line in New York City, and to include sound barrier panels along the columns at the base. They also claim that the barriers would help to block the fumes from the truck traffic. They priced their proposal at \$300,000, compared to \$2 million dollars for the proposed urban mews. They claim that the rush to tear it down is mostly an attempt to quiet community protest, as there is no urgency based on engineering reasons. They say the argument that air quality is a factor is irrelevant, as the trucks are the source of the problem, not the parkade. They also argue that the air quality testing was done in a poor site to accurately measure the levels.

Section 1:14:14 – 1:19:28

In this section, the men discuss how the parkade was originally built on behalf of the businesses of Columbia Street, and to tear it down is to neglect the history of New Westminster as a retail centre. They say that the city is closed to new ideas, and the group is simply trying to provide reasonable alternative options to them. They point out that City Council is meant to act in the public interest, and therefore, they need to respect the history of New Westminster, and the views of experts and people who use the parkade every day.

Section 1:19:29 – 1:23:01

In this section, Antique Alley is discussed. The men tell personal stories of visiting the antique shops, and do not recall as much truck traffic in the past. They talk about how you could have plaques similar to those in Pier Park on the parkade that could describe the various historic buildings.

Section 1:23:02 – 1:24:05

In this portion of the interview, the idea of noise barriers is revisited, which they say would also serve as pollution barriers.

Section 1:24:06 – 1:30:08

In the last section, the various techniques of challenging the parkade removal are discussed. Save the Parkade organized a community rally, tried to get news attention and publicity, and has been attending various council meetings & homeowner association meetings. They emphasize that

their goal is for the city to allow more public consultation and consideration before moving forward. They have a Twitter account. The timeline was proposed for the renovations to begin in April, which have carried forward as planned since the time of the interview.