

254 6689

FAX 255-0790  
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## LABOUR-WELFARE PARTY

The following is the platform of the LWP with regard to the November 16, 1996 civic election in Vancouver. These proposals do not mark the limits of the progressive ambitions of the party but rather are a list of reforms currently within the constitutional, legal, and financial means of city-hall to enact. We are painfully aware that real and permanent social improvement will require powers and methods far beyond those proscribed in the Vancouver Charter. We are running in this election because we believe the modest reforms we are proposing would greatly enhance the quality of life for many Vancouverites. As a group we have a longer term vision of a radically changed city-region. Participating in this election, at this time, is part of our strategy for arriving at this goal.



### 1. Revenue Enhancement

Not counting money the City of Vancouver collects for other levels of government; the City itself should collect in taxes about \$552 million in 1996. There are 28 different types of tax some of which are more susceptible to increase than others. The general purpose tax levy (property tax) brings in \$328 million, Business licensee fees bring in \$9.9 million. The Hotel tax brings in \$6.8 million while parking meters bring in \$6.6 million. The LWP believes these particular taxes should be more than doubled such that the city government would have an extra \$400 million to work with. This money would be used in addition to the funds currently being spent on existing services hence would allow new programs such as social housing and day-care to be expanded without subtracting from what is already being spent on other departments.

We believe the property tax increases should be levied on the more expensive houses and the larger, more established, businesses. Likewise business licensing increases should be levied on the larger businesses (office towers, shopping malls etc.) with many smaller start-up endeavors being allowed to operate license free.

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increased parking costs will serve the twin objectives of raising revenue and penalizing automobile usage.



### 2. Public Housing

The city's housing situation is appalling. Scores of thousands of people live in substandard rooms while thousands of others are completely homeless. Most of the money going to welfare recipients is actually going to wealthy slumlords who own rancid hotels and dilapidated houses. City-Hall, through the City of Vancouver Public Housing Corporation, clearly has the authority to engage in major public housing projects. (it currently operates 11 apartment complexes.)

We advocate spending \$250 million a year on new social housing projects. We estimate that by using city land, and efficient architectural designs, over 5,000 comfortable housing units could be built per year. Local low income persons, particularly those on social assistance would be given first choice to move into these low rent projects. These housing projects in turn would quickly become major sources of income for the City. Over the course of three years 15,000 units, with an approximate average \$400 monthly rental, could be built giving the City over \$60 million per year in additional revenues. In a nutshell this proposal would tax the rich to house the poor and would leave the mainstream working class financially unaffected.



### 3. Transportation

Greater Vancouverites now possess 750,000 private automobiles, many of which pass through the City of Vancouver every day. The private automobile is an outrageous waste of human and material resources and is an unacceptable public health risk. Cars are the number one cause of pollution and injury in our city. Cars consume far more labour and material than they warrant as a mode of getting people around. They are a highly inefficient form of transportation. We are aware that many even in the working class are attached to their cars however we believe this is the result of insecurity, advertising and inadequate public transit. We want

FAX 604-736-4187


ALLEN GARR

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to see the private car replaced as much as possible by electric mass transit and the bicycle. We believe this could be accomplished by:


- a) designating several main streets Hastings, Broadway, Cambie, Kingsway as being bike-and-trolley-only roads;
- b) developing a city-wide network of bicycle paths and bicycle only lanes;
- c) increasing taxes substantially on all residences with garages and driveways;
- d) increasing taxes on parking lots and increasing parking meter charges and fines;
- e) subsidizing the expansion and frequency of the trolley network;
- f) facilitating a change whereby bicycle racks and storage space be placed n buses;
- g) making the downtown core, and the university routes, fare free.

We expect to spend to \$40 million a year toward this project.



#### 4. Day-Care

Through the City's Community Services Grant Program the City currently hands out \$862,418 (1995) to over 50 day-care centres. The grants range from \$2,000 to \$100,000 but are typically around \$10,000. We believe the entire community should contribute to the work and cost of child-rearing and as such we believe the amount spent on childcare should be increased to \$30 million. Our main goal here is to increase accessibility of day-care for low income women. In furtherance of this we believe the city could finance a cost effective network of day-care co-operatives staffed largely through the volunteer efforts of single mothers and high school home-ec. students.



#### 5. Gardening

The City currently has ample amounts of under-utilized land that could be put to agricultural purposes. The City owns 181 parks, 3 full size golf courses and thousands of hectares of boulevards and roadsides which could produce a large amount of food. Rooftops of buildings could also be put to agricultural use. City-

Hall actively discourages people from turning their front lawns into gardens and it plants only trees and bushes of an ornamental, non-food, bearing nature. Vast areas of park land are given over to lawn grass while volunteer community gardeners are provided with only pitifully small plots on which to plant. Lawn grass requires as much work and material as does a garden yet it is overwhelmingly the main crop grown in Vancouver merely because it appeals to quirky ascetics of the dominant class.

The LWP believe the City should convert the bulk of parkland, golf courses, and empty lots to gardening. Community gardeners should be given free rein on parks and boulevards—with City subsidy. Private residences should be financially penalized for planting grass and non-food bearing trees and bushes while at the same time rewarded for doing the reverse. The City should commission a well funded, labour-intensive department to convert un-used land to agriculture. A program should be implemented whereby all new City trees be berry or fruit bearing species. This same department could (free of charge) plant, tend, and harvest gardens on private residences should the owners of those properties not be willing to invest the necessary labour and capital. This department could also develop rooftop gardening wherever building structures could bear the load. The food harvested from the above sites could either be sold commercially, at cost, or donated to food-banks. The result would be a greener more attractive city with an additional bonus of cheaper food. An additional \$20 million per year should be provided for these purposes.



## 6. Drugs & Crime & Public Health

The City currently has tens of thousands of hard-core drug addicts and many more occasional or recreational illicit drug users. The "Drug War" singles out hemp, opiates, and cocaine for attack while irrationally leaving alcohol, nicotine, and caffeine for wide distribution. Criminalization of certain drugs merely increases prices and drives users and addicts into hiding. Much of the petty crime (car break-ins, prostitution) are done to pay inflated drug costs. Drug overdose is the leading cause of death amongst Vancouver youth and drug related illness and injury are major health problems in the area. The City currently contributes to the madness of the drug war by the financing of the Police Vice/Narcotic squad to the tune of \$85,000 per month. This squad currently accosts and/or arrests about 150 people

per month yet does little to stem the flow of hard-drugs into the city because these drugs come from lucrative foreign operations owned by politically protected people. All the narcs are doing are sabotaging the lives of, and terrorizing, a community of persons whose only crime is to suffer from poverty and addiction.

We are aware the City does not have the constitutional authority to legalize drugs. However there seems to be nothing stopping the City, as its contribution to ending the drug war, from canceling the funding of the narcotic squad. The City could also spend the money saved from the Vice/Narcotic squads liquidation on better detox and rehab facilities. In addition to this the City should establish a network of properly funded Harm Reduction Centres complete with safe fixing sites.



## 7. Smoking

Recently the City has enacted a series of by-laws designed to restrict smoking in public places. We view this as the thin edge of the wedge of a move to criminalize nicotine and hence to do to cigarette smokers what has already been done to consumers of hemp and opiates. We view the recent efforts harass smokers as a sinister, unnecessary, social disruption. Hence we would immediately repeal all by-laws of this nature. We believe peoples right to choose to smoke has to be respected. The LWP thinks the best approach is one which balances smokers and non-smokers rights and would allow for a designated percentage of public places (25%) to allow smoking. Notwithstanding the LWP does not support the tobacco cartel and would prohibit cigarette advertising and promote better understanding of the harmful affects of smoking.



## 8. End Classism at the Office of Cultural Affairs

The City spends about \$1.5 million per year (1995) subsidizing music. With the exception of the \$62,000 given to the Vancouver Folk Music Society all the money goes to "classical" music. The Vancouver Symphony Orchestra gets \$709,000, the Vancouver Opera gets \$257,000, the Bach Choir gets \$60,000 and so on. Hence the

upper classes are getting their favorite music subsidized while the music of the lower classes gets neglected.

We believe that at least equal amount of money should go to popular music (such as rock) as is going to classical. Hence we propose that \$1.5 million per year be given in grants to aspiring pop bands. We believe this program would have the spin-off of making Vancouver a Mecca for modern popular musicians.



### 9. Recycling

Currently too much of the city's sewage is simply being dumped into the rivers in an untreated fashion. We believe that much of what is classified as garbage, tin and cardboard, could be recycled. Relying entirely on individual consumer effort is not nearly as effective as addressing the problem as is a properly financed sanitation department. We believe that an additional \$20 million per year should be allocated to converting sewage into fertilizer and other recycling initiatives. We also propose that the city pay the cost of any dwelling unit occupant who wishes to convert their toilet to a compost toilet. Our recycling proposals, needless to say, compliment our urban gardening proposals, through the provision of free fertilizer.



### 10. Violence against Women

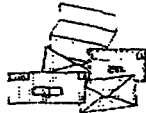
Rape, domestic assault, and sexual harassment are wide-spread in our city yet the police and authorities do little about it. We believe a change in police priorities could go along way to exposing and reducing these problems. We believe the police force itself should be 50% female and that this would aid the refocussing of its crime reduction efforts. Also more money could go to shelters for persons at risk of becoming victims of these crimes and hence will spend \$10 million per annum thusly. At the same time we believe the police should be used in child apprehension

cases only where there is clear evidence of immediate danger to the child in question.



### 11. Library Expansion

Vancouver Public Libraries are an important cultural asset and one that can be accessed by all classes of citizens. Current problems stem from inadequate funding which limits the amount of required books and materials and frequently reduces the operating times to "bankers hours". We believe the VPL's budget should be increased from \$26 million to \$36 million with a view to increasing materials and expanding hours of service.



### 12. Welfare for First Three Months

Presently many new arrivals to our city are forced into homelessness and crime due to the NDP's three month residency requirement for collecting welfare. We believe the city should assist these persons until such time as they find employment or are eligible for GAIN. This will probably cost \$10 to \$20 million per year.



### 13. Jobs

Many of the above described initiatives (housing, gardening, daycare, music and recycling) will have the added benefit of reducing unemployment in Vancouver. We estimate 10,000 well paid, full time jobs would be directly created through these initiatives and even more work would be indirectly created through spin-offs and the expansion of the local economy. Hiring practices will targeted to favour those currently living in poverty in Vancouver.

**On Saturday, November 16,  
VOTE**



**LWP**

LABOUR WELFARE PARTY  
COUNCIL CANDIDATES

1. shane DELARUE
2. william w. KAY
3. ann LIVINGSTON
4. matt McGRATH
5. sharai MUSTATIA
6. martha ROBERTS
7. lani RUSSWURM
8. anthony RYDER
9. joseph X

**It's an act of solidarity with the  
working class and unemployed!**

**It's an act of protest against the one-  
party (NPA/COPE/VOICE) system!**

**And remember you can register to  
vote on the day of the election!**

**FOR MORE INFO. CALL:  
251-6626**