

**Amenity Bonuses: Bridging Cultural Production and
Consumption in Vancouver's City Centre**

by

Daniel Robert Cupa
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APPROVAL

Name: Daniel Robert Cupa

Degree: Master of Urban Studies

Title of Research Project: Amenity Bonuses: Bridging Cultural Production and Consumption in Vancouver's City Centre

Examining Committee:

Chair:

Dr. Geoffrey Mann

Assistant Professor, Department of Geography
Simon Fraser University

Dr. Anthony Perl

Senior Supervisor
Professor and Director, Urban Studies Program
Simon Fraser University

Dr. Meg Holden

Supervisor
Assistant Professor, Urban Studies Program and
Department of Geography
Simon Fraser University

Dr. Nancy Duxbury

External Examiner
Director of Research, Creative City Network of Canada
Director, Centre of Expertise on Culture and Communities

Date Defended/Approved:

June 4, 2007



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Abstract:

This project examines the City of Vancouver's Cultural Amenity Bonus program through the story of the Vancouver International Film Centre. The Amenity program, which began in 1975 under Vancouver's Downtown Official Development Plan (DODP), is a collaborative funding mechanism that links City Hall, developers, and non-profits in facilitating the macro planning goals of creating a *sustainable* cultural infrastructure base in Vancouver's downtown, as per the City's Ten Principles of Sustainability. As such, the program is used to negotiate on behalf of non-profit *incubator* organizations involved in cultural service delivery within the downtown core. The purpose of this project is to assess to what degree the Film Centre exemplifies *sustainable* cultural infrastructure. By looking at concepts of consumption, production chain, infrastructure and partnerships this project acts as a preliminary background study which informs how to assess the performance of the Film Centre through the lens of sustainability.

Key Words: Cultural Amenity; Cultural Indicators; Cultural Sustainability; Creative Industries.

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1.0 Introduction

The following research project examines Vancouver's Cultural Amenity Bonus Program, through a case study of the Vancouver International Film Centre (VIFC). By looking at the history of this case and interviewing thirteen key stakeholders, this project tells a story that unearths several important findings. These findings inform ways in which the Film Centre can measure cultural performance and suggests ways in which the City of Vancouver can improve its cultural service delivery in pursuit of its goals of cultural sustainability.

Cultural sustainability is one component of the City's Ten Principles of Sustainability (see: Appendix A) and outlined by the following 3 principles:

- (1) the importance of cross-institutional dialogue (principle #5),
- (2) the merits of cultural diversity (principle #6), and
- (3) the value of cultural development (principle #7)

Informing how these principles can be measured by indicators in relation to the Film Center, is the ultimate goal of this background study. Measuring culture's 'performance' is a very context specific exercise with a lot of variance in perspective and definitional concerns. However, after coding and undergoing a constant comparative analytical method, the interview data illustrated key findings and areas of conceptual consensus amongst the strategically chosen and illustrative array of stakeholders. These findings act as the background information which inform, guide and justify the types of indicators that should be sought. This strategy is referred to as a "Tier Four" model¹ and was chosen because of the underdeveloped and context specific nature of measuring culture—especially with regards to a single institution such as the Film Centre. As such, rather than proposing definitive qualitative and quantitative cultural indicators, this project takes a step back and suggests, on the basis of the opinions of experts and prevailing literature, what types of indicators should be pursued. In that sense, this project acts as a background study which could inform further studies. That is the nature of the Tier Four model. Cultural planning is beginning to be recognized more and more as an important policy consideration for urban governance for a variety of reasons, and this study feeds this policy initiative with a set of concepts derived from the research.

¹ Developed by Jackson et al (2006) "Tier Four" type cultural indicators are qualitative based concepts that guide the collection of quantitative data.

Based on the concepts of *consumption, infrastructure, production chain* and *partnerships*, which were coded from the interview data, this project unearths four key findings: (1) the importance of understanding user psychology, (2) the importance of understanding user actions, (3) the importance of listening to locals and (4) the importance of listening to critics. Each of these conclusions has important implications for what kind of data should be sought when assessing via indicators how a cultural facility like the Film Centre is performing in delivering a cultural service. While these conclusions may seem intuitive, they were not at all expected or hypothesized by the principal researcher and as this project shows, not entirely successfully implemented in this particular case either. The following project is thus a story motivated less by the Film Centre's success than by the opportunity to draw lessons for sustainable cultural service delivery.

2.0 Chapter Overview

The Amenity Bonus Program and its use in the creation of the VIFC is a story that has many voices. To make sense of these voices, a research framework has been established and is elaborated upon in this Chapter. This chapter introduces this project's research question, empirical context, research objectives and research methodology. The project then moves on to tell the story of the VIFC: first through an historical descriptive lens (Chapter 3) and then through a critical evaluative lens (Chapters 4 - 8). By beginning with the lens of history, including a methodological account, literature review and account of those individuals involved in the VIFC's creation, Chapter 3 of this project seeks to establish context by looking at history and process. Then in Chapters 4-8, via the perceptions of various perspectives and how they relate to ideas of cultural urban theorists, this paper establishes an evaluative framework for assessing the sustainability of the Vancouver International Film Centre. Chapter 9 concludes the project, by introducing conceptual cultural sustainability performance indicators. Recommendations for cultural facilities planning in Vancouver are made and external validity is explored.

Cultural planning has changed, Downtown Vancouver has changed and The Vancouver International Film Centre acts as the site through which various perspectives on cultural sustainability rationalize that change. This project is a story of politics and rights to the city, a story about neo-liberal strategies and the meanings of culture and film, a story about amenities and business, and a story about a city, bent on sustainability, that made it all happen. This project attempts to tell a story, motivated less by the Film Centre's success than by the opportunity to draw lessons for sustainable cultural facilities in Vancouver's downtown.

2.1: The Research Question

Using cultural facilities in downtown revitalization has become a prevailing planning tool in post-industrial cities (Clark 2002). Planning for cultural facilities is not a new thing—indeed it goes back to the earliest of urban settlements (Hall 1987, Evans 2005); but how and why cities plan for culture has taken on new forms and new meanings in the post-industrial era (Florida 2002; Scott 1999; Zukin 1995, Dziembowska et al. 1999).

The City of Vancouver's experiment in cultural amenity bonusing and its creation of the Vancouver International Film Centre (shown in Figure 2.1) is a unique example of contemporary cultural facilities planning. It is unique because of its "how"—the collaborative

and discretionary approach to planning as well as its “why” –the emphasis on sustainability: where social, economic, environmental *and* cultural objectives are interwoven. As such, the Film Centre is much more than a screen and some seats, and its purpose is far broader than merely showing films to avid movie-goers. So how is it doing?

How does the Vancouver International Film Centre exemplify sustainable cultural infrastructure?

2.2: A Place, Process, and Plan

This research project is about a place, a process and a plan. *The place* is the Vancouver International Film Centre, *the process* is the City's Amenity Bonus Program and *the plan* is for a sustainable downtown. The point, or rather, this project's research question is: how does that place and process live up to the plan? A brief introduction of each facet is important to this research project to establish context.

The Place

The Vancouver International Film Centre is a cultural film institute located at Seymour and Davie Street in Vancouver's Downtown South neighbourhood. Comprising 17,000 square feet on three floors, the VIFC houses: a film screen; theatre seating for 175 viewers; an atrium; concession area; flex production/office space; and the offices of the Greater Vancouver International Film Festival Society (GVIFFS). Across the street from the Film Centre, is the yet to be expanded Emery Barnes Park. Also, in the immediate vicinity of the Film Centre, is the City's Scotia Bank Dance Centre. Together, these facilities make up part of the cultural infrastructure in Vancouver's rapidly densifying Downtown South neighbourhood. In recent years, high demand for residential real estate downtown has triggered significant development. As such, in order to ensure that residents are supplied with sufficient cultural infrastructure (among other public considerations); the city has actively negotiated with developers, via the Cultural Amenity Bonus Program, the funding of facilities like the VIFC.

The Process

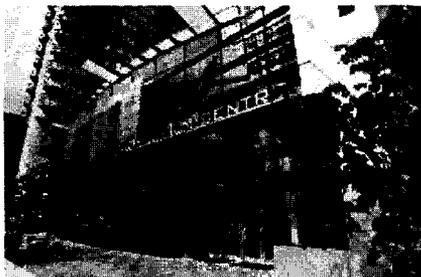
The Cultural Amenity Bonus Program is a funding mechanism whereby the City grants bonus density rights to developers in exchange for public cultural goods. In the case of the Film

Centre that public good was a \$3.5 million cultural film institute. This process has been enabled by guidelines set for by the City's Downtown Official Development Plan (DODP) of 1975 (see Appendix B for a history of the DODP). Working within those guidelines, the City's Office of Cultural Affairs, whose opinion was corroborated by various City departments through its collaborative planning approach, saw the Film Centre as an important component to a culturally sustainable downtown.

The Plan

'Planning for cultural sustainability' in Vancouver is best outlined by the City's Ten Principles of Sustainability. These principles cover a broad range of issues with relevance to this case study. Principles including the importance of cross-institutional dialogue (principle #5), the merits of cultural diversity (principle #6), and the value of cultural development (principle #7) are all guidelines which underpin the Office of Cultural Affairs Cultural Facilities Priorities Plan (OCA 2005). As such, an example of *sustainable cultural infrastructure* is a place and a process that fulfils or strives to fulfil these principles. Knowing how to measure these principles is thus the research goal.

Figure 2.1: The Vancouver International Film Centre



Source: VIFC 2007

2.3 The Research Problem

Let's begin by establishing the research problem. There are no set guidelines establishing what makes cultural infrastructure sustainable. While Vancouver has sustainability principles, what actually exists as an indicator of cultural *dialogue*, *diversity* and *development* has not been established. No comprehensive list of cultural sustainability indicators exists anywhere in the world (UCLG 2006). There are theories. There are suggestions. But as Evans notes, there are many gaps, weaknesses and oversights in studies that measure the

effects of cultural facilities in cities (2005). Most importantly, many cultural facilities assessments fail to appreciate the unique context of each and every program, the perspectives of various voices, robust evidence and the merits of grounded theory (Ibid). A 2006 report on Cultural Indicators and Agenda 21 for Culture, echoes this sentiment, concluding that much of the work on cultural indicators is analytically spurious and void of any cross-agency coordination. Without proposing a list of local cultural indicators, as “more years of work will probably be needed in order to achieve a solid proposal on this subject,” the Agenda 21 report on Culture does propose a framework of analysis for case studies (UCLG 2006). This project will use this framework and act as a background study, or “Tier Four” indicator approach, which proposes contextually derived concepts that are aimed to guide the design of quantitative data collection (Jackson 2006).

This project thus heeds Evan’s call for a grounded theory approach, uses the “Tier Four” indicator approach, and fits the Agenda 21 for Culture’s model for increased coordination; albeit with an expanded format². As such, this project seeks not only to add to the impoverished literature on sustainable cultural policies and facilities and introduce the preliminary background information for an evaluative framework for how to assess cultural infrastructure in terms of sustainability through the story of the Film Centre, but it seeks to bring to light the perspectives of those living and creating in what is often called one of the world’s most livable cities, where ‘culture’³ has often been ignored (City Plan 1995).

2.4 The Vancouver Achievement

What does it mean to live in the world’s most ‘livable’ city? According to Punter, Vancouver has achieved “an urban renaissance more comprehensively than any other city in North America” (2003; p.3). Punter claims that Vancouver has transcended the superficiality of mere visual and aesthetic design practices, which plague other cities and are the subject of numerous critiques, and has succeeded, through its unique collaborative and discretionary planning approach, in creating a livable, inclusive and sustainable urban realm with a high level of public cultural amenities (Punter xxi). However, while Punter’s analysis is very comprehensive and acts as both an inspiration and fodder for this project, where my research heeds caution is at the tendency for a reading of “Vancouver’s Achievement” to

² The Agenda 21 for Culture’s proposed format is expanded upon in this project to elaborate on the important empirical aspects of the case study (UCLG 2006).

³ Hawkes defines culture in two ways: (1) Culture: the professional output of artists and (2) culture: a system of values that informs society (including popular culture or the artistic practices of communities- echoed by Cochrane (2006) and others). Rather than normatively choosing a definition to adhere to, the definitional discrepancy of ‘(C)cultural amenities’ is an important issue raised in the interview data, and central in understanding the purpose of cultural facilities in cities and how to measure them.

imply a successful closure. That the approach to planning in downtown Vancouver is finished. Firstly, this contradicts the City of Vancouver's own definition of sustainability: a "direction rather than a destination"⁴; secondly success stories can be viewed as propagandistic insofar as they tend to get framed within particular ideologies (Abers 2000); and thirdly there is a tendency for an ecological fallacy in assuming that what is true for some projects is true for the whole of downtown. Which projects are we talking about? Most livable for whom?

The Film Centre is one actor on the stage of Vancouver's Achievement. Its character is complex but its *sine qua non* is *non-profit* cultural service delivery. The nature of such a facility is unique to the city because it fosters much debate. This debate is a function of two realities; (1) because its success is not judged by *profit*, how performance is defined varies according to perspectives; and (2) since ownership is *public*, different perspectives appropriate, or lay claim to the facility in different ways.

2.5 Methodological Framework

There are many ways to evaluate a cultural facility like the Film Centre. There are impact assessments and project evaluations; longitudinal studies and predictive studies; the list goes on (Evans 2005). According to Evans however, what is more important than the type of study used is the value of the evidence used in the study. Evans suggests that while cultural facilities evaluations for policy making are increasingly expected by governments to be evidence-based, due to "competing needs and aspirations, opportunity costs and a more heterogeneous population", these evaluations often fail to appreciate perspective and context and mistake 'hard evidence' for good evidence. The recognition that 'hard evidence' or "economic benchmarks alone are an insufficient framework upon which to analyze progress and plan for the future" is not new (Hawkes 2003; p.1). While some of the most serious economists try, giving everything a dollar value is not only hard but often fails to provide important aspects of the full story. While many agree that using evidence like 'performance' indicators to measure the value of cultural facilities is important, *which* indicators one chooses to measure affects a study's worthiness less than *how* they are chosen: "'top-down' efforts, no matter how well intentioned, will not achieve their aims" (Hawkes 2003; p.38). This argument illuminates "the need for more grounded theory" (p. 961; 2005).

⁴ Vancouver's ten principles of sustainability are outlined in Appendix A. The City's definition of sustainability acts as a benchmark for chapter 9 recommendations and indicators.

Thus, since governments need evaluative cultural frameworks⁵ this project follows a *programme evaluation* that introduces how cultural sustainability performance indicators can be drawn from a grounded theory approach. In recognizing (1) the breadth of stakeholders responsible for the Film Centre's creation and destined for its service; (2) the complexity of the Film Centre's mandate and (3) the ambiguity of the value of a cultural service, a grounded theory approach is seen as the most reasonable method. However, this project also relies on a literature review and a lot of empirical data that is more characteristic of a case study approach which will be elaborated in following section on analytical strategy. There are some discrepancies between case study and grounded theory approaches but this project uses tenets of both methodologies. In other words, this project is in many ways a case study that uses elements of grounded theory.

The grounded theory approach is a general research method developed by Barney Glaser and Anselm Strauss for studies that seek to iteratively derive theory from data (Gray 2004)⁶. This project attempts to theorize what makes a cultural facility like the Film Centre sustainable from the interview data of various expert stakeholders. However, the grounded theory method (and especially the Glaserian interpretation) stresses strict rules about not conducting literature reviews prior to data collection or taping interviews—that were both undertaken. As such, this project is not pure, unadulterated grounded theory. However, where this project chiefly borrows from grounded theory approaches is in the use of the *constant comparative method*. The constant comparative method outlines the process by which concepts are derived from the data. However, before going into this aspect of the project's analytical strategy, a brief explanation of epistemology is important.

In order to make sense of a story with a complex mandate, many voices, and a subject matter that is difficult to quantify—and to recognize both perception and context—this study is an abductive⁷ (Denzin 2005) exploration of a case with a constructivist epistemology. Constructivism understands “the meaning-making activities” (Lincoln & Guba, 2004; p.197) of subjects who “construct their own meaning in different ways” (Ibid; p.17). Gray refers to this approach as ‘interpretivist’ and contends that any methodology that sees social reality as

⁵ For example, assuming economic benchmarks such as total ticket sales or gross revenue as evaluative indicators for the Film Centre fails to understand the objectives of a non-profit arts organization that is mandated for quality and diversity of cultural options not provided by the commercial sectors. Generating cultural indicators to measure quality and diversity would thus be the goals of a subsequent study.

⁶ While these two theorists departed from each other on numerous rhetorical points, both versions of the theory are based on the same fundamental tenets.

⁷ While *induction* is the process of generating hypotheses from data and *deduction*, testing hypotheses by collecting data, *abduction* is the iterative process of collecting and testing continually and iteratively.

too complex and variable to quantify falls within this category (Gray 2004; p.20). Whatever one calls the methodology, what is important for this project's purpose is not to mistake evidence as necessarily 'hard' quantifiable, positivistic data that can deduce a universal law regarding human behaviour (Marshall 1995). The subjects in this study have perspectives based on experiential and technical knowledge. These perspectives are treated as evidence upon which the key findings in this study are generated.

There is no set formula for what makes a cultural facility sustainable (UCLG 2006). This project does assume however, that through the constructivist lens, certain overriding principles for this particular case can be illuminated. This project rather seeks to uncover aspects of sustainability through a qualitative exploration of the Film Centre—not to find truth, but to provide perspective. This project then seeks to rationalize that perspective in a way that is useful for all Vancouver stakeholders: politicians, bureaucrats, NGO's, the private sector, the community, the film industry, and the cinephiles of today and the filmgoers of the future.

2.6 Research Methods & Analytical Strategy

The logic for the *constant comparative method* in this project is as follows: (1) establish the identify of every stakeholder involved in the Film Centre's creation and intended service provision; (2) request and proceed to conduct a semi-structured interview with all willing participants based on knowledge gathered from a literature review⁸; (3) code those interviews according to their themes and concepts, highlighting areas of consensus and division⁹; and (4) draw comparisons and conclusions for policy and related theory from the various perspectives gleaned in relation to prevailing theory.

This research program values stakeholder opinion. As such, the data gathered is not random, because stakeholders were sought out in their respective fields of expertise. Randomized public opinion is also valued by this project, and typically under represented in cultural facilities assessments (Evans 2005). Consideration of this will be explored in Chapters 5 and 9 in terms of how it *could* unfold. This project does engage two members of the community without any professional ties to the Film Centre; but their opinions were sought because they represented a particular perspective: someone who would not be

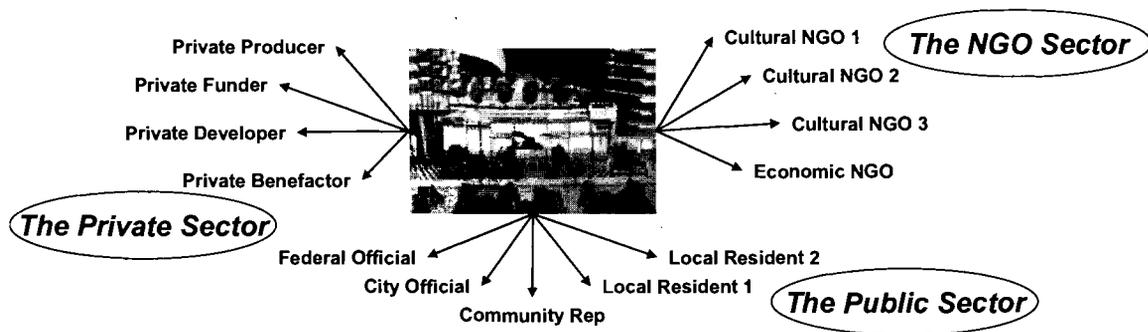
⁸ The literature review included: academic literature; popular press; statcan data; and City of Vancouver minutes, agendas and policy papers.

⁹ This method requires constant comparison because each additional interview brought new information and data. Information gathered during this process sometimes informed proceeding interviews and at times changed the interpretation of preceding interviews.

inclined to use the Film Centre. Chapter 5 explores the significance of this methodology. It illustrates how different perspectives are important to show the role of the Film Centre as a public good.

The stakeholders selected make up a spectrum of perspectives from the public, private, and NGO sectors. The public subjects include: a *Federal Official*, a *City Official*, a *Community Official*, and *two Local Residents*. The private subjects include: a *Private Producer*, a *Private Sponsor*, a *Private Developer* and a *Private Benefactor*. The NGO subjects include: three different Cultural NGO Directors and one Economic NGO expert. While each stakeholder was asked questions based on the same structure¹⁰, each was unique as non-structured dialogue ensued. Figure 2.2 illustrates the set of anonymous interviewees involved in this project (see: Appendix B for interview questions.)

Figure 2.2: Anonymous Interview Subjects: VIFC Stakeholders

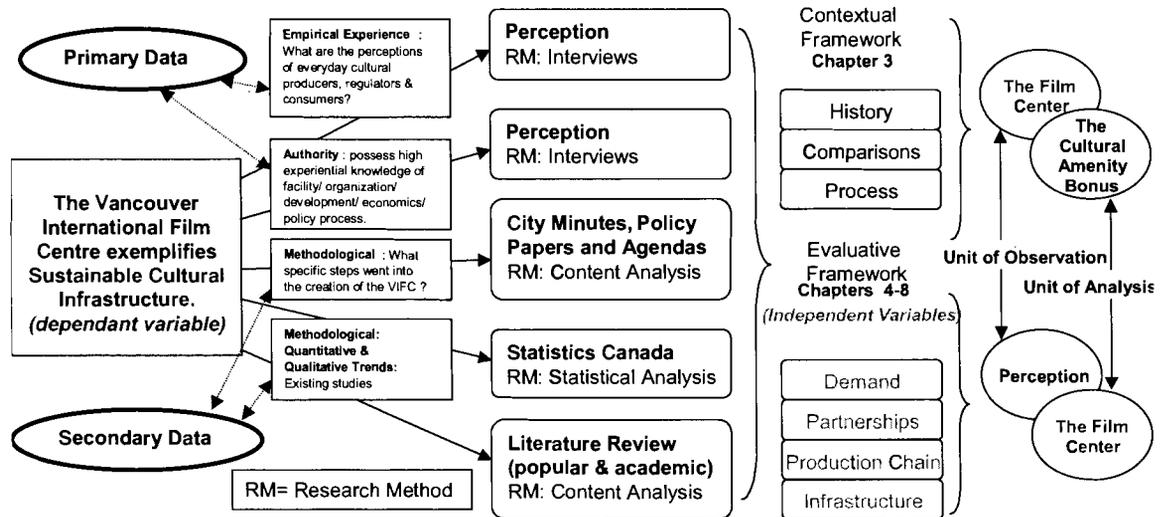


The data gathered from these interviews make up the sample from which my independent variables were gleaned. As such, the independent variables are the overarching concepts used by my subjects to explain the dependant variable: the Film Centre as sustainable cultural infrastructure. This study's units of analysis and observation are on two scales. (1) The fundamental unit of analysis is the Vancouver International Film Centre and unit of observation the perspectives of the various stakeholders; but on a more generalized level (2) the unit of analysis is also the City of Vancouver's Amenity Bonus Program, and the unit of observation the Film Centre. While Chapter 3 introduces history, process and comparisons and analyses the Film Centre's context on a more generalized level as in the latter scale, Chapters 4 through 8 introduce the Centre itself as the chief unit of observation.

¹⁰ Interview Questions were structured to engage participant perspectives on cultural *consumption, regulation, and production* at the Film Centre (rationale outlined in Chapter 4).

Figure 2.3 below illustrates these two streams and outlines how the project's claims are warranted through both secondary and primary data.

Figure 2.3: Supporting Claims with Evidence.



As such, although Chapter 3 does introduce some independent variables which affect the Film Centre as sustainable cultural infrastructure, in the broader sense of history, process and comparisons, this study is primarily interested in elaborating on these general themes to establish context. Chapters 4 through 8 are where four clear independent variables are analyzed. These four variables were gleaned from the data and are elaborated upon in these chapters, including: *consumption, infrastructure, production chain and partnerships*. The understanding of how each of these concepts relate to sustainability varies amongst the subjects, initiates debates, introduces areas of consensus, and ultimately suggests indicators and policy recommendations for both scales of analysis: the Film Centre and the amenity program.

The Film Centre was chosen as the case study, among a dozen or so other amenity bonus examples for the following reasons: (1) it is a relatively large amenity bonus; (2) it exemplifies a cultural activity with connections to a large cultural *industry*; (3) it is involved in a medium with a 'popular' dimension; (4) it has cross-cultural functions; (5) it has many stakeholders; (6) I am interested in film culture and the film industry in Vancouver¹¹; and most importantly

¹¹ This case was chosen based on its merits as well as the researcher's interest. That fact cannot be ignored. In qualitative research, reflexivity is important to highlight potential biases.

(7) it was a fairly recently completed amenity bonus and therefore still in its crucial learning stages¹². A look at the Film Centre's mandate helps to introduce these reasons and further justifies the grounded theory approach.

2.7 The Vancouver International Film Centre Mandate

The grounded theory approach is especially worthy when a facility's mandate is broad and cultural service objectives complex. The Film Centre's mandate for sustainability fits this parameter. For apart from filling ecological¹³ objectives of centrality and clustering; social objectives of community and 'eyes on the street'; and economic objectives of place marketing and foreign capital influx, the Film Centre actually has a cultural mandate to fill as well:

[1] To encourage understanding of other nations through the art of cinema, [2] to foster the art of cinema, [3] to facilitate the meeting in British Columbia of cinema professionals from around the world, and [4] to stimulate the motion picture industry in British Columbia and Canada (VIFC 2007).

Thus, while the Centre indeed has a projector and some seats, its mandate is clearly less about audiences consuming the art of cinema, as is typically done in a conventional film theater, and more about establishing the breeding grounds for cinematic production, among numerous other socio-economic planning objectives. In keeping with Vancouver's ten principles of sustainability, its mandate is cultural diversity, cultural development and cross institutional dialogue.

The Film Centre, as such, is the manifestation of numerous ecological, economic, social, and cultural motivations at a variety of political scales. Born out of (1) new municipal funding mechanisms¹⁴, (2) new theories of cultural sustainability¹⁵ and (3) cultural industries as a new regime of accumulation¹⁶, the Film Centre is a cultural facility that is emblematic of a new era of cultural planning. It is an era where the cultural 'amenity' sits at both site of cultural consumption and production; and at the stake of political struggle whereby different voices on sustainability intersect in the post-industrial city centre in different ways.

¹² Performance indicators may help this young organization understand its niche/role in Vancouver.

¹³ The ecological component of sustainability is really 'spatial' in terms of concepts of centrality, clustering, transportation, mixed-use, density, and 'green' design.

¹⁴ Under Financing Growth in the Downtown Official Development Plan 1975 (DODP) a clause was set to encourage zoning bonus incentives through Community Amenities Contributions on rezoning applications. Elaborated in Chapter 3.

¹⁵ Explored in Chapters 4-9.

¹⁶ Zukin, Scott, Brenner and Theodore and others refer to the power of cultural industries and their influence in the Political Economy as 'a new regime of accumulation'.

While debates ensue over whether or not this close connection between economic development, political planning and cultural amenities is at all new (Clark 2004; Evans 2005; Miles 2003; Florida 2002; Zukin 1995); this project illustrates, as some others have already argued, that there is no question that the treatment of cultural amenities in cities have experienced a quantitative and qualitative shift in the post-industrial era.

Amenities are 'non-market transactions of goods and services that individuals take into account when maximizing utility (Lipsey 2001). Otherwise put, amenities are those phenomena, including facilities and services, which provide the needs and desires of communities and make places attractive to live in. But which community are we talking about? What are a community's needs and desires? A look into the history, context and the incarnation of Vancouver's Cultural Amenity Bonus Program contextualizes those questions and begin the story of Vancouver's attempt at creating a sustainable cultural infrastructure downtown.

3.0: The Film Centre: Context, History and Process

Vancouver is not the only city that has attempted to use incentive zoning to negotiate for public benefits; but its program is unique¹⁷ and therefore worth exploring. The Cultural Amenity Bonus Program is a simple concept: developers are enticed, by the City, to fund and develop cultural facilities. The City achieves this by granting bonus zoning for density to the developer. The developer is lured by the potential for increased profits on the increased density¹⁸. The facility is then leased to an entrusted and existing NGO, with the City as strata titleholder. The NGO must be involved in a cultural service delivery downtown and deemed, by the City's Office of Cultural Affairs, to be in demand by the public¹⁹. In the end, the NGO gets a new facility from which to administer its cultural mandate and the City achieves a variety of objectives, namely cultural, for downtown sustainability. Or so it hopes. The Cultural Amenity Bonus Program is one incarnation of the Community Amenity Contributions funding policy, which also supports organizations such as daycares and education centres etc. The process is a theoretical win-win-win. But since no theory can be proven unless tested, and since no test can be constructed without the input of its actors, this project needs to set the theory-testing-stage with a brief account of history²⁰, context and process.

Zoning density in Vancouver is a function of a Floor Space Ratio unit (FSR), also known as Floor Area Ratios (FARs) etc. The FSR is the factor by which a developer multiplies their land area holding in computing allowable buildable floor space (i.e. allowable floor space = (FSR)*land area). While single-family detached neighborhoods typically have 0.6 FSR or lower, Downtown South has a DD zoning for 5.0 FSR outright before bonus and negotiation. Brava was granted 8.08 FSR, as 320,000 sq ft. was deemed maximum density able to be absorbed in the Downtown South on the particular property size, by the Vancouver's Urban Design Panel and Development Permit Committee. These two bodies play a significant role in the development permit process in Vancouver. They are made up of city experts from a variety of fields and have a lot of sway on the way development unfolds (details on their influence to Brava will be elaborated in section 3.2) Figure 3.1 illustrates this process through a general depiction of the amenity bonus calculation.

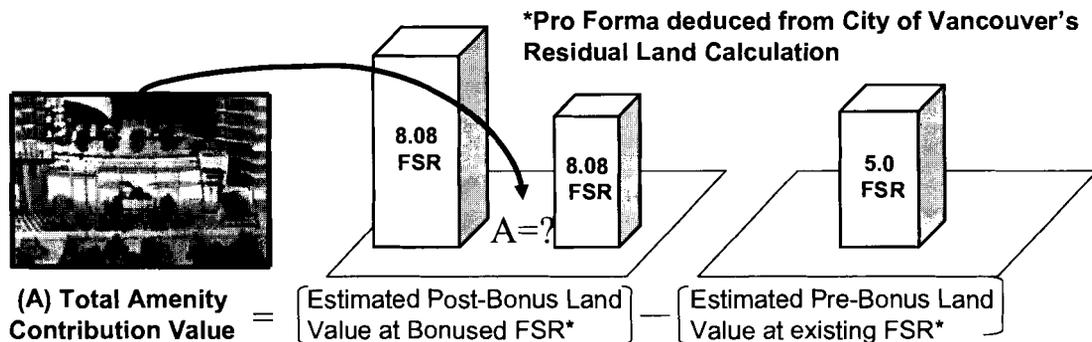
¹⁷Numerous e.g.'s in the US, namely New York in the 1980's and California in the 1990's, illustrate the use of public policy in negotiating for public benefit through incentive zoning, exactions and public/private development (Sagalyn 1997).

¹⁸ While the Urban Development Institute (UDI) initially had concerns that Amenity Bonuses were not economically viable, the City's Amenity Bonus Calculation (Figure 3.1) ensures certainty in a stable real estate market. And in a real estate market that has not cooled since the early 1990's, this calculation can be very lucrative for developers.

¹⁹ Cultural Facilities Priorities Plan 1990 (OCA 2005)

²⁰ See Appendix C: Outlines a brief history of the Downtown Official Development Plan 1975.

Figure 3.1: The Amenity Bonus Calculation



Source: Adapted from various City of Vancouver sources

The City and its citizens get a new \$5 million facility at a strategic downtown location, the NGO gets a state-of-the-art home, and the developer achieves certainty on profits; but what are Vancouverites left with after this dynamic process involving a multitude of politics and actors? As other trials would attest, and the Film Centre’s experience would begin to corroborate, the Amenity Bonusing program was a process with a lot to learn about sustainable cultural service delivery.

3.1 The Cultural Amenity Bonus Program

Armed with the DODP the City’s Planning Department and Office of Cultural Affairs felt well equipped to tackle the sustainability of Downtown Vancouver through Cultural Amenity Bonusing. While the DODP only acted as a guideline and was by no means a comprehensive template, the City felt empowered by its platform. It gave the City (1) the ability to fund cultural facilities; (2) a means for arguing for *cultural* amenities which were historically overshadowed by recreation and libraries and now considered important to the post-industrial economy; and (3) requirements and protocols for what types of facilities would be accepted for bonuses. This section will explore these three precedents.

The DODP gave the City of Vancouver the legislative authority to sell zoning under the Community Amenity Contributions funding amendment to the Vancouver Charter (DODP 1975). Bonusing is just another term for selling zoning. This arrangement was attractive to the City for two reasons (and perhaps the etymology behind the use of ‘Bonus’ as an adjective): (1) densifying the downtown was largely sanctioned by the public²¹ and

²¹ 20,000 Vancouverites participated in public opinion research in ‘City Plan’ 1995.

something the City was already interested in doing and (2) over 80% of Vancouverites who participated in CityPlan felt that tangible cultural facilities—the “bricks and mortar”—needed some kind of public investment²². So since Vancouverites wanted public investments in cultural facilities and wanted density downtown, selling density was akin to getting facilities for free. And due to overstretched city budgets and the political salience of the cash-strapped municipality, it made for a very attractive policy. Of course while economists know that there is no such thing as a ‘free lunch’, the concept nevertheless has always been politically strong.

From the developer’s point of view, Vancouver’s downtown residential market was clearly under performing, and supply needed to catch demand. Getting a cultural amenity bonus into one’s pro forma²³ was both attractive to the bottom line as well as pivotal to one’s marketing campaign and ‘downtown legacy’ (Private Developer). Ultimately, this multiplicity of wants unleashed a discretionary funding policy that changed the face of cultural development in Vancouver’s downtown. Whether or not the City was spending the public’s density properly is another question altogether and will be explored in Chapter 5.

Cultural facilities, at the municipal level, have historically never had the same political clout as other amenity interests in Vancouver. Whereas the Parks Board backs recreation facilities and Library Board backs libraries, the City’s Office of Cultural Affairs has historically had the dull political teeth of a community service group (as illustrated in Table 3.1)²⁴. However, with growing recognition of culture’s importance to the creative

²² The public often voices strong support for ‘visible’ use of tax dollars, where tangible infrastructure can be seen—although not always the highest and best use of taxes as will be illustrated in Chapter 6.

²³ A Pro Forma is the calculation developer’s use to estimate costs and profits.

²⁴ Evans argues that culture’s weak political role in North America goes back to the early days of modern planning, in mid 19th century England, when cultural facilities were used in promoting nationalism and thus solely under state jurisdiction. Others extend this claim and suggest the culture’s ‘back seat’ has never been due to popular will, but rather to political will. People’s desire to be creative (Florida 2002), and cultural development as a ‘social right’, spans modern history (Evans 2005). National Operas, Museums and Galleries often fail to represent the variety of cultural subjectivities that make up the urban, and are better voiced at the scale of the neighbourhood or city (Zukin 1995).

Table 3.1: Comparing City Facilities Funding Rationales

City Facilities Needed	Jurisdiction		Rationales used to argue for funding		
	Boards	Service Groups	Plan-Based Approach	Standards Based Approach	Past Level of Service Approach
		Fire & Rescue Services	VFRS Service Delivery Model (Comprehensive Quantitative Based Rationale)		
		Engineering Services	City Transportation Plan (Comprehensive Quantitative Based Rationale)		
Police facilities	Police Board		VPD- Strategic Plan (2004-2008)	NO STANDARD BUT HAS BOARD	
	Library Board		VPL- Strategic Plan (2004-2007)	NO STANDARD BUT HAS BOARD	
	Board of Parks & Recreation		VPB- Strategic Plan (2005-2010)	HAS BOARD & STANDARDS	2.75 acres of neighborhood park per 1000 population. (Park Board policy.)
		Community Services in Collaboration (e.g. Planning / Development / Social Planning / Office of Cultural Affairs)		1:1 replacement of affordable rentals lost thru Redevelopment. (Van. Charter)	8.5% of city housing stock as social housing. (Council policy.)
				1 daycare space for 50% of pre-school aged children with working mothers; 1 daycare / 100 employees; 1 out-of-school space for 40% of elementary school children w/ working mothers.	
			The Cultural Facilities Development Priorities Plan 1990	NO STANDARD AND NO BOARD	

Source: Adapted from Funding Growth (FG 2004) and various City of Vancouver reports

sector economy, it is beginning to gain momentum and service standards are beginning to be sought²⁵. While ‘culture’ and ‘art’ are hard to standardize and as such historically rarely attempted, there is a growing sentiment not to ignore operating rationales for art’s sake. Indeed there is a difference between running a for-profit business and a cultural non-profit, but hard to standardize does not mean giving up on standards. The political importance of using standards-based approaches is beginning to be realized by the City’s Office of Cultural Affairs as well as numerous private groups and NGO’s (City Official). Where this project extends this momentum, is to a focus on the post-construction stage. What are standards for cultural service delivery? Chapter 7 explores this through the voice of industry experts and Chapter 8 through the amenity bonus actors. Chapter 9 will conclude and recommend measuring the Centre with cultural sustainability performance indicators, by taking a step back from the politics, and illustrate how to understand the users and potential users through the perspectives of the expert stakeholders that have been chosen.

²⁵ The reason for culture’s increasing political viability in the post-industrial era is often explained through competing theoretical perspectives. The Neoliberal perspective which suggests culture is the crisis-of-capitalism’s temporary solution or by the associationalists a body of thought which views aspects of culture’s political notoriety as a small victory for democracy (Theodore; Amin & Thrift). Others suggest the centralization of cultural planning is an ebb and flow of concentration and dilution. The transition, however, to ‘world class’ cities competing in a global arena.

For while the amenity program has attempted to bring standardization by developing sets of protocols, the protocols are very 'front-end-loaded', and politically motivated rather than user defined (NGO Cultural 2). Bonuses currently only go to:

- (1) existing non-profits involved in cultural service delivery;
- (2) downtown core facilities;
- (3) organizations that can be entered from the street to enhance public realm and not only to private offices;
- (4) groups that have 'perceived' demand;
- (5) facilities which celebrate historical continuity;
- (6) arts and culture which have broad cultural and ethnic representation;
- (7) groups of a certain size;
- (8) only once to any group; (the list goes on).

This list of criteria is not mutually exclusive, it is all or none. Table 3.2 illustrates 12 groups that have gone through the program. Since City Stage in 1975, much has changed. Bonus ratios have leveled off and operating allowances are now standard. Some standards however, as will be illustrated in Chapter 6 are not always conducive to good planning. For example, after being handed a "cutting edge" downtown facility and 20 year operating allowance, "where is the incentive to deliver" (NGO Cultural 3) and how is it ensured that what is being delivered is worthy?

Table 3.2: Comparing Amenity Bonuses

Address	Year	Bonus recipient	Amenity Sq Ft	Bonus Sq Ft	Bonus Ratio	Additional benefit
745 Thurlow	1975	City Stage	3,250	2,816	0.87	10 year limit; No Op Costs
1125 Howe	1981	Pacific Cinecentre	9,499	39,380	4.15	15 Yr. Op. Cost Allowance
1190 Hornby	1981	Canadian Music Centre	3,590	22,840	6.36	15 Yr. Op. Cost Allowance
1140 W. Pender	1981	Granny Y Daycare	14,267	48,471	3.40	15 Yr. Op. Cost Allowance
900 Howe	1984	Public Legal Education	5,000	36,000	7.20	15 Yr. Op. Cost Allowance
925 West	1988	Canadian Craft Museum	9,252	39,903	4.31	15 Yr. Op. Cost Allowance
938 Howe	1989	Alliance for Arts & Culture	4,095	26,500	6.47	20 Yr. Op. Cost Allowance
955 Richards	1999	Contemporary Art Gallery	5,496	24,357	4.43	20 Yr. Op. Cost Allowance
1133 Seymour	2001	Film Centre	13,700	64,714	4.72	20 Yr. Op. Cost Allowance
550 Bute	2003	Volunteer Vancouver	6,000	22,982	3.83	20 Yr. Op. Cost Allowance
488 Robson	2003	Art in Starts	6,040	26,714	4.42	20 Yr. Op. Cost Allowance
819 Seymour	2004	VCT/VSO	46,572	248,192	5.33	20 Yr. Op. Cost Allowance

Source: Adapted from various City of Vancouver reports

The Greater Vancouver International Film Festival Society was a group that desired a facility that not only fit the City's protocols but also had a special place in Vancouver's Historic Theater District, which had been rapidly losing screens. Whether its role in the creative sector was worthy or not, it nevertheless solidified a place for itself downtown. By ensuring ownership of the amenity facility through a thousand year lease or the life of the building, the City uses this program to override market pressures. The City's first amenity (City Stage 1975) only took out a ten-year lease. After ten years the rental price became so high that it is now a McDonalds. Nobody else could afford to pay rent there (City Official). The Vancouver International Film Centre had learnt from such mistakes and was slated to become the second largest amenity bonus granted to date and in the foreseeable future. But while City Stage's crucial oversight has now been rectified, the Film Centre is still young: "It is hard to determine what impact they will have over the long term" (NGO economic). That is why understanding where they came from, who is involved, and what they are doing is important in order to understand how they could be sustainable in the future.

3.2 The Process: "BRAVA" 1176 Seymour Street

In order to understand the story of the VIFC and the perspectives of its actors, a look at process is imperative. The process by which the Film Centre came to fruition had three distinct stages (the same is true for all amenity bonuses): (1) the pre land development application stage, (2) the City review stage and (3) the construction stage. In the pre application stage each of the three parties²⁶ held something of value (i.e. had power or a means of mobilizing that power) and had an agenda to fill (i.e. purpose for that power). In the City review stage, the agenda of each party was revealed and work within the DODP guidelines and policies commenced in order to achieve consensus on the development. In the construction stage, final details were crafted and preparation for the inaugural opening at the 2005 Vancouver International Film Festival ensued. From inception to completion the process took over 5 years. Finally, by virtue of a coincidence of wants, the City, the Developer (Onni / Amacon) and the NGO (Greater Vancouver International Film Festival Society (GVIFFS)) underwent a process of attempting to develop a culturally sustainable downtown through the Vancouver International Film Centre.

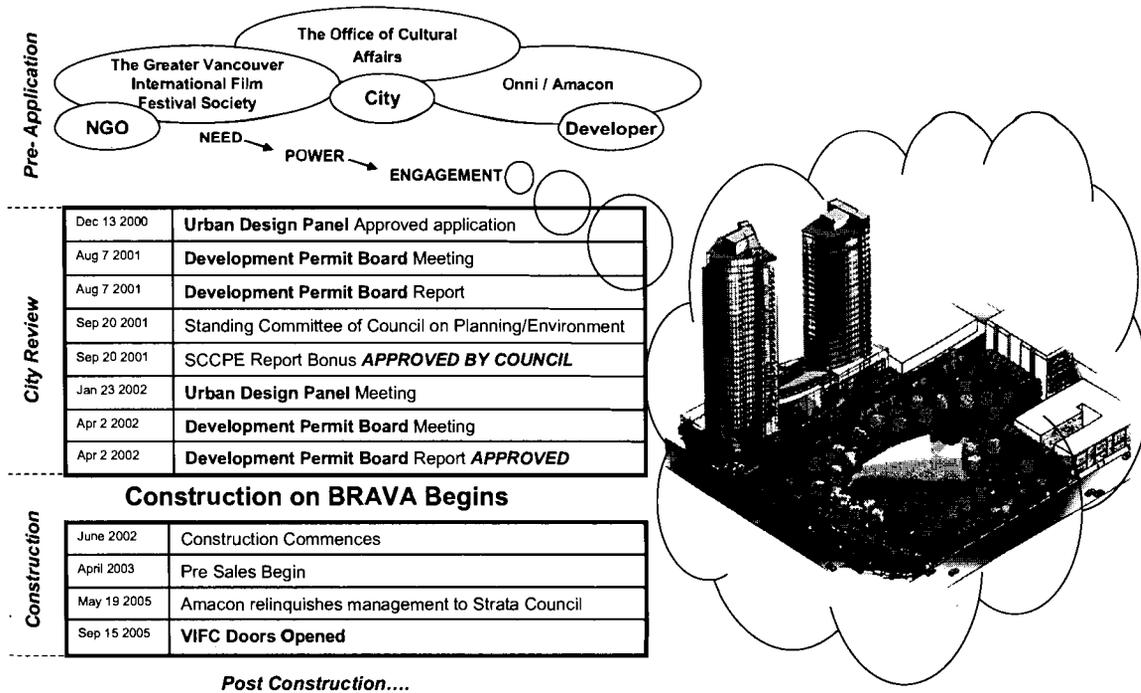
²⁶ The City (Vancouver), the Developer (Onni) and the NGO (GVIFFS).

3.2.1 The Pre Application Stage

In the pre-application stage, the GVIFFS, the developer and the City each sat in their respective offices with different demands. The GVIFFS had demand for new offices (NGO), Amacon had a land parcel and demand to serve a 'hot' real estate market (The Developer), and the City had a panoply of cultural objectives for Downtown South (among many other objectives). The City's legislative authority gives its development objectives the most political sway, but at this stage, the City's objectives are largely contingent on the vision and experience of the profit and non-profit parties. While the City indeed does act as a developer itself or an operator of cultural services at times, it primarily acts as a development facilitator. In terms of achieving cultural objectives, a city's chief role is simply steering development projects. Relatively speaking, Vancouver has a considerable amount of discretionary power (as shown in Appendix C History of the DODP); but this is the planning department's chief political mandate. And in terms of achieving cultural objectives, according to Ley, a city's "chief social benefit is that it forces development projects, large and small...to fit better with their locality and their region and with community values" (1994; p. 366).

The needs of the GVIFFS were well known to the City at this stage. The City has as portfolio of sites with the potential for re-zoning and increases in density, and a laundry list of cultural facilities: "we know those sites which are larger, which may be coming on board and then we have a Facilities Priorities Plan" (City Official). The GVIFFS was at the top of this list in the late 1990's. Not only did it receive operating grants from the City and engage in a yearly revue but it was seen to (1) have been operating successful film festivals for over twenty years; (2) make an important contribution to Vancouver's cultural scene with over 40,000 members, (3) act as a potential tourist attraction and foreign income generator (4) act as an antidote to Vancouver's declining rich single-screen history (5) be in the midst of a rapidly densifying residential district downtown (6) conform with prevailing amenity planning strategies and (7) act as an economic incubator to a growing creative industry sector (Ibid.). With a little coaching from the City, the GVIFFS was aware of the City's Bonusing program and knew which developer to approach (NGO Cultural 1). The developer was enticed by the proposal and in order to find out more began preparing an application to the City. So when the joint team of Amacon and Onni submitted a Letter of Intent to a Project Scoper at the Pre-Design Conference at the City of Vancouver, it was soon clear that the iterative process was going to ensue. Figure 3.2 illustrates this general process.

Figure 3.2: The Brava Development Application Timeline



Source: Adapted from various City of Vancouver Reports

3.2.2 The City Review Stage

Development applications in Vancouver go through two avenues: non-complex proposals²⁷ and complex proposals. The BRAVA application was of the latter variety. Once the pre-design conference has been completed the application then goes through three successive stages: the submission stage, the processing stage and the decision stage. The City suggests flaws and warns permit applicants at various points in the process; but it is during the *processing* stage, at the Design Review Panel, when the application's potential for success first becomes most apparent. The Brava application Design Review had a vote of 6-0 in favor. The panel is made up of various urban design experts²⁸ and while their suggestions have no legal authority, they do act as contingent recommendations that the applicant is suggested to follow in order to be approved by the Development Permit Board.

The Development Permit Board Meeting is a public meeting held in council chambers, where the fate of a permit application is decided. A Board of Variance may appeal this decision, but

²⁷ Non-complex proposals, with few controversial variables, go straight to the development processing office and are decided upon by the Director of Planning, Director of Development Services and the City Manager.

²⁸ It is made up of development planners, urban designers, landscape architects, City engineers and some public representatives.

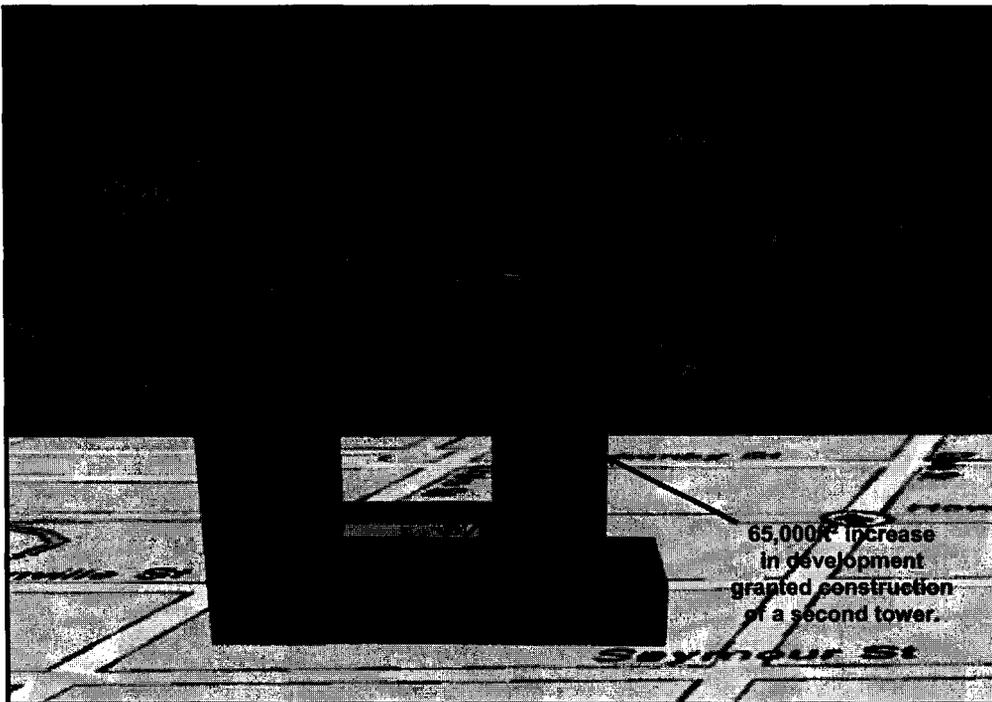
due to recent controversies around the Variance Board's abuse of power, it rarely exercises its right²⁹. On April 2nd of 2002 BRAVA was approved in principle with a few minor revisions. The Development Board expressed excitement about the Film Centre and excavation would soon begin.

3.2.3 The Construction Stage

The increase in Floor Space Ratio on the Brava site enabled the developer to build two towers instead of one (as illustrated in Figure 3.3 below). The Real Estate Services Division at the City of Vancouver used past precedence in establishing Brava's pro forma. By using a residual land calculation, the pro forma establishes how much the developer must invest into the cultural amenity in exchange for the allowable bonus. In the case of Brava this amounted to roughly a \$5 million investment in exchange for 65,000 sq ft of bonus density. The investment was divided into two parts. One part went to an endowment fund of \$1.5 million to pay for operating costs for twenty years. The other component was around \$3.5 million in construction and furnishing costs. While the implications of these figures will be elaborated in Chapter 6, Brava was inaugurated, by the media, as an unabashed success story. It managed to 'fill the donut' of the Downtown South and acted as a significant cultural and residential development in the downtown core.

²⁹ A controversy arose from one of the project's corporate sponsors: The Vancity Savings and Credit Union. The issue was not so much the fact that Vancity had donated close to \$1 million to the Centre for state-of-the-art seats, projectors and other hardware, but the fact that part of this deal included the placing of the Vancity Brand on a large sign on the exterior of the building. Council made the argument against corporate signage. Although corporate signage on a City owned facility had been done past, such as the Vancity Place for Youth, The Vancity Theater was a much larger facility and City Council had changed (Private Sponsor). In the end council ruled that the sign was not allowed and although the \$1million deal had already been signed on the basis of the exterior sign, Vancity agreed to continue: "we could have pulled out, but there was so much good will" (Private Sponsor). Besides, even without the sign, it was perceived to be a good deal.

Figure 3.3: 1176 Seymour Brava Development.



Soon after construction was complete, conclusions had been drawn in the official story: the design was great; the profitability fantastic; the relationship with the future of Emery Abrnes park exciting; the relationship with the downtown core and other amenities rich; the relationship with the Brava tenants ground breaking; the opening festival's demand was high; the Centre's tangible infrastructure absolutely state-of-the-art; the partnerships strong; and the future for Vancouver's, B.C.'s and Canada's film industry promising. The Film Centre was completed and was to start fulfilling its multifaceted mandate and the City's objectives for sustainability. The post-construction phase of the Film Centre was "slated to become a cultural hub for the entire downtown core" (Lee 2005). Or was it? Now that over a year has passed, how is the Film Centre doing? *How does the Film Centre exemplify sustainable cultural infrastructure?*

Chapter 4.0: Creating the Evaluative Framework

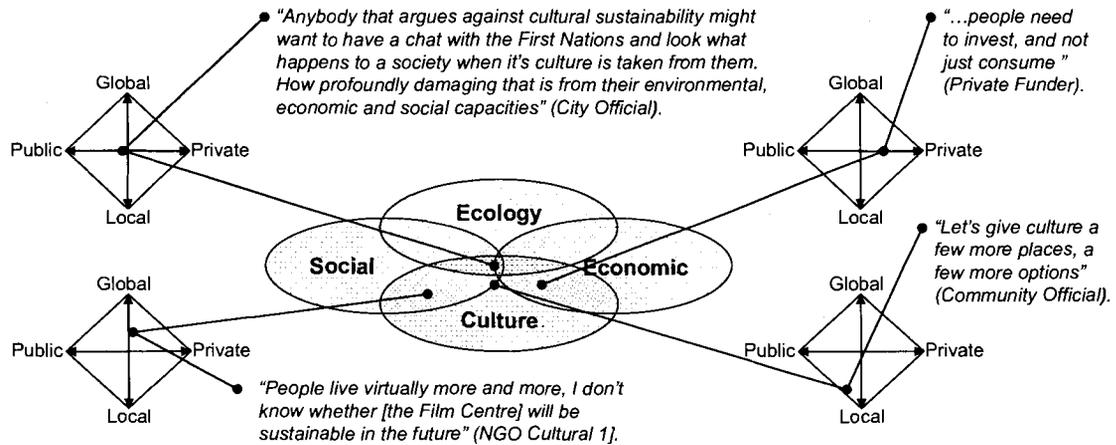
The doors to the Vancouver International Film Centre were opened by a wide array of stakeholders in September of 2005 all with different perspectives and intentions, but seemingly holding one belief in common, that supporting local film culture downtown was a 'good' idea. Cultural institutions have that ability: "to orchestrate and choreograph images of diversity to speak for a larger whole" (Zukin 1995; p.14). But why it was a good idea, and how best to support it, are different issues. Was it for economic or cultural development? What is the difference between these two perspectives? Can one have both? Cultural facilities are often now expected to provide "the twin benefits of social cohesion and economic competitiveness" (Evans 2005; p. 96). How various facilities succeed in this however, is often not well measured. Chapters 5 through 9 organize the opinions of expert stakeholders and establish the background information that would be useful in measuring the performance of the Film Centre.

The Centre acts as the site through which various perspectives on cultural sustainability rationalize (1) the increasing attention given to community based cultural development and (2) how it relates to the emerging prevalence of the creative and cultural global economy in Vancouver. This chapter organizes those perspectives in a conceptual framework that introduces how the Film Centre, the amenity program and cultural facilities beyond could be evaluated.

Stakeholders were prompted by questions to explore the socio-cultural benefits and the potential for the economic benefits of the Film Centre. Questions were based on their experience with: (1) the amenity bonusing process; and (2) the *consumption, regulation and production* of film culture at the Film Centre (see: Appendix B). This framework of questioning is problematic (i.e. where do cultural value, meaning and community engagement fit within this model), but intentionally so, because it implicitly introduces (1) the concept of scale and (2) the concept of ownership. This prompted the *public vs. private* and *local vs. global* debates: *who* (ownership) is producing, regulating and consuming and *where* (scale)? Scale and ownership are critical concepts needed for how one engages in understanding cultural sustainability through the Film Centre. Figure 4.1 illustrates and introduces how various perspectives that were generated through this project can be framed and categorized in the relation to the Film Centre.

Figure 4.1: Modelling Stakeholder Perspective on Cultural Sustainability

(What does Cultural Sustainability at the Film Centre mean to you...)



Modelling perspectives on sustainability is a rather subjective exercise but important in understanding how subjects rationalize sustainability. The most important finding that can be drawn from the Community Official's call "for more cultural options" the Cultural NGO's uncertainty; the Private Sponsor's suggestion and the City Official's analogy, is that global phenomena have local consequences. And for cultural sustainability, concentrating on the local and how it relates to the global, is important. This conclusion was apparent in all interviews.

For example, in terms of local scale, what are the social and community values of local production, socio-cultural capital building and engaging in culture as opposed to consuming "capital C" cultural³⁰ products? On a global scale, what are the benefits of non-profit mandates, quality, authenticity, diversity of options, languages and ethnicities? On the economic side of local scale, how do Vancouver's creative sector industry and downtown economy, among others, benefit from local production, cultural amenities and public realm improvements? And on the global scale what are the values of flagships, place marketing, branding, internationalism and "building a world stage.... [and having] Vancouver represent Vancouver" (Private Benefactor).

On the international scale, ownership of film *production* is highly concentrated. In North America, production is dominated by Hollywood. With high degrees of state *regulation* and involvement, Hollywood movies have enormous budgets, million dollar marketing campaigns

³⁰ Culture is used in terms of Hawkes' definition outlined in Chapter 2.0.

and strategic niche consumer markets with “films that are calculated to be as safe a money making proposition as possible” (NGO Cultural 1). On the local scale, however, the story is quite different—and rather paradoxical. While Vancouver has a wide array of film production communities, clubs, studios, festivals, schools, sophisticated regulatory bodies³¹, a historical cinema district, and an avid film going community—Vancouver also has very large branch-plant film *production* industry, often called ‘Hollywood North’ (Gasher 2002), with a relatively meagre amount of successful local Canadian production. One of the strategies of the Centre was to rectify this paradox. Chapter 7 explores this paradox, but heeds caution in the tendency to theorize the vast array of perspectives into two diametrically opposing camps: ‘Hollywood vs. Non’³² and ‘Public vs. Private’. This project views these dualities as debates rather than positions³³. In reality, the stakeholder data make up a spectrum of perspectives. That is not to say however that reaching consensus never occurs.

The next four chapters are broken up into four main themes that were gleaned from the interview data. **Chapter 5** will look at concepts of consumption, such as need, markets, diversity and technology. **Chapter 6** will explore the concept of infrastructure through clusters, density, mixed-use, community, managing intangibles and design. **Chapter 7** will unearth the concept production, surrounding risk, investment expenditures, and the branch-plant phenomenon. **Chapter 8** will explore the concept of partnerships, such as that in the public/private/NGO dialogue. In conclusion, **Chapter 9** will conclude by tying together these various concepts and suggests how performance indicators for the Film Centre and beyond could be developed.

The opinions of the following stakeholders were chosen based on their expertise and relationship with the Film Centre- and are by no means a random sample. While this does introduce questions of bias, manipulation, non-standardized of data etc., it must be re-stated from Chapter 1 that these chapters do not attempt to establish truth, but rather perspective. And from this perspective, only then can a truly valid evaluative framework be developed. A framework where profit is not the only indicator.

³¹ For example, National Film Board, BC Film Commission, Office of Culture Affairs.

³² In many ways, it is the western equivalent of Global vs. Local. While Bollywood and cinema from France, for example have large production industries, nothing compares to the reach of Hollywood.

³³ Furthermore, while this project does take normative stance on local cultural policy development the view that all that is Hollywood is bad is left to the perspectives of interviewees.

5.0 Consumption: Effective vs. Non-Economic Demand

The term *consumption* is problematic because it is usually associated with *effective demand* as opposed to *non-economic demand*. While consumption can clearly mean both, this distinction must be clarified to avoid false interpretations³⁴. Effective demand is defined as the purchasing power of the consumer and its ability to "create its own supply" (Lipsey 2001). The user's desire to pay (e.g. renting theatre space) prompts the production of supply (e.g. building the Film Centre). The problem with this notion of consumption for the Film Centre is that it was supplied not to make money, but rather to fill non-economic demands that could not afford to pay going market lease rates. The Film Centre was supplied as a public infrastructure subsidy, also known as an indirect production subsidy³⁵. It is operated by a non-profit organization patronized by public grants and private sponsorship and labelled as a cultural 'incubator' facility. That being said, in a purely market-based economy one would only invest in a Film Centre if it had the ability to turn a profit. But the Film Centre had many more objectives and was built "to emphasize quality more than money making potential... [it does not] have much of a function in terms of the business world, [its] not profitable; [its] a *non-profit*" (NGO Cultural 1).

In a mixed economy, non-profit cultural facilities are developed to either (1) supply the non-economic demands of the society; and/or (2) to stimulate the economy in a way that is too risky, uncertain, or complicated for any free-standing economic body to want to take on alone (Evans 2005). The Film Centre responds to both motives. Not only is Vancouver a city that is well recognized as having a "film industry and movie making talent pool that is well over and above the current production" (Private Benefactor) (to be explored chapter 7), but it has a public with a high degree of non-economic demand for arts and culture³⁶. When the market does not provide³⁷, the public sector steps in. This is where elected officials, expert and public opinion, as opposed to market incentives, dictate supply. However, interpreting what people say must be done carefully. For just because the Film Centre is a non-profit that cannot simply have net operating incomes indicate its success or lack thereof, does not mean that its ability to succeed in cultural service delivery cannot be measured.

³⁴ Clark (2002) refers to three consumption typologies: Traditional (ritual/ reinforcing past), Individualistic (conspicuous) and Moralistic (political); and argues that consumption of amenities and entertainment drive public policy in a New Political Culture NPC. Consumption at the Film Centre can fit any one of these typologies.

³⁵ But as Chapter 3 illustrated, this subsidy came in the form of bonus density; not a direct nominal tax payer subsidy, but nevertheless a public subsidy (i.e. what are the costs of absorbing density such as increased utilities, parks)

³⁶ As illustrated by City Plan 1995 (City Plan 1995).

³⁷ An economically viable organization has net operating income (NOI) with a positive integer.

This Chapter explores various dichotomies of Concept vs. Need that were apparent in the interview data, which illuminate ways in which Film Centre success can be measured. These dichotomies include Culture vs. Pop Culture (5.1.1); Public Access vs. Marketing Vancouver to the World (5.1.2); and New Media vs. Convivial Engagement (5.1.3).

5.1 Concept vs. Need Dichotomies

It is one thing to have a great “idea” or concept, and entirely another to have a concept that meets people’s needs. The problem with concept versus needs dichotomies however, and for that matter all dichotomies for policy creation, is that issues are never binary. The metaphysic of unity theory hypothesizes that politics tends to gravitate to either-or camps (Edwards 2004), but as Florida notes this hardly represent people’s experience of contemporary reality: people as a whole generally desire a new model (p. 281; 2002). The interview and archival data in many ways corroborates this. The Film Centre’s experience also recognizes this; but in some ways it does not. A look at the difference between a perceived general arts and culture *need*, and how this translates to the *concept* of the Film Centre introduces this discrepancy.

According to City Plan (1995), a city-wide assessment of public demand which included 20,000 participants, 80% of Vancouverites expressed a desire for an increased role of arts and culture in their communities:

Vancouverites want art and culture to contribute more to their city’s identity, their neighborhoods’ character, and their own learning and self-expression... [; and] a strong arts community that encourages local artists and reflects Vancouver’s diverse cultural heritage... [enabled by] co-operation between arts organizations and business, recreation, and education partners (p.4; Ibid.).

This was not the only wide scale public survey that yielded such results. A local private institution in Vancouver with diverse “members...from a variety of international backgrounds” just recently had a vote on granting \$1 million dollars of charitable donations (Private Sponsor). While the institution (Vancity) has historically awarded the money to a NGO involved in social, economic or environmental justice, this time 40,000 Vancouverites voted for a cultural organization: it was “a good litmus test...a good indicator that our members like the arts and culture” (Ibid.).

Interpreting a general demand for arts and culture as demand for a Film Centre is a separate issue of course, but was, according to some, a ‘no-brainer’. “We have a very strong cinema

audience here...[and] we were losing screens in the downtown” (Public Official). Granted two commercial megaplexes, totalling over twenty screens were built in the downtown core in the last decade, but the Film Centre is: “a completely different experience, a deeper experience” (Private Sponsor); “a completely different animal” (Cultural NGO 2).

But based on the Film Centre’s poor out-of-the-festival-season box office and production rental performance, not everyone agrees: “generally, we’re in a very bad time for cinema and cinema exhibition.... I think [the Film Centre is] living with the risk that [it] will become obsolete” (NGO Cultural 1). “The word on the street” (Cultural NGO 3) is that, outside of the two-week festival, the Film Centre is not filling up: “indeed the public binges, more and more, the public binges on events and doesn’t sustain the art form the rest of the year” (NGO Cultural 1).

So what do these sentiments indicate about demand? Is the Film Centre failing to “provide the niche that isn’t already being filled” (NGO Cultural 2)? “People don’t know about the film centre, 1 in 50, maybe 1 in a 100...would they go if they knew, I don’t know?” (Cultural NGO 3) Are there possibilities for latent demand that will be realized when Emery Barnes Park is completed³⁸ (NGO Cultural 1)? These questions raise two fundamental points about the concept vs. need debate that can be deduced from the interview data:

- *While non-economic demands are vital to cultural diversity in cultural sustainability, effective user demand should not be underestimated; and*
- *While the Film Centre aids in diversifying cultural options and adds to the Vancouver brand at a variety of scales, its ability to establish its own brand and niche has not been as strong, although it should be.*

These two points illustrate that concepts are most successful when they meet an certain degree of effective user demand. Furthermore part of what makes facilities successful is their brand, or how users categorize the institution’s functions. Successful branding and effective demand are measurable through survey research and inform indicators that measure user actions in terms of what types of film services they are interested in and what makes for a successful VIFC brand.

³⁸ The connection between Emery Barnes Park and the VIFC was continually cited in the Urban Design Panel and Permit Board’s reports. This synergy is expected to be very important according to the City (Seymour 2001, 2002).

5.1.1 Culture vs. Pop Culture

There are two types of effective demand that contribute to the Film Centre's operating income³⁹: (1) programmed cinema ticket sales and (2) production space and theater rental demand (to be elaborated in Chapter 7). Without proving low effective demand with quantitative data—this project trusts expert opinion—this project rather seeks to explain *why* effective demand is low and what the policy implications for this are. The VIFC's relative age; inexperience with yearly programming, relatively small community of supporters other than the two-week festival, and incomplete status of Emery Barnes Park are all among causes of low demand expressed by various expert stakeholders. The officially complementary although unofficially overlapping program niche with the Cinematheque⁴⁰ was also expressed as a cause, although by a smaller sample of stakeholders. But other than 'the experts', this project also sought some non-expert stakeholder opinion-- or community members without any interest in the Film Centre. What it is about the Film Centre that is undesirable to 2 Brava residents for example:

People aren't brought up with culture. I was brought up on Hollywood films... people are ignorant and stubborn trying new things. You're just going to get the cultural people who've been brought up in that environment. It starts young. You're not cool unless you've seen that movie. My little cousins have to see that next BIG movie. Kids are just like adults, they want to go and see that next big movie so they can go and talk about it (Local resident 1).

It seems to me that this theater is for hoity-toity, artsy, cultural people. It's fancier, it's like a night out studying, a little too thinky for a night out after a hard day's work. People don't want to read subtitles; they're too much work. People are too lazy; [they] just want sit and be told a story (Local resident 2).

Both these sentiments express two re-occurring themes from those who are not interested in the Film Centre: (1) a distaste for what is perceived to be "high culture" and (2) an affinity or comfort for what is often referred to as "pop culture." These perceptions are in many ways: cliché⁴¹, true of most cities and arts and culture institutions (Zukin 1995), arguably increasing sentiments with the growth of *Youtube*⁴², Internet, email and DVD's (Cultural NGO 1): but importantly, in fact the reason for their creation:

³⁹ This omits demand achieved through branding and overall marketing of Vancouver locally and globally, which would be extremely difficult to measure, although according to the Private Sponsor something that should be a top priority: "what are the [investment] opportunity costs of losing the Film Centre".

⁴⁰ Cinematheque is another cultural institute involved in the film sector, which also went through the Amenity Program in 1980, with a very similar mandate.

⁴¹ This cliché goes back to Theodore Adorno's criticism of the 'sameness' of the culture industry (19).

⁴² *Youtube* is 'freeware' video Internet website. It was brought up as a concern over declining cinema attendances by four separate interviewees without prompt.

It's a completely different animal. [The Film Centre] is like an English department at a University versus the publisher of Harlequin Romance...;the same way the Vancouver Art Gallery is different from a commercial art gallery or vacant lot that sells velvet paintings (Cultural NGO 2);

[!]f the only books you could get, in a library or bookstore were the best sellers....; if the only music you could get was stadium rock, or Grammy award winners we'd have a pretty impoverished culture... [The Film Centre's] role is a complementary opposite to Hollywood (Cultural NGO 1);

So if the Film Centre and its users pride themselves on being seen as “the antithesis of a BIG Hollywood Cineplex out in the sticks” (Ibid.) and Vancouver's public, other than that of pop culture enthusiasts, generally agrees that cultural options need to be supported by the public sector and private grants (at 80%), the *concept* seems to make sense, right? But does general public sector support give a *carte-blanche* to the cultural service provider? The duty of the public cultural institution here is not as clear. For example both 'pop culture enthusiasts' expressed a common interest which actually corroborates part of the VIFC's mandate: an interest in *local* production. One resident said: “it bothers me that Vancouver is never represented by Vancouver. I think [local] movies could do well if they put it out there” (Local Resident 2). The other resident expressed that, “I have seen some good movies from Montreal or Quebec...how come Vancouver doesn't have any big movies? (Local Resident 1) This common thread prompts two issues which relate to demand:

- *The demand for local and Vancouver based screening; and*
- *Understanding current and potential user demands.*

Understanding locals and users were both seen as important to the cultural development component of sustainability at the Centre. This perspective suggests that using indicators derived from survey data and questionnaires is an important consideration for a cultural service provider. Just because the Centre is the opposite of a film exhibitor that is showing films to make money does not mean that it should ignore its 'market' of users.

5.1.2 Public Access vs. Marketing Vancouver to the World

There is another distinct non-user trend, and that comes from the perspective of one that likes the idea of the Centre, although does not intend to actually ever use it:

There aren't any films that I know about that I've had an intention to go and see. It looks like an interesting place. Part of me has wanted to go in, but I just haven't had any reason to. So I just haven't... but I like the diversity of stuff (Community Official).

In this perspective, it is the concept or idea alone of having a publicly funded International Film Centre with public access that is appealing: "I'm just glad to see them there" (Ibid). Evans argues that this is often true (2001; p.36). Culture as a "social equity right" and "arts and culture as social welfare provision" is historically a very salient perspective (p.2). On a local level, this is seen as important to many, and according to some this is true all over, but there is also a degree of international marketing and perceived foreign demand that influences the creation of the Film Centre. This falls within the scope of the *Grand Project* or cultural flagship perspective.

Part of the intention of the Film Centre was to "act as a cultural tourism magnet" (City Official). While no studies have been conducted to assess the effect of the Film Festival on local tourism, experts suggest that it is currently a very local festival with very little international demand, "although it should" have more (Private Benefactor).

The branding of Vancouver is important, is immensely important...the centre...the Vancouver reputation, the sense of the Vancouver brand... We're not a Cultural Mecca & don't aim to be. But, we're a centre for creativity with a strong cultural component in film... The film Industry [is] the anchor of Vancouver's transitioning economy—creativity is a huge component of this economy (Ibid.).

Not one interviewee denied the importance of the creative sector and Vancouver's film industry in having a healthy post-industrial economy; however the opportunity costs of funding culture through the amenity program was a question posed by some subjects and illuminates an aspect of non-economic demand for culture that becomes politically very contentious. The issue is the concern over market affordability and rights to the city, public access to what, and at what cost? It is the debate over what should be affordable. Should it be the studio, or the house in which the struggling artist lives pointed out one interviewee (Private Benefactor)?

As was illustrated in chapter 3, public sector involvement in retaining downtown land for cultural use is attractive policy in that it is great for achieving consensus (Zukin 1995; p.14). Amongst this project's stakeholders, consensus that local film culture is good and subsidizing

a downtown location are good was almost unanimous⁴³. Interview after interview subject commented on the importance of diversity and the government's role in ensuring downtown locations by making culture affordable so cultural organizers: "wouldn't have to compete with the commercial market"⁴⁴ (City Official). The issue of pricing cultural producers out of the neighbourhoods in which they thrive is very prevalent in the literature (Florida 2002, Lloyd 2006, Zukin 1995). Springing from the issue of affordability, however, is a salient issue that is often cited as the opportunity cost of the 'cultural consensus'. The issue is affordable housing⁴⁵.

Critics of Neo-liberalism accuse cultural facilities of contributing to the status quo unjust nature of city rights and access: "the Arts appeal to everyone and... hide high end real estate by giving candy to the public" (Zukin 1995; p.121). This project's interviewees generally took a more "Associationalist"⁴⁶ view of 'culture's consensus' and resurgence in the post-industrial city as a small win for the public: "Don't get me wrong when I say I think I need we need more housing, I'm not against cultural programs either. In fact I'm strongly in favor of cultural programs" (Community Official).

- *Despite the opportunity costs public access to these facilities is paramount; and*
- *Marketing Vancouver is important but that depends on what is being marketed.*

Public Access and Vancouver's image are both very important to all stakeholders for cultural diversity and development. What was clearly important to interviewees was that public access and marketing were authentic and represented the public's best interest by encapsulating a *universal* story. Indicators that illustrate user psychologies need to understand concerns of access and how Vancouver would like to represent itself through marketing.

⁴³ While it could be argued that this is because 10 of 12 stakeholders are somehow involved in the Film and Cultural Sector and therefore biased, it must be noted all but one of these stakeholders do not depend on the Film Centre's success for their livelihoods and some could be actually categorized as representing non-complementary interests.

⁴⁴ Affordability in relation to Production Chain will be elaborated on in Chapter 7.

⁴⁵ The main proponents of this criticism come from the school of Neo-liberal critics. The argument goes like this: because capitalism is inherently crisis ridden and cultural industries are capitalism temporally solution to the end of industrialism, the Film Centre exemplifies a social good that capitalists can agree on while housing is a social good that is in actual high demand. Other critics, and not necessarily from the Neo-Liberal school, criticize the paradox of gentrification and how artists are priced-out of their neighborhoods (Zukin, 1975; Fasche 2006).

⁴⁶ Associationalists believe that civil society "can promote greater productive efficiency and a more inclusive and democratic polity...[through] an essentially harmonious balance (Brenner and Theodore 2004; p. 76).

5.1.3 New Media vs. Convivial Engagement

Convivial engagement is inherent to human beings; but understanding what makes people come together is not an exact science. Much of the amenity planning literature suggests that it is the bundle of public amenities that brings people together, but while cities increasingly see this to be true (Florida 2002; Clark 2004), it is also true that new media, especially personal computers, are increasingly filling people's desire for community—and this does not necessarily occur in the romanticized ideal of the public urban realm (Amin and Thrift 2002;p.45). The role of new media and the future of convivial engagement is a debate especially relevant to the medium of film. It was a prevalent issue in many interviews. Film, after all, is viewed on 'screens', but how the aesthetic quality of a video screen "in your living room in your tiny downtown condo" (City Official) compares with a film screen in a theatre is argued by many as a very different experience.

A 35 mm celluloid projected onto the screen has richness and texture that an electronic image projected digitally does not yet have....Sitting at home watching something on a screen with light coming from behind it... it's... not the same aesthetic experience. It's like seeing a painting, or a slide of a painting, it ain't the same thing, you know.... the social experience of sitting in a group and having the correct aesthetic experience is still something that is worth holding onto dearly... as that experience seems to be becoming less and less valued, people are beginning to speak of it as something we should value, and in fact there is a social aspect, funny enough, just sitting in the dark with a bunch a people watching a movie, you know (Cultural NGO 2).

This perspective stresses (1) the aesthetic value of celluloid film technology, and (2) the experience of watching something with fellow citizens. But as another interviewee pointed out, many young cinephiles and aspiring film producers get more out of their internet communities: "the really interesting, non-industry control stuff will never make it to the theaters... [the internet] give[s] amateur film makers a chance, allows a wider spectrum of movies" (Cultural NGO 3). This view was corroborated by an additional interviewee, but with the belief that virtual film communities should not be the only venue for cinephiles:

I like to think that people need to get out of their homes and have convivial public world experience with fellow citizens, I think I have to except reality and see that in many ways that doesn't seem to be true.... but if you look at what's happened in other cities, a lot of bigger cities, they don't have much in the way of a public domain the way people used to have. And the world is going more and more in that direction. People live virtually more and more.... I'm not so sure about where the world is going, it's very uncertain and I don't know whether [The Film Centre is] sustainable in the future. But you know another part of me says, well not just that I

hope [the Film Centre is], but I think that [it] should be and [it] should make [itself] relevant and have to reinvent... [itself] (Cultural NGO 1).

The belief that new media was not meeting the public's needs and the notion of the Film Centre needing to reinvent itself appeared again and again in the interview data. So how does the Film Centre reinvent itself? Before going on to address the role of infrastructure and the importance of intangible infrastructure two points can be made about new media and the role of convivial engagement.

- *New media has an important role in Film Culture and cannot be ignored in successful film policy; and*
- *Convivial Engagement is important but cannot be contrived.*

The role of new media and convivial engagement are important issues to understand in terms of how user psychology influences action. What makes users want to come to congregate in public facilities and spaces? Does the Film Centre reinvent itself by trying new strategies and seeing what works, or by studying users and understanding what they want or prefer?

6.0 Infrastructure: Symbolic vs. Functional

The Film Centre's infrastructure has both *tangible* (i.e. 'bricks and mortar'/ organizational structure) and *intangible* (i.e. "the downtown buzz") components. Furthermore both tangible and intangible components have capital C *cultural* values (e.g. in terms of goods and services for consumption and production) as well as small c *cultural* values (e.g. in terms of the opportunity for engaging in dialogue on value systems). These components can be viewed on numerous scales and are interrelated. That being said, the Film Centre is a tangible building with four walls and a roof, but it also has a relationship with the neighborhood. Moreover, the GVIFFS is a society with an organizational mandate and structure, but it also has a variety of external relationships, some of which are yet to be realized. How much either infrastructural attribute is more symbolic or functional is a debate worth noting. While this debate is often dichotomized as *highest and best Cultural use* (in terms of an economic and social policy toolkit) vs. *community cultural use* (in term of the capacity to share values amongst a community of diverse identities) the interview data illustrated, that the Film Centre really attempts to be recognized and act in both veins.

This chapter looks at concepts of intangible and tangible infrastructure at the Film Centre that were gleaned from the interview data. Section 6.1 will look at the tangible issues of design quality, incremental planning, sub-lease agreements, operating allowances and funding requirements. Section 6.2 will explore the intangible concept of creative cluster dynamics and public domain.

6.1 Tangible Infrastructure

The Film Centre's tangible infrastructure has two main roles: (1) as a publicly owned cultural facility, with seats and a screen; and (2) as a publicly run cultural facility, with an organizational mandate and eight full time staff. Each of these roles expresses something unique about the Film Centre and illustrates its attempt at downtown sustainability. Treating each individually helps to draw out the VIFC and GVIFFS's weaknesses and its strengths.

According to one Cultural NGO:

The film centre basically is a space that allows [the GVIFFS] a non-profit arts organization to put a roof over [its] heads, have some security, and in return... provide a service for the citizens of Vancouver (Cultural NGO 1).

While fundamentally that is true, the Film Centre is a little more than a simple roof with four walls.

6.1.1 The VIFC: Design Quality

The Centre was designed by an architect whose lifelong passion was theatre design. It boasts state-of-the-art construction materials including soundproof walls, French made furniture and the highest quality of video, film and multimedia, hardware and software—including the capability to broadcast live webcasts (Ibid.). The atrium is massive, the lobby is grand, and the overall design is “superb” and “dramatic” (Ford 2003).

The Film Centre is a building on three floors with roughly 14,000 square feet of floor area. Each floor essentially represents one of the many reasons why this particular facility and group was argued and negotiated for by the City’s Office of Cultural Affairs: (First floor) the need for subsidized public engagement space and a subsidized screen downtown; (Second Floor) the need for subsidized flex/production space for the film festival and film production community and (Third Floor) the need for subsidized office space for the GVIFFS.

The first floor holds a three storey glass atrium and lobby, larger than any other theater in Vancouver. The idea was developed so people were not just forced out of exits and into back alleys and were able:

to sit down and talk and have coffee...and have a collective experience, around what they saw and understanding what they saw.... we thought that was particularly important in a high-density neighborhood like the Downtown (City Official).

A fundamental premise of the amenity program is ensuring public spaces on otherwise unaffordable real estate. Staying downtown is very hard “because of property values” (Cultural NGO 1). Also, the program is bent on making sure facilities are accessible:

the public’s got to actually be able to get in the building and enjoy the amenity. So you could bonus for offices—there are many non-profits, but the public isn’t served as directly (City Official).

The interview data again echoed CityPlan with respect to actual buildings in communities and how Vancouver was doing a good job in planning for amenities in a densifying neighborhood.

As you densify things you need to bring in more amenities, and these amenities are often times things that wouldn't otherwise be created. And so end up in a community that is missing some big gaps in delivery of its social programs, or delivery of needed resources in the community (Community Official).

A building, after all, is a resource: "it's a critical mass of screens we need to have a festival" (City Official). The theatre is square footage, seats, washrooms, tables, doors with locks, a projector and a screen. It has a screen of unmatched quality and the best digital projector in Canada (Cultural NGO 1). Others say, however, that the Film Centre may have tangible resources but does not use them as it should. The Film Centre:

should be le grand public, but it's not le grand public....there is no glamour in groundwork....[other facilities are] achieving more, with more groundwork, but less resources.... [The Film Centre] is seen as too intellectual, too high-class, too obscure. They should make themselves popular. They are doing things up here, when it should be down here...a lot of waste of resources (Cultural NGO 3).

As the cliché goes: "it's easy to build buildings, but it's hard to play to standing room only audiences every night" (Aurbach; Feb 12 2007). The interview data suggested the following conclusions about the Film Centre's tangible design and infrastructure.

- *While the Centre's design quality is remarkable, it may not fully deliver the community's needed resources as well as it could and maybe impeding on the Centre's success.*

'Build it and they will come' is increasingly understood as a fallacy in cultural planning circles, but has always been popular amongst politicians. Sometimes it works and sometimes it does not. The interview data suggested that the imperative for public access is something that is not clear to the public. Whether this is true and how to ameliorate this predicament is an indicator context worth exploring.

6.1.2 Cultural Programming and Operating Allowances

The VIFC is a cultural facility and GVIFFS is a cultural programmer. While the GVIFFS had an over twenty-year history running two-week film festivals, the business of out-of-festival-season programming was new to the non-profit. Vancouver already had a non-profit cultural programmer involved in film: the *Cinematheque* located just two blocks away (see Table 6.1 below). Surely as the City Official pointed out "they are in the business of running film festivals and running film centres", but the 'centre' side of the business was a new venture. This new side of the GVIFFS portfolio of responsibilities was cited as very important in all

Urban Design Review and DPB reports “provided it animates year round” (2000 UDP Min.). The VIFC was to follow a similar operating schedule as other amenity bonuses:

The deal is that the City has a lot of rights and control on behalf of the citizens of Vancouver, but it doesn't have a lot of responsibility. [The Centre] take[s] over the responsibly. So it's a very good arrangement for the people of Vancouver, in that first of all the developer put up all the expense of construction of the building and the first 20 years of maintenance and then the film festival society becomes responsible for that. And there's an apparatus for making sure that the City is protected and that the people of Vancouver are protected which is that [they're] responsible for building up an endowment fund; which the City calculates at about a \$100,000 a year over a period of twenty years, should result in something like \$3 million, with 5% interest calculation or whatever. And so that's a sizeable chunk of change which sits there generating interest and that interest should cover the ongoing maintenance of the building, re-roofing, you know, some of the utilities bills and so on (Cultural NGO 1).

As one interviewee pointed out, “An amenity does not provide a service unless it runs a successful business” (Private Benefactor)-successful defined as, not in the sense that it makes profit, but in the sense that the public values its services. That being said, in the for-profit sector, without any profits the business does not survive. However in the non-profit sector, what are the safeguards and guarantees for the public? According to the NGO quoted above the public gets a great deal through this policy arrangement, but according to another “what motivates the NGO to succeed?” (Cultural NGO 3) Are the people of Vancouver truly protected by endowment fund responsibilities? This question prompts many questions about performance indicators that will be discussed more in Chapter 9. The answers though, of course, lie not in what stakeholders believe, although their expertise does get them a long way, but in what users want and are interested in. A good deal for the people of Vancouver is a Film Centre that thrives.

6.2 Intangible Infrastructure

What constitutes an intangible is a debate worth having, but, regardless, relevant to the issue of infrastructure at the Film Centre. The Film Centre was developed, in part “to build a world stage” (Private Benefactor); to provide “cultural excellence” (Cultural NGO 1); to make the city “alive at night” (Private Sponsor); to generate “that kind of buzz and synergy we get when the film festival is on” (City Official). And in the vein of Floridesque argumentation people often cite “the look of a city, the feel of a city—attracts investors. The arts and the sense of a city—attracts investors” (Private Sponsor). Anything to do with ‘sense’ is an intangible. Looking at intangible aspects of the Film Centre helps to establish what “creating a buzz” means, and while some intangibles clearly spur tangible effects (e.g. cultural venues generate local business like coffee shops and restaurants (OCA 2006)) others are not quite

as clear. By looking at (1) the Centre as a cultural facility within a cluster of other cultural facilities, community facilities and businesses downtown; and (2) as a public steward or 'good' neighbor, the following 2 sections will explore the Film Centre *buzz* and what we can learn from it.

6.2.1 Creative Clusters & Inter-Facility Dynamics

The Film Centre is not only strategically placed as a site to facilitate the increasing density as the "donut of Downtown South" (Private Developer) was being filled with residents, but it has a synergistic relationship to other facilities as well as history. These facilities include other amenity bonuses (outlined in Table 6.1) as well as other significant buildings (outlined in Table 6.2). Historically, the Granville Street corridor was a bustling entertainment district with many theaters. While most of these theaters closed and were converted to a night club and bar strip renamed Theater Row Entertainment District, ironically, the only thing missing were the film theaters themselves. The archival record took some time to catch on, but the district was eventually retagged: Granville Street Entertainment District. Downtown cinema closures are a North America-wide phenomenon, with Vancouver as a prime example:

Royal Centre which was ten screens closed, Vancouver Centre which was two screens closed, the Caprice, the Plaza, the Vogue, the Paradise, the Starlight, the Rembrandt, City lights, Strand, I mean, it's just a long, long, long list of closures for cinemas in the downtown core (Cultural NGO 1).

Part of the Theater Row Entertainment District Plan was to retain some of the historical flavor of the district, but funding such venues was difficult. The City had been observing the trend for some time and so when the opportunity arose with the site on Seymour, the amenity bonusing process ensued. The key was to establish a diversity of entertainment and cultural uses. The cultural options desired by all were seen as a vital component to the sustainability of the area and something other cities had failed to do.

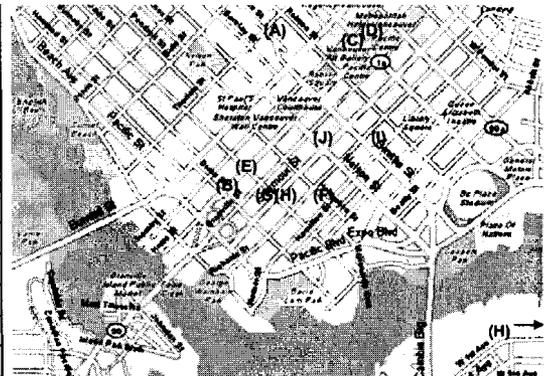
Florida (2002) and Lloyd (2006) both stress diversity and "the experiential life" as the foundations of a successful creative community, "options are what matter" (2002; p.285). Planners need to "build a people climate...interesting options...communities need to be open to diversity and invest in the kinds of lifestyle options and amenities people really want" (p.285). It seems as though Vancouver has really attempted to plan in this vein. Former Co-Director of Planning for Vancouver Larry Beasley continually sites "quality of place" and "experiential planning" in his speeches (UDI 2004). But Florida warns, and Lloyd concurs,

that cultural districts need to be seen as authentic, have indigenous roots and rise organically and locally to be successful (2002; p. 182).

With respect to the literature, making the connection with history is important for cultural planning in Vancouver. However, as for authenticity and rising 'organically', the Vancouver bonusing model tends rather to set the frame, establish the infrastructure, fertilize the scene and wait for magic to happen. If it does then the model was successful. It is rather early to tell with the Film Centre, but "the Cinematheque is great, they do a lot of supportive and other work" (Community Official). Table 6.1 illustrates the various cultural amenity facilities downtown.

Table 6.1: City Owned Facilities (smaller scale arts and culture venue)

Address	Year	Bonus recipient	Cultural Sector
745 Thurlow	1975	(A) City Stage*	Performing Arts
1125 Howe	1981	(B) Pacific Cinematheque	Film
1190 Hornby	1981	(C) Canadian Music Centre	Multidisciplinary/Music
925 W. Georgia	1988	(D) Canadian Craft Museum	Museum/Craft
938 Howe	1989	(E) Alliance for Arts & Culture	Multidisciplinary/Admin.
955 Richards	1999	(F) Contemporary Art Gallery	Art Galleries
677 Davie	2000	(G) Dance Centre**	Performing Arts
1133 Seymour	2001	(H) Film Centre	Film/Visual/Media
488 Robson	2003	(I) Art in Starts	Arts Education
819 Seymour	2004	(J) VCT/VO***	Multidisciplinary
160 West 1st	2006	(H) Playhouse Centre	Performing Arts



*No longer in existence **Not an Amenity Bonus (Heritage Bonus) *** Multifaceted Development

Source: Adapted from various City of Vancouver Reports

According to some, however, the City is "no longer interested in cultural amenities, they want community amenities like daycares" (Private Developer). While this trend is very upsetting to the developer who would much rather have cultural amenities as opposed to other social amenities in their pro-forma, Vancouver is clearly steering away from cultural bonusing for a period of time⁴⁷. There are a few reasons for this. (1) Facilities in downtown Vancouver will soon represent most recognized non-profit art forms, as deemed by the Cities Office of Cultural Affairs (CCTF Learning 2005). (2) "Amenity bonusing is a wonderful tool for a certain size and type of facility" (City official) of which Vancouver now has, or will soon have, substantial infrastructure. (3) There are fewer and fewer sites for rezoning⁴⁸ and

⁴⁷ Larger facilities with different levels of funding under the Cultural Precinct Plan have now taken over the agenda. At least until the Cities Creative City Task Force completes its final recommendations.

⁴⁸ Note: Amenity bonusing does not require rezoning. In bonusing, the added density (FSR) is only valid as long as the building stands; whereas in rezoning, the density is changed forever, and if the building, for example, burns, the amenity is not required to return upon rebuilding at the rezoned allowable density (City Official).

development sites in the downtown core. And (4) there are only so many successful cultural organizations that exist and could prove successful at running a business of a certain size (to be elaborated below). The concept of creative cluster and the synergies that are beginning to develop between facilities in Vancouver is new, according to the City's Office of Cultural Affairs (City Official). The interview data suggested that:

- *Diversity of options is key to a sustainable cultural district, but tangible infrastructure alone does not ensure successful delivery of diversity.*

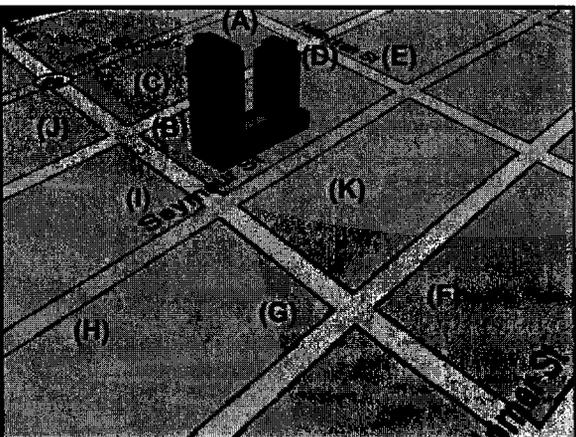
Successful cultural infrastructure is something that is hard to plan as many theorists suggest. It comes organically, like in Lloyd's neo-bohemia of Wicker Park Chicago, Zukin's Soho New York in the 1970's and Florida's Austin Texas and San Francisco Bay Area of the late 1990's (2002). There are policy tactics to promote 'organic' cultural development, but while those lie beyond the scope of this paper, their effectiveness can be attributed to the same prescription many gave for the Film Centre and the amenity program—achieving the right *balance* between tangibles and intangibles.

6.2.2 Eyes on the Street: Emery Barnes Park & Community Surveillance

The VIFC is a public facility. Its role is thus not only to serve the public's cultural interests, but wider community interests as well. The Film Centre's relationship with the future extent of Emery Barnes Park, and a neighborhood with many homeless people that access the nearby Gathering Place facility is worth noting. Currently, there are still businesses operating on Seymour across from the Film Centre, with leases that have not yet expired; but the City has refrained from enacting eminent domain on those properties. However, within the near future, almost the entire block between Davie and Helmcken, Seymour and Richards as illustrated in Table 6.2, will be a park.

Table 6.2: Significant Neighbours

Address	Site Description	storeys
(A) 1110 Howe	Holiday Inn	8
(B) 677 Davie	The Dance Centre	4
(C) 1150 Granville	Howard Johnson Hotel	7
(D) 1100 Granville	Chateau Granville Hotel	14
(E) 1067 Seymour	The Gathering Place	16
(F) 1188 Richards	Residential Tower	23
(G) 1225 Richards	Residential Tower	25
(H) 1238 Seymour	The Metropolis tower	29
(I) 1221 Seymour	Social Housing Tower	12
(J) 1212 Howe	Ramada Inn	15
(K) Rich/Sey/Davie	Future DT South Park	(2ha)



Source: Adapted from various City of Vancouver Reports

As one interviewee put it, the Film Centre has an important role as a neighbourhood steward for the increasing density in Downtown South of both residents and the homeless:

Given the problems in the city of Vancouver now with the problems of drugs use, homelessness, crime etc. the thinking of the city is that to have open spaces like that which are a bit at risk it's good to have eyes and ears on it. So in that sense [the Film Centre is] a better resident around this park than most because there are a lot of people coming and going, [they have] a lot of open glass as a façade, [they] look out there, and the idea is that it will feel a bit better being in that park and [they] can keep an eye on things and [they] can help also bring a sense of purpose to the city core. Cultural amenities are different than retail stores, they are a bit like parks, and they make a city feel more civilized and more different kinds of things going on and people have a reason for stopping not just going from point A to B but for stopping and being in a place (Cultural NGO 1).

This success of the VIFC as a neighbour, as another interviewee put it, differs depending on what members of the community you talk to:

Depends who you talk to of course. If you talk to street people who have fewer and fewer places to hide out....it's not a positive thing....there's fewer and fewer of those good bushes...cracks in buildings...little crevasses the homeless like to use....On the other hand, if you talk to certain street people, they may find some advantages....There are more people down here to hustle, there are more places and ways to break the law to fulfill some of their needs. Now on the extreme other side, of course, you have people who are moving into the community.... I see those people as having a positive experience (Community Official).

From this perspective, while the homeless have mixed opinions, which either way ultimately suggest the need for more social housing, the 'homed' residents of Downtown South may or may not like what is going on inside of the Film Centre (or perhaps not even know), but may

appreciate what it is doing for the public realm and public behavior. As Emery Barnes Park becomes completed and the Film Centre begins to show outdoor films to people in the park, via its exterior screen, the relationship between the areas homeless and homed, and the VIFC and Downtown South, will begin to be better understood.

There are numerous critics of use of public infrastructure as community surveillance (Fasche 2006; Zukin 1995). Where a discrepancy lies between the VIFC and these critics is in the nature and scale of the VIFC. Zukin vehemently criticized the dominion over public parks in New York by community watchdogs, but praised the role of heritage retention as a small victory for communities. Indeed the Film Centre imposes its symbolic authority of glass and steel over the 'purified' design of the downtown park- but does it symbolize the City as a 'stick' for misbehavior or the City as a 'carrot' to entice good behavior? The data on the VIFC as public steward will become more apparent as Emery Barnes Park is completed.

Until Emery Barnes Park is completed, some argue that the Film Centre is not entirely complete. If, in fact, the Centre experiences a resurgence upon the full build out of the park, it would be an extraordinary example of the importance of urban design.

7.0 Production Chain: Incubating the Film Sector

The Film Centre's panoply of social, ecological and economic objectives⁴⁹ are arguably part of a political appropriation by different interest groups seeking to utilize a public program for their benefit, and not under the GVIFFS's actual *cultural* mandate. While many claim that this is part of the strength of Vancouver's planning model (as outlined in Chapter 3), others remind us that the Centre is actually only in the business of running a cultural film institute. Spurring local businesses, creating cross facility synergies, symbolically acting as a good neighbor, securing downtown real estate; these are all ostensible strategies, but they are not part of the Film Centre's mandate.

What is, however, part of the Film Centre's mandate and the subject of great interest to the papers research question, is expressed in the VIFC mandate's 4th point: "to stimulate the motion picture industry in British Columbia and Canada." While points 1 and 2 (see: section 2.7) focus on community production, diversity and social capital etc., or what Evans (2005) refers to as the "culture as amenity", points 3 and 4 also suggest the importance of social capital but in the professional sense, or what Evans refers to as "the cultural economy" (Evans 2005; p.9). Otherwise put, how the centre can *incubate* the GDP-enhancing film industry. Incubate is just another word for stimulate, but alludes a spatial fixation, from the latin *incubare*, to lie upon—that stimulation happens in a controlled place. Questions related specifically to the VIFC's mandate, as outlined in Chapter 4, were heavily focused on the notion of cultural incubation. This chapter explores the interview data and brings to light stakeholder opinion in two broad categories: (7.1) the Hollywood North paradox and (7.2); the role of affordability, risk and certainty, and how various strategies attempt to spur the film industry.

7.1 The Hollywood North Paradox

The Hollywood North Paradox is simply one incarnation of the larger branch-plant paradox for which the Canadian economy is known (Gasher 2002). What is not intuitive to anyone who looks at the film industry in Vancouver is that if Vancouver has the talent, the locations,

⁴⁹The Film Centre as a 'cultural amenity' : a tool for economic and social development, is a prevalent debate amongst cultural urban theorists (Clark 2004; Evans 2005; Miles 2003; Florida 2002; Zukin 1995); but how cultural amenities actually incubate the Cultural products industry is not as well explored. This in some ways overlaps with Hawke's discrepancy between the meaning of culture and Culture.

the tangible and intangible infrastructure, etc. then why does Vancouver not have any significant locally *owned* production companies? Where is Vancouver's Cirque du Soleil, as one interviewee asked (Community Official)?

Strategies to rectifying the Hollywood North paradox are not new; but a successful strategy would be. The Film Centre does not claim to be *the* solution to the industry's difficulties, but it sees itself as playing an important role. This role can be as advanced as providing that critical link between high level distributors and production companies, or as simply as introducing school-aged children to the art of film: "so it's the whole spectrum, from the top of the pyramid of the people who are the most successful companies right down to really young, so far unpracticed filmmakers (Cultural NGO 1). Rectifying the Hollywood North paradox clearly does not have a single answer, but the way some of the answers *begin* seems rather simple:

I certainly think that for young film makers or emerging film makers, having a resource like the [Film Centre], where they can partake of this is tradition and history is essential, I think that most people who are writers read, and I think people who want to be film makers should see film, increasingly I think one of the things we observe in this sector is that often young people today might want to be Quentin Tarrantino, but they don't really care about the French New Wave or John Ford Westerns. That, I think is distressing for people believe that it is important for artist's love and appreciate and be well versed in the traditions, whether they want to break those traditions or rip off them or whatever, I do think it is a tremendous resource. For the general public of course also, but for film makers, I think it is one of the services [they] provide to the local film community (Cultural NGO 2).

Michael Gasher's book entitled *Hollywood North* (2002) is a quintessential piece that uncovers the history and political economy of the Hollywood North Paradox. The work goes into a detailed history of Canadian film production, of which British Columbia was a latecomer, and how early Provincial policies set the stage for its current state of foreign domination (Ibid.).

It's the old familiar story. In the movie business, BC residents are the hewers of wood and drawers of water for a seductive foreign culture – and Beautiful British Columbia itself stands in for less beautiful foreign parts, usually in the United States. The movie invasion of British Columbia by US producers may be good for Canada's economy, but what is it doing for our soul as a nation? In the circumstances, the nickname 'Hollywood North' takes on an ominously ironic ring (Gasher 2002; p.6).

The piece suggests that emancipation in the industry will only evolve if both natural and strategic solutions come to the fore. Through the artist's connection with space and natural inclination to tell stories, and the federal and provincial policy maker's recognition of the

importance of local production, BC has a chance at industry success. Gasher is very critical of policy that gives incentives to use B.C. as a site for exploitation: “The promotion of a BC film industry was meant to be exclusively an economic development initiative designed to attract foreign capital and create local jobs” without *any* interest in *cultural development* (2002; p.69). This was back in the 1980’s. Unlike other provinces, B.C. directed all of its attention to Hollywood based companies (Ibid.). In light of this history, the creation of the Film Centre does seem like a small part of a drastic policy departure. It is *cultural development* that is now seen as paramount. While most theorists agree that using culture to spur the economy is not new (Evans 2005, Clark 2002), there was a time when economic development was seen to help culture and not as much the reverse. In the case of the Film Centre, cultural development is seen to help, in part, the economy. So while the days when the *New York Times* once called Vancouver “The City That Can Sub for All of America” (Gasher; p. 6 2002), will hopefully end, what policies will see that day end remain to be seen.

- *The Film Centre focuses on cultural development and the ability to incubate at various levels. Its ability to nurture local production will help rectify the Hollywood North paradox.*

Film incubation is only one aspect of the Film Centre’s mandate. Alleviating the branch plant phenomenon that plagues the industry in Vancouver is an enormous task. However, how best to allocate programming resources to support film incubation is an important consideration.

7.2 Risk, Certainty and the Role of Affordability in Film Sector Incubation

The film sector is usually by far the largest city-specific creative industry in any city (Scott 2000), and Vancouver is no exception. The creative sector, according to one interviewee is

[Vancouver’s] fastest growing workforces [...with] the highest per capita concentration of artists in Canada....[O]ur facilities - from the incubation or creation to production and distribution needs to catch up the growth in the creative sector and we believe it is important to the City (City Official)

Vancouver has a plethora of “pre-production, post-production, writers, studios—which make up a critical part of Vancouver emerging as a creative destination” for film makers (Private benefactor). One interviewee in fact claimed, “my father was a television producer....my brother and sisters work in the film industry...[and] many people I grew up with either act, or are involved in television [or] film in some way” (Private Producer). That is the nature of film.

It is a very capital-intensive industry and has high multiplier effects (Gasher 2002; p. 10). As such it has political appeal and instigates a lot of public policy incentives for production. But there are different ways of achieving this.

Before briefly looking at how federal, provincial and municipal programs differ and corroborate on film incubation, and where the Film Centre sits within these strategies, the following section will look at the concepts of risk, certainty and affordability. These concepts appear again and again in the interview data and make up an important understanding for film incubation.

7.2.1 Mitigating Risk with Certainty and Centrality

The film business is risky. The reasons for this are numerous. Film can take a lot of investment and can be a very capital-intensive art form: “My first camera cost me over \$10,000 dollars...you don’t even want to know how I raised the money” (Private Producer)⁵⁰. But as Florida and many others argue, it is not the financial rewards that attract people to the creative industries; it is a whole host of other reasons. To mitigate these risks, many interviewees suggested that creating a central home for the local industry was a top priority.

It’s difficult to make it—these people are taking huge risks. The Film Centre acts like a ‘half-way house’- a film entrepreneur is a very risky job
The government needs to keep feeding the supply chain. It requires new people to continue to attract an ever-increasing amount of projects. The onus is on the policymakers/ individuals and entrepreneurs” (Private Benefactor).

The film entrepreneur is not the only player in the film industry. There are many cohorts. Many people work in the film sector, but as one interview put it, it is one thing to be a:

[T]echnician from BCIT or the [Vancouver] Film School working on films... [but] they are not film makers, they are technicians... A lot of people are making movies, but Canadians are not in the creative process...except for Quebec.... For all the money and all the films in Vancouver, it’s amazing that more [local] films aren’t being made (NGO Cultural 3).

Understanding the nature of the risks and how to best ameliorate these risks is important to film incubation. Understanding industry needs and understanding the entrepreneurial artist’s needs are vital to a successful Centre in terms of the wider film industry. One overarching

⁵⁰ Private Producer interviewed was in early stages of professional development and not yet a film entrepreneur, per se.

set of themes for the Film Centre was that of centrality, unity, commonality, a home base, a half-way house and of a 'centre': "The Film Centre is a place... for whatever stage the film was in. So we built a production level on the second level, so artists working in Vancouver could have a home base" (City Official). An economic expert echoed this sentiment and suggested that: "the Centre also offers a unique gathering space for the industry that is central and instantly recognizable" (Economic NGO). Another interviewee exclaimed that "every film made in Vancouver should premiere there" (Cultural NGO 3). Considering this desire for unity, one cannot ignore the Film Centre's relationship to Vancouver's other film institute, the Cinematheque. This relationship will be better explored in Chapter 8. However let it be stated that when exploring how to mitigate risk with the certainty of a central place or home, the implications of having two homes definitely changes that dynamic.

7.2.2 Affordability

The argument for the importance of affordability was made by one interviewee as follows:

We can't afford to become too expensive. The Creative Class disproportionately contributes to society and culture. In terms of their salaries and what they make—their ability to earn—they contribute way more. That's why we need to make it affordable for them. We must make Vancouver affordable for creative people, otherwise they will move (Private Benefactor).

Has the Film Centre achieved this? Well according to one interviewee they have, "tried to make the space affordable and certainly available; [they] have done everything [they] can to lay out the red carpet for people in the film and television industry" (NGO Cultural 1). But another industry expert suggested that the Film Centre has not yet shown itself to be a successful incubator for Canadian film:

It is unclear what their role, if any is with new Canadian films being released. This is one area they could focus on to better serve the needs of the industry....it has made strides—they partnered with other organizations....[t]hey also offer reduced rental rates for non-profit agencies and school organizations to use their facilities. But the VIFC is a new facility still in its early stages of development. It is hard to determine what impact they will have over the long term (Economic NGO).

Film production occurs on many scales; it can be capital intensive and supporting it through policy occurs on many levels. Having a policy toolkit with multiple tools is therefore an ideal environment for incubation. The NGO Economic Expert made that clear, and various theorists agree (Evans 2005; Scott 2000). However, the desire for unity, being recognizable,

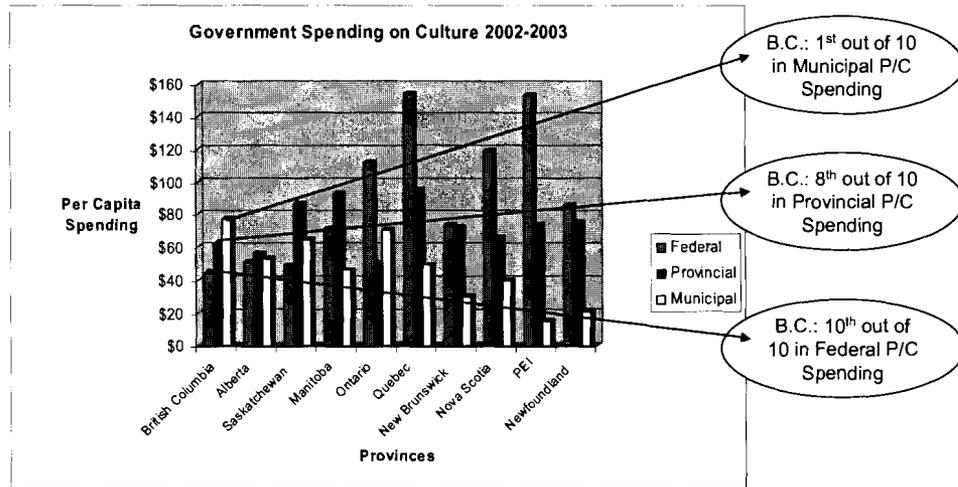
and having a common home can in some ways suffer when programs are diverted and mandates are not clear. Notably, many interviewees (even some experts) were surprised when they learned that film industry incubation was part of the Film Centre's mandate. Crystallizing this mandate by using industry feedback and with the help of other film institutes and experts could prove important for the creation of a centre with a distinct purpose and role that is not already being fulfilled by some other group.

7.2.3 Investment Expenditures & Strategies

There are many different levels of federal, provincial and municipal funding. Thus when comparing, one must be certain they are not looking at *apples and oranges*. The National Film Board, the BC Film Commission and Vancouver's Office of Cultural Affairs all have different strategies. These three bodies, for example, invest in movies and film in different ways and do so in a spatially uneven way. The NFB often provides grants to individual artists, the BCFC negotiates tax relief for film producers (one form of subsidy) and the VOCA provides grants to organizations.

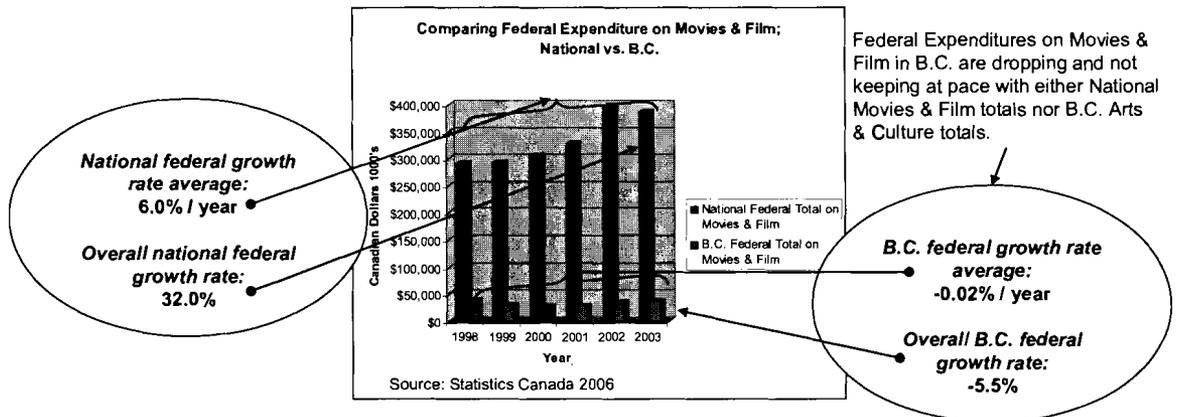
So when attempting a comparative analysis, different programs and federal, provincial and municipal programs must be viewed separately. However, despite all the differences in programs, "no matter how you cut it, British Columbia is usually tenth out of ten in funding from the federal government" (City Official). Vancouver funds the arts and culture and film sector more than most municipalities. Figure 7.1 illustrates the difference between the three levels of government investment streams. While Figure 7.2 used Statistics Canada Data, Figure 7.1 used data compiled by the City of Vancouver. However this data was also originally derived from Statistics Canada.

Figure 7.1: Comparing Federal, Provincial and Municipal Spending by Province



The data purposefully left out the territories because their per capita share was much higher than that of the provinces. Certain provinces have received substantial increases in per capita movie and film investments, but others, like B.C., only decreases. Figure 7.2 elaborates on that point and shows that while investment growth in the film sector is occurring nationwide, it is not happening in B.C.

Figure 7.2: Comparing Federal National and B.C. Expenditures



According to one interviewee this means B.C. does not get its fair share.

And so you wonder why Cirque du Soleil comes out of Quebec? Well, I know why Cirque du Soleil comes out of Quebec, because they support the arts community incredibly. With the Olympics coming up, and everybody is talking about BC, we have to have this big huge cultural thing, BC doesn't have it—so where are we going to get our culture from—well we're probably going to go to Cirque du Soleil (Community Official).

The Film Centre is clearly an attempt at bridging the federal and provincial funding gaps. It is a new type of facility. While an economic NGO expressed that we do know what does work in terms of policy, tax credit policies are clearly more in the vein of economic production than cultural production:

Policies such as the tax credit program have proven effective in encouraging production and maintaining a strong labour force. From a cultural perspective, organizations and government must work effectively with the industry - staying abreast of changes, needs and gaps in the labour force, maintaining a proactive policy that responds to and supports the community in doing its job (Economic NGO).

Film industry jobs are clearly vital to a healthy economy in British Columbia. But while the numbers are staggering, they do not compare to provinces such as Ontario and Quebec that have so much more federal and provincial investment (CCTF 2005).

8.0 Partnerships: Negotiating for Public Benefits

Amenity bonusing is largely a story about partnerships. The Film Centre is an example of what can be achieved through a Public/Private/Cultural NGO partnership. These types of partnerships exist in many cities around the world, but what is unique to amenity bonusing in Vancouver is:

Other cities tend to step out of the equation and leave that relationship between a non-profit and the developer... and they are always time limited, so the building still has those five or ten stories sitting up on that building, but the benefits are gone (City Official).

In Vancouver and in the case of the Film Centre, the time limit on the amenity is the life of the building. The process by which the negotiation takes place, which was elaborated in Chapter 3, is definitely one of the strengths of the program. The process utilizes comparative advantages and succeeds in consensus building. This project's interview data is close to unanimous about this⁵¹. But what the interview data also unearthed is that there are parts of the negotiating process that actually hindered the creation of "a truly great Film Centre" (Cultural NGO 2). The following chapter will explore the strengths and weaknesses of the partnerships in two categories: the pre-construction phase of dialogue and the post-construction dialogue.

8.1 Pre-Construction Dialogue

A description of the pre-construction dialogue was already explained in Chapter 3, and therefore will not be repeated. However, this section is interested in what can be learned from the interviews with respect to each conversation in the dialogue. Pre-construction dialogue can be separated into four main conversations: (1) NGO-Sponsor, (2) Developer-NGO, (3) City-Developer and (4) City-NGO.

Many other conversations did take place, such as the City-Sponsor exchange during the sign controversy and the City-Public exchange during City Plan's wide scale public consultation (among various other consultations (CCT)). However, the four main conversations analyzed in this study and to be elaborated in this section do provide some points of interest and intervention.

⁵¹ Except for resident opinion, the implications of this perspective highlight a need for further investigation of resident demand, and Vancouver demand.

8.1.1 NGO- Sponsor

The NGO-Sponsor dialogue is a very familiar exchange. And it always unfolds in the exact same way. The NGO asks: “do you want a sponsorship opportunity?” (Private Sponsor). Large institutions, especially those known for philanthropy are constantly bombarded with sponsorship ‘opportunities’. In such a competitive environment, knowing exactly the right fit is a complicated affair for a sponsor. The close to \$1 million granted to the VIFC by the Vancity Credit Union enabled the VIFC to get “the crème de la crème of video and film projection” (Cultural NGO 1). While there is a lot of criticism of the private sector sponsoring public venues, the private sponsor replies: “who’s going to take charge of cultural organizations? Who’s going to put back into the cultural sector? There has to be a formula” (Private Sponsor).

Part of the criticism of private sector involvement in the amenity program derives from a belief that the sponsor is piggybacking on a facility that is paid chiefly through publicly owned density rights, and not solely on sponsorship dollars⁵². The argument is about where the money is coming from and, in part, whether a private institution will be falsely recognized as a sole patron. Putting that criticism aside, public facilities cost money. Interview after interview acknowledged the difficulties cities have in funding facilities and that creative solutions through partnerships have to be generated⁵³. The developer’s point of view largely corroborates that of the sponsor:

A lot of cities are getting on board, because amenities are very expensive these days, I think it’s a super difficult challenge for them. They have desires, they want community centres and libraries and all of these different avenues that are extremely difficult to fund. It takes \$15 - 20 million to do a significant project, and if you’re only collecting DCC’s⁵⁴ or you’re collecting taxes it takes a long time to be able to create that. So we’ve found, obviously from the developers point of view, to work with a city that is open minded, and to work through different... it almost takes that creative mind to be able to move forward (Private Developer).

⁵² Some private theatres are getting sponsorship money as well—Illustrating the value of naming rights (Private Sponsor).

⁵³ CityPlan established the public’s needs and desire cultural facilities. The Cultural Facilities Priorities Plan established which facilities were needed. The Creative City Taskforce is now taking that information a step forward ().

⁵⁴ Actually called Development Cost Levies (DCL’s) this is a development cost tax revenue.

8.1.2 Developer- NGO

The Developer-NGO conversation was quite brief; it only lasted for the duration of the development application and construction; and on the surface was rather utilitarian. But this exchange actually produced a lot of added values for the respective parties. The VIFC was able to secure high quality design and detail for the public through this partnership. On top of the fact that the developer was so eager to complete and the architect had an affinity for theaters, the creation of a cultural amenity was good for the buildings identity and marketing:

I look back at the BRAVA, it helped certainly with the branding and the identity behind the project. It obviously gave it a story, right; I mean, you talk to these real estate marketers these days and it's all about creating a story around real estate; you know, it's just another condo building let's be serious; but, to be able to give it some identity and kind of create a story behind it, I think obviously having something like the Film Centre makes it that much easier, you're given a story, the BRAVA obviously was kind of like the Bravo- the whole showpiece- it was a campaign that they, rather than having to come up with something and really build it, it was already there for you (Private Developer).

While some may criticize this relationship as superficial, and 'market driven' in the pejorative sense, it must be noted that within the macro scale construction industry, developers do not usually talk to NGO's. Granted it is just another condo building, but admittedly it is a condo building with \$3.5 million publicly owned facility attached to it. Rather than a manufactured marketing campaign that may or may not work, the developer is given a story that is being told, in part, by a wider array of individuals with knowledge of Vancouver's downtown. In sum, this conversation was seen as positive, with a lot of potential for external validity and re-working to suit other public needs and in other municipalities.

8.1.3 City-Developer

The relationship between the City of Vancouver and the city's developers has a long and animated history of struggle and politics (Punter 2004)⁵⁵. Constant bickering, corrupt politicians, 'right' and 'left'-wing councilor debacles have been a mainstay at City Hall for

⁵⁵ This struggle is best symbolized by the 501 Wall Centre tower on Burrard Street, where the bottom half of the tower is enveloped in dark glass (not sanctioned by the Cities Development Permit Board), and the top half of the building adorned in clear glass with a bluish hue (recommended by the Urban Design Panel and approved).

decades (Ibid.); but when you really step back and look at the value a discretionary Development Permit Process provides, the BRAVA developer said:

The whole plan was there for everyone to review, I think that you, the developers are always going to say that it's too much, but I think when we look back and look at it I think it's basically \$14.50 a ft that's it.... But I think they brought some certainty, I think there are some other municipalities that aren't doing such a good job and they're putting things through a lot quicker, not consulting the developer as much as they probably could....[T]here is a beneficial relationship between the developer and the municipalities, and I think that it has taken key people and open minded people in the municipalities to make these kinds of things happen (Private Developer).

Apart from suggesting the external validity of the Vancouver Planning Model's use of amenity bonuses⁵⁶, this perspective suggests a couple of other policy implications: (1) the same way the City will always attempt to serve public interest by virtue of electoral politics, the developer will always prefer regulatory over discretionary measures by virtue of the short term costs of cooperation; and (2) as long as contrasting mandates in the form of strict discretionary guidelines and regulations provide for some *certainty*, developers are willing to cooperate. These suggestions support the importance of (1) City guidance and (2) development certainty in policy creation, but they highlight another aspect of the pre-construction dialogue that is worth paying attention to.

The city has wish lists of facilities and land sites in its plans. Developers are clearly interested in learning about these lists and how they could work such projects into their pro formas but:

These are never identified, so you don't know and in this day and age you never have enough time to necessarily tie up sites and spend a few months with the cities. We're buying based on what we know, so based on zoning, based on what are the certainties. And then, of course, once we get into conversation with the cities, we initiate the discussion...some developers have been able to come forward with ideas to create value for the city as well as themselves...with great successes...but...there are risks (Private Developer).

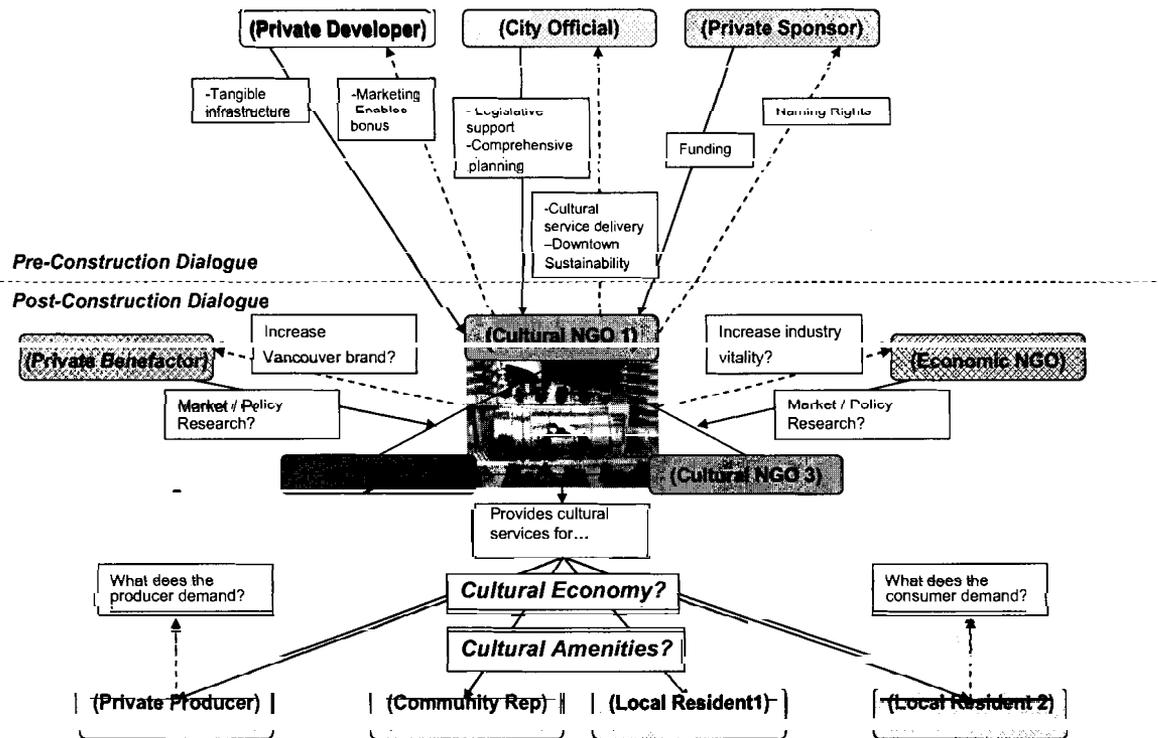
The Film Centre was unique insofar as the GVIFFS was coached by the City to approach the landowner of a site the City was interested in bonusing with a film

⁵⁶ Not only cultural, as many note such facilities are largely downtown oriented and have less viability in suburbs and areas of less density.

institute. Typically the developer initiates this discussion with the letter of intent at the Pre-Design conference stage (outlined in Chapter 3). Either way, the process at the pre-construction stage is rather secretive. Once the developer learns of the amenity potential, no time is left to waste. Massing, design, and shadow studies soon ensue and the only variable more important than certainty, *time* begins to be the developer's number one concern.

The issue of *time* will always be a prevalent factor in development applications. However in the name of swiftness "opportunities are missed...I think we missed an opportunity to do something really great [with a Vancouver Film Centre]" (like merge the two film institutes to create one centre) (Cultural NGO 2). So then how could the negative aspects of time limits be alleviated? How about exposing wish lists to the public domain and letting competitive forces fight for the best answers? While the thought may appear to be attractive: divulging City amenity wish lists (and/or land development sites with potential for bonuses) to the development community as public information would pose a lot of problems for the current permit structure. It would drive up speculation on land values and make obsolete the current amenity land residual calculation. The difference between pre- bonus and post-bonus land values would be so small and variable that there is no telling how much value the developer and public would reap. However, if somehow there was better communication between developers and the city, amenities may be better thought out without hampering development certainty and public value. This notion brings to light the longest standing and most important dialogue in cultural amenity sites, and that is the City-NGO interface. (Figure 8.1 Illustrates the various dialogues and places questions where the dialogue has not been developed).

Figure 8.1: Where Stakeholders fit within General Dialogue Structure



8.1.4 City-NGO

The City-NGO is the most important partnership in this case study for many reasons. (1) It has the longest running history (over twenty years); (2) the dialogue is on many levels (i.e. funding, promoting, personal etc.); and (3) their dialogue continues for the perpetuity of the NGO existing in that facility. The GVIFFS basically acts as an outsourced service delivery tool for the public, and is utilized for its expertise in their particular product (film). Cities around the world are beginning to see the importance of latching onto the experience of NGO's in cultural (or other forms of) service delivery (Evans 2005; p.59). Embracing civil society is a common incarnation of a devolving federal state and its value is argued as more efficient in some ways than federal parachute funding (Ibid.). But where this dialogue finds criticism in the interview data is in the post-construction stage.

8.2 Post- Construction Dialogue

In the post-construction phase, the stakeholders change roles and conversations. What is most interesting about the post-construction phase is all the new stakeholders that begin to get involved, as illustrated in Figure 8.1 above. The public engages in dialogue through its pocketbook, actions and word-on-the-street. Private benefactors get into the dialogue over benefits and strategies. Policy wonks and economic think-tanks begin to observe the incubation taking place or not taking place. Private producers are given options to exercise their demand. Many new stakeholders enter into the debates, but whether or not they are being heard is of utmost importance to this paper's central question and will be explored further in Chapter 9.

Now that the developer is gone and strata has taken over, and the sponsor keeps contact to ensure the marketing contract is being fulfilled—the city and NGO cooperate in running a Film Centre. The City possesses most of the authority and the NGO the responsibility. A lot of people like the amenity program and the facilities it produces:

Transparency is important, [we cannot have] creativity behind castle walls—the more approachable the better—people are more comfortable with their tax dollars being spent on things they can see and be involved in (Private Benefactor).

The City clearly understands this. Transparency is important. The City also understands that some facilities wither and fail. That is why the City places a host of “checks and balances” to ensure public cultural benefits for the people of Vancouver and beyond (City Official). But while the City does so much to protect this dialogue and ensure success, it is not without criticism:

[The GVIFFS] simply reproduce their organization...What motivates the [Film Centre] to succeed? We want to judge. We need more accountability. I question the model... [they] protect their turf too much....They just try to survive as an organization (Cultural NGO 3).

However, as another interviewee pointed out,

But [the dialogue] is not around, it's not directly or explicitly around justifying our occupation of this cultural space... it has to do with our annual operating grant...they ask questions each year. How do you service Vancouver's diverse communities, and related questions? They ask you what are you doing, what kind of programming are you providing each year, and how are you reaching out to communities in the

diverse communities etc., etc. So those are all questions, which are asked in the annual operating grant application (Cultural NGO 2).

The post construction dialogue between the City and VIFC is well established and has precedent. This is according to many interviews the real reason behind any success that this program may have. However, in dealing with a wider array of cultural facilities that are governed through this relationship, the dialogue for these new cultural planning 'experiments' needs to be strengthened.

9.0 Conclusion: Performance Indicators

Does the Vancouver International Film Centre exemplify sustainable cultural infrastructure? Clearly this project has not been able to answer yes or no, and never intended to, but it has brought to light certain principles and themes which may enable a better performance assessment of the VIFC and other amenities as time goes on.

This project will conclude by reiterating perspectives in the data that brought to the surface important considerations for the Centre as sustainable cultural infrastructure in terms of *cross-institutional dialogue, cultural diversity and cultural development*. This project acted as a background study to assess what different perspectives were, and did not seek to do any measurement pre say. Rather, this project sought to establish a body of background knowledge, which could inform a future study. The following four conclusions, which lead to potential indicator generation, have been unearthed by this project.

#1: Understanding Film Centre (cultural amenity) user psychology

To increase the VIFC's capacity to provide *cultural diversity* to Vancouverites, staying in tune with user psychology is important. Understanding what cultural film products people desire is essential in order to understand what to provide. Understanding both the people of Vancouver's desires and preferences for film products and services, as well as that of industry is key for sustainable cultural service at the Film Centre. City Plan in 1995 established an *overall* demand for arts and cultural services, but with (1) recent increases in the City's cultural infrastructure; (2) more people living in denser agglomerations, where amenities are shared; and (3) an increasingly heterogeneous population; arts and culture and Film Centre data, needs to be more specific.

What needs to be understood goes beyond blanket support for arts and culture and Film Centre spending. The type of data to be collected should include people's demands for genres, classes, languages and countries of origin. This data should also be understood in terms of demographics in order to understand which cohorts are having their desired products and services offered. This data should be tracked and cross tabulated. For while 80% of Vancouverites claimed in City Plan to want more tax dollars spent on cultural infrastructure, whether or not they would actually patronize the facilities is something that was assumed but has not materialized.

#2: Understanding Film Centre (cultural amenity) user actions

The difference between user psychology and user actions is that, with cultural amenities, there is a difference between what people say they want, and what people actually do. As such, while non-economic demands are vital to cultural sustainability, effective user demand should not be overestimated and needs to be measured in relation to numerous variables. *Demographic data* and the effective demand for *various Film Centre products and services*

should be tracked and cross tabulated⁵⁷. This data could be collected in partnership with other bodies that may reap benefit from such a study, and it could be used to track changes and could provide vital information for the Centre's 'effective' success. This data could prove relevant for latent demand. Because as the Film Centre tries to reinvent itself, understanding what users want may help this process. Collection of this data would be very relevant if it were initiated before the completion of Emery Barnes Park. The City's current Creative City Taskforce is undertaking related studies, and based on the findings of this project, such studies should continue.

While the Film Centre aids in diversifying cultural options and adds to the *Vancouver* brand at a variety of scales, its ability to establish its own brand and niche has not been as strong although should be. Categorically *who* is currently using the Centre and *why and how* they could use it more is an important understanding to have—speaking to industry and understanding the reality of new media are very important considerations in the Film Centre re-inventing itself. The 'guess and check' method is obviously much too costly. If their niche is overlapping and their identity is not central, than how could a non-overlapping niche affect its brand?

#3: Listening to Locals

While films from around the world are a vital source of knowledge for movie-lovers, aspiring film makers, and cinephiles, the value of local cultural production was held as especially important by every stakeholder. Screening local production was seen as an important opportunity for Vancouver's local film talent and aspiring producers to tell *their* stories. Numerous interviewees felt that increasing the screening of local production could improve Vancouver's indigenous film community. Clearly the VIFC has an 'international' mandate, which makes up most of the NGO's area of expertise. But by paying close attention to and tracking the effects of "Canada Screens" and the marketing of their local repertoire the VIFC may learn something important about its audience, and aid in its desired reinvention.

#4: Listening to Critics

What group or groups express criticism of how the Centre functions, and what are their claims? Criticism, even in its most 'radical' and 'extreme' forms is the best conceptual performance indicator. Even if the criticism is entirely unwarranted, it still serves its purpose by reiterating, and perhaps clarifying the mandate. And some criticisms, of course, make suggestions which help improve or ameliorate the present cultural mandate of the organization. Institutional bridging was the fundamental aspect of success of the public/private/ NGO partnership that developed the Film Centre. Now that the Centre is running, bridging with other groups now is a very important step. In other city-cultural NGO partnerships, citing criticism, year after year, would prove counterproductive to a group that is trying to justify its existence and retain funding and support. Under the Cultural Amenity Bonus Program, however, the last thing the City wants is for the Film Centre to fail. Citing criticism from cooperating organizations is a helpful tool, not for political infighting, but for cross institutional dialogue and for cultural sustainability.

⁵⁷ The value of gathering data for the Film Centre should not be underestimated. If the Centre is not filling up, what would it have to lose by giving away 2 for 1 passes to Films and other incentives. Such gestures should be handed out liberally for participation in data collection. Not only would this aid in marketing, but it would also add to increased sales. Such data should be collected on a yearly basis.

These conclusions were derived from various themes that were uncovered from the unstructured interviews. This project was clearly interested in learning about sustainable cultural infrastructure through the Film Centre, and was aimed to inform a relatively new and important subject area.

Appendix A: City Principles of Sustainability

1. Today's decisions must not compromise the choices of our children and future generations.
2. We are all accountable for our individual and collective actions.
3. Resources must be used fairly and efficiently without compromising the sustainability of one community for another.
4. Using renewable resources is encouraged and supported, while the use of non-renewable resources should be minimized.
5. Renewable resource consumption should not exceed the rate of regeneration.
- 6. Strong collaboration and open communication between the public, the business sector, and all levels of government are important.**
- 7. We value cultural, economic, and environmental diversity.**
- 8. A community should provide a safe, healthy, and viable setting for human interaction, education, employment, recreation, and cultural development.**
9. A sustainable Vancouver contributes to, and provides leadership towards, regional, provincial, national, and global sustainability.
10. The Vancouver economy should move forward from its dependence on non-renewable carbon based fuels, particularly for transportation, which are likely to fluctuate dramatically in price and supply.

Source: Creating a Sustainable City [Online] available at <http://vancouver.ca/ctyclerk/cclerk/020423/rr3.htm> accessed: 28/01/06

Appendix B: Sample Interview Questions

A: Interview Questions: NGO (Cultural//Economic)

B: Interview Questions: Public Sector (City/Federal//Community/Resident)

C: Interview Questions: Private Sector (Developer/Sponsor/Producer/Benefactor)

A: The Non Governmental Organization Sample

i(*Brief Overview*): Briefly describe what your organization does?

ii(*Personal Experience*): Describe your background/ experience with the organization?

iii(*Community*): What members of society does your program reach? What is your program's relationship with the adjacent neighborhood? What other groups is your program affiliated with?

2: The Amenity Program

i(*City Issues*): What is your program's relationship with the City of Vancouver?

ii(*Landlord Issues*): What is your program's relationship with your building's developer/ property manager?

iii(*Infrastructure Issues*): What is the current state of the facility? Do you feel there are any infrastructure concerns that need to be addressed? Are these concerns physical or intangible?

3: Cultural Sustainability

i(*Incubators*): Do you see your organization as an 'incubator', otherwise put, an organization which develops cultural producers? If so, in your opinion how and why is it important to be involved in cultural production? If not, where do you believe cultural producers should come from?

ii(*Consumption vs. Production*): Do you believe there are any merits in turning what would be merely cultural consumers into actual cultural producers? If so, in your opinion how does cultural production relate to cultural sustainability? If not, what does cultural sustainability mean to you?

iii(*Creative Industries and Cultural Sustainability*): The Cultural Amenity Bonus Program came from theories on cultural sustainability which suggest creative 'incubator' organizations are crucial components in a culturally sustainable city. How do you feel this program has thus far succeeded in advancing cultural sustainability? What improvements do you think could be made to the program in advancing cultural sustainability?

iv) Is there anything else you would like to share with me?

B: Interview Questions: City Employee

B: The Public Sector Sample (City Official)

i(*Brief Overview*): Briefly describe what the Cultural Planning Department does?

ii(*Personal Experience*): What is your background and experience with the City?

iii(*The Amenity Program*): Can you comment on some of the history, intentions and successes and/or failures of the Amenity Bonus Program? When where and how was the program initiated? What role does the program play in advancing your department's goals? What are some of these goals?

2: The Amenity Program

i(*NGO Issues*): Could you describe the nature of the relationship between the Cultural Planning Department and the NGO's involved in the amenity program?

ii(*Developer Issues*): Could you describe the nature of the relationship between Cultural Planning Department and building developers involved in the amenity program?

iii(*Infrastructure Issues*): Do you feel the amenity program is doing a sufficient job in providing both enough physical and intangible infrastructure to the NGO's? Do you feel there are any infrastructure concerns that need to be addressed? Are these concerns physical or intangible?

2: Cultural Sustainability

i(*Consumption vs. Production*): Do you believe there are any merits in turning what would be merely cultural consumers into actual cultural producers? If so, in your opinion how does cultural production relate to cultural sustainability? If not, what does cultural sustainability mean to you?

ii(*Incubators*): What role do you think incubators play in developing cultural producers? In your opinion how and why is it important be involved in cultural production?

iii(*Creative Industries and Cultural Sustainability*): The Cultural Amenity Bonus Program came from theories on cultural sustainability which suggest creative 'incubator' organizations are crucial components in a culturally sustainable city? How do feel this program has thus far succeeded in advancing cultural sustainability? What improvements do think could be made to the program in advancing cultural sustainability?

iv) Is there anything else you would like to share with me?

C: The Private Sector Sample (Developer)

i(*Brief Overview*): Briefly describe what type of projects your company is involved in?

ii(*Personal Experience*): What is your background and experience in developing?

iii(*The Amenity Program*): Can you comment on some of the history, intentions and successes and/or failures of becoming involved in the Amenity Bonus Program? When where and how was the program initiated in your experience? What role does the program play in advancing your objectives as a developer?

2: The Amenity Program

i(*NGO Issues*): Could you describe the nature of the relationship between your company and the NGO's involved in the amenity program?

ii(*Developer Issues*): Could you describe the nature of the relationship between your company and the Cultural Planning Department?

iii(*Infrastructure Issues*): Do you feel the amenity program is doing a sufficient job in providing enough both physical and intangible infrastructure to the NGO's? Do you feel there are any infrastructure concerns that need to be addressed? Are these concerns physical or intangible?

3: Cultural Sustainability

i(*Consumption vs. Production*): Do you believe there are any merits in turning what would be merely cultural consumers into actual cultural producers? If so, in your opinion how does cultural production relate to cultural sustainability? If not, what does cultural sustainability mean to you?

ii(*Incubators*): What role do you think incubators play in developing cultural producers? In your opinion how and why is it important be involved in cultural production?

iii(*Creative Industries and Cultural Sustainability*): The Cultural Amenity Bonus Program came from theories on cultural sustainability which suggest creative 'incubator' organizations are crucial components in a culturally sustainable city? How do feel this program has thus far succeeded in advancing cultural sustainability? What improvements do think could be made to the program in advancing cultural sustainability?

iv) Is there anything else you would like to share with me?

Appendix C: History of the DODP

The Cultural Amenity Bonusing Program was first initiated in 1975 under the Downtown Official Development Plan (DODP), but its roots go back much further and its role today is ever evolving. How it was initiated, how it was tested and where it stands today are all questions that highlight the unique nature of Vancouver's planning model, and where the cultural amenity bonus fits within it. By looking at: (2.2) the birth of the Downtown Official Development Plan of 1975; (2.3) an overview of cultural infrastructure in Vancouver and the role amenity bonuses play within it; and (2.4) the cultural amenity bonusing process at 1181 Seymour Street, a contextual history of the amenity program and its creation of the Vancouver International Film Centre will be painted.

The Birth of the Downtown Official Development Plan 1975

In the early 1970's, Vancouver's urban planning framework underwent a major shift. While the pre 1970's were characterized by a regulatory, federally sponsored, modernist approach, the post 1970's evolved into a discretionary system characterized by increasing levels of city control, public consultations, design review, and other iterative and collaborative approaches (Punter 2003). The DODP legislated this shift and had a significant impact on the land development process in Vancouver's Downtown ever since (Harvey).

The Downtown Official Development Plan of 1975 was born out of a unique political climate. It was really a combination of public pressure, political will and an accommodating bureaucratic framework. As such: (1) due to strong public reactions to particular forms of development (2) city council and the planning department's development process changed, and (3) thanks to the powers of the planning department and the Vancouver Charter, the City of Vancouver had legislative authority to create the DODP. The genesis of the DODP is important to the story of cultural amenity provision, not only because it explains how this was politically sanctioned, but it explains what is politically possible and what Vancouverites care about.

Towards the end of the Non-Partisan Association's (NPA) near monopolistic reign of Council (from 1937-1972), Vancouver's public became very disgruntled with downtown development. Neighbourhood crushing highways, unsightly commercial "towers of darkness", underground malls and perceptions of widespread corruption, saw community groups and Vancouver's public screaming for change (Punter 2003;p. 23). Poor planning was undoubtedly the claim;

who was making that claim, however, is also an important part of the story. Vancouver's social demographics were changing. Citizens began demanding more than (Hasson & Ley 1994;). The NPA, "favoured business leadership, efficient and lean government, and generally discouraged public participation" (Punter 2003; p.13). But this tactic clearly no longer worked, and Vancouver citizens elected a new council, with a new plan in mind.

The newly elected TEAM council had social objectives and a bureaucratic plan of attack. Downtown Vancouver was to become liveable and neighbourly. In reaction to the failed social utopian promise of modernism, TEAM's succession represented a new vision, and the answer lied in the medium, not the message. Development in downtown failed because of one simple yet profoundly large oversight: the importance of dialogue. Regulatory planning does not harbour dialogue. In a regulatory framework, developers are given minimums and maximums without any regard for context. Loopholes are dug and streamlines are charted. The urban landscape thus emerges in an information depleted and disjointed array of objectives, with the human face of neighbourhoods wiped off to development agenda. However, in a discretionary framework, ultimately the brainchild of the TEAM council and their respective planning staff, the developer, city and public engage in a dialogue aimed at ensuring liveability. "Neighbourliness" was the mantra, and the DODP became the manifesto of Vancouver's collaborative planning approach. But while its creation can be thanked to nuanced social theory and a politically active public and their socially progressive municipal leaders; higher levels of government cannot be left out of the story.

The discretionary planning model was a locally driven innovation; but (1) could not have been possible without the powers of self-government enabled by the Provincially granted Vancouver Charter of 1953 and (2) cannot be viewed in a vacuum without a clear understanding of the broader climate of Federal de-regulation, cuts to funding, and what some call Neo-Liberalism. Thus, the DODP was both a creature of the province and a reaction to the state. And if public objectives weren't going to be achieved through federal funding: "cities had to use such regulatory controls as zoning to achieve their public objective" (xvii try to use new quote from later chapter on zoning)

The DODP was created with a liveable and neighbourly Downtown Vancouver in mind. Its guidelines stress the importance of: design, amenity, public realm, population growth, sustainability and a flexible bureaucracy. Flexibility was not only one of the goals of the plan, but also a principle without which the plan would have never been conceived. TEAM reformed various aspects of permit processing and discretionary zoning and with the creation

of a new Development Permit Board and the Design Review Panel, the DODP became a new tool for a new bureaucracy. While much of this tool acted as a regulatory tool, its interpretive capacity is what gave it its success (). While land-use density in terms of floor space ratios, parking and loading are regulated in the plan, with minimums and maximums; permitted building heights and social and recreational amenities and facilities were slated as interpretive. This interpretive clause in the By-law was the pivotal distinction in the creation of the Amenity Bonus Program.

I give entire credit to the group that wrote the current city Official Development Plan....it set the permitted outright at a fairly reasonable level, and that we have had the right to look at....the kind of amenities that we now think are important in the downtown.... and that we've had the ability to look at whole communities so development rights don't allow developers to build just anything as of right (City Official).

As such, this interpretive clause is a discretionary policy tool used by the city as a negotiating mechanism for the development permit process on behalf of various cultural communities in Vancouver. The Bonus Program is part of what John Punter calls the "Vancouver Achievement"—where Punter argues that a unique blend of American style pro-development policy cross-fertilized with staunch proscriptive European planning principles has labeled Vancouver, year after year, as one of the world's most liveable cities (2003; p.3). But what makes Vancouver unique? Why study the City of Vancouver's cultural policy programs when everyone seems to be hopping on the amenity bandwagon?

Granted, other cities use and create cultural amenities for a variety of political purposes. Clark (2002) argues that an entirely New Political Culture (NPC) has been created, and amenities are dominating policy creation in cities. Neoliberal and Regulation theorists extend this argument and suggest that 'culture' and 'creativity' have become ubiquitous and hegemonic and are simply the results of capitalism re-inventing itself in the crisis of post-industrialism. While these analyses are in many ways insightful in the non-normative domain, they do have a propensity for ecological fallaciousness in assuming what is true for the whole is true for the individual case. And they fail to see any normative hope or benefit to incremental change to extant cultural urban policy. Cities are accused of focusing on soft political issues, i.e. everyone likes culture, and ignoring harder ones, i.e. what about affordable housing? So Vancouver *can* be accused of hopping on the amenity bandwagon,

but for sake of analogy, it is a wagon that has a history and focus that is unique to contemporary cultural facilities planning⁵⁸.

⁵⁸ More to be said about this debate and where culture fits into livability to be elaborated in Chapter 3

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