UnCommon Ground:
Creating Complete Community at The University of Victoria

A Discussion Paper by
Jason Found & Michael M'Gonigle

March 2005
UnCommon Ground:  
Creating Complete Community at The University of Victoria

About Us

THE POLIS PROJECT on Ecological Governance is a research group that seeks to discover and implement solutions to pressing issues that can build healthy and sustainable communities. Our goals are to bring the community back into political life, to invigorate an ecosystem context for institutions, to revitalize innovative businesses, and to discover constructive new opportunities for government agencies and the state itself. With our combination of academic research and activist intervention, we aim to dismantle the notion of the environment as merely another sector, and bring it into the mainstream where it belongs, as a core value in all aspects of our society. Most recently our work has focused on sustainability in our own backyard: the university as an object and potential model for sustainability.

POLIS is affiliated with the University of Victoria through the Eco-Research Chair at the Faculty of Law and the Faculty of Environmental Studies.

Acknowledgements

We wish to thank all those who provided comments and feedback in the many stages of this study. We would especially like to thank Britt Erickson, Joe Van Belleghem, Moura Quayle.

The authors would like to express their special appreciation to Briony Penn for her inspired artwork and to Jessica Boquist for her contributions and lively design throughout the report.

The authors also wish to acknowledge their debt to Diana Porter and Theresa Peters’ for their early research on this topic, particularly their unpublished paper entitled, “A Complete Community: Creating a Village Core for the University of Victoria.”

With Support From

ENDSWELL FOUNDATION  
LUNA TRUST  
MCLEAN FOUNDATION  
REAL ESTATE FOUNDATION OF BC  
HUMAN RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT CANADA  
VANCITY COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

Financial support for this project does not imply the endorsement of the findings or contents of this report.
“Sense of place is not just something that people know and feel; it is something that people do.”
-Albert Camus
Table of Contents

Executive Summary.................................................................................................................. 1
Introduction.............................................................................................................................. 3

Part I. The Urban Village

Foreword: Joe Van Belleghem, Partner, Windmill Developments........................................... 4

1.1 Planning at UVic............................................................................................................... 6
1.2 Building Complete Communities.................................................................................... 6
1.2.1 The New Urbanism..................................................................................................... 7
1.2.2 Local Models of Complete Communities................................................................. 9
1.2.3 Projects at Universities.............................................................................................10
1.3 A Vision of Complete Community at UVic................................................................. 12
1.3.1 Place......................................................................................................................... 13
1.3.2 Getting Here, Getting There, Getting Around......................................................... 14
1.3.3 Future Buildings & Site Design Considerations.................................................... 16
1.3.4 Enterprise Generation & Local Impact.................................................................... 17
1.4 Implications for Planning............................................................................................... 20

Part II. Mystic Vale Farmlands (a.k.a. CJVI Lands)

Foreword: Dr. Moura Quayle, Dean, UBC Faculty of Land and Food Systems........................ 22

2.1 Farmlands in the Community.......................................................................................... 24
2.1.1 Recent History.......................................................................................................... 24
2.2 Precedents and Purpose............................................................................................... 25
2.2.1 Guiding Principles for Maintaining Green Space.................................................... 25
2.2.2 Models of Food-Based Projects............................................................................. 26
2.2.3 Local Organizations and Models............................................................................ 31
2.3 Potential Uses............................................................................................................... 33
2.3.1 Academic.................................................................................................................. 33
2.3.2 Research................................................................................................................... 35
2.3.3 Social....................................................................................................................... 36
2.3.4 Economic............................................................................................................... 37
2.4 Implications for the Farmlands..................................................................................... 37

Part III. To Make It Happen...

3.1 Enabling Constraints...................................................................................................... 38
3.2 Integrated Planning........................................................................................................ 40
3.3 Financial Mechanisms................................................................................................. 43

Part IV. Cultivating Common Ground.................................................................................... 46

Bibliography......................................................................................................................... 47
A Twenty-First Century University

Universities are entrusted with a major responsibility to enable societies to address the immense social and environmental challenges of the 21st century. Where innovative development patterns are embraced, campuses can become comprehensive models of sustainable human settlement.

This study examines the potential for creating such a model at the University of Victoria (UVic). Two critical areas await action. First, an Urban Village is needed to densify development, and create a more vibrant university community. Second, attention must be paid to the future of UVic’s long neglected farmlands adjacent to Mystic Vale. Enhanced planning processes and techniques can help the University to achieve imaginative futures for these sites.

The Urban Village

With integrated planning based on principles of New Urbanism and Smart Growth, the Urban Village would become a dynamic hub of campus and community life. Many academic, economic, and social benefits would follow. Potentially situated along Sinclair Road and utilizing the parking lots behind the McKinnon Gym, an Urban Village could incorporate diverse amenities: offices, teaching facilities, services, housing, shops, meeting places, a hotel and dialogue centre, research and consultancy clusters, a community health centre, and social enterprises.

UBC and SFU have already embraced their own visions of the campus as urban community. Local examples of successful communities exist, notably Cook Street Village. Recently, Victoria city council demonstrated what is possible by approving Dockside Green as a global model of sustainable urban redevelopment in the downtown core.

An Urban Village at UVic would dramatically alleviate the pressure to develop campus green space, while also serving as a model of “green development.” To ensure the highest level of outcomes, a guiding vision must be created through open and collaborative processes. Specific attention must be given to the potential impacts on, and benefits to, the surrounding communities, municipalities and region.

Mystic Vale Farmlands

Largely unnoticed and unused, 30.7 acres of historic farmland lie at the southeast corner of the UVic campus, along the outer edge of Mystic Vale. Long referred to as the ‘CJVI lands’, UVic will soon begin to study the future uses of this area. In this report, we consider how this site could be developed to position UVic at the cutting edge of global trends in researching and implementing “sustainable systems.” Based on a consideration of diverse experiences from across North America, we consider how the academic capacity at UVic could benefit from the cooperative planning of this unique area, while also enhancing local, provincial and national interests.
Many alternatives are possible. This study pays particular attention to the potential for a multi-faceted, interdisciplinary research and teaching centre that respects the qualities of the landscape, is supported by faculty, staff and students, and acts as a catalyst for 21st century innovations. The site could address a variety of contemporary needs, from wastewater recycling, energy efficiency and sustainable food systems, to youth education, aging and gardening, and urban health. A hands-on, outdoor learning environment would establish UVic as a model of teaching and research.

Creating a living laboratory at the Mystic Vale Farmlands will, admittedly, challenge UVic to think, and act, “outside the box.” Yet, governments worldwide are increasingly concerned with systemic vulnerabilities, and are being urged to “future proof” urban systems. In such a situation, bold research and teaching programs are called for, programs that can deliver practical solutions to complex problems. These solutions could then be exported and applied in ways that positively contribute to the local and regional economies. This would enable us to draw in top students and researchers looking to work in dynamic, cutting-edge institutions. In combination with the Urban Village, the UVic Farmlands would generate enormous positive publicity, attract international interest, build local community, and draw enhanced financial support.

Both Vision and Reality

To embrace the potential for these two areas on campus, new planning strategies, processes, and financial mechanisms will be required. A key shift would be to adopt the notion of enabling constraints—constraints that will encourage innovation, not business-as-usual. Examples include: containment boundaries, densification and infill, mixed-use zoning, transportation demand management, and ecological design. While these examples constrain one form of development, they also allow for original solutions to emerge.

This constraint-based model is complemented – and demands – a broad adoption of integrated planning that examines development holistically, rather than through incremental building-by-building strategies. Conceptual visioning, design competitions, and design charrettes are all tools of collaborative planning that should be employed to achieve such integration. To further enable the process, governance mechanisms must be reexamined and realigned to remove the barriers to sustainable innovations.

Alternative financial mechanisms may also need to be employed to develop these projects, given existing constraints on the normal ministerial channels. Development corporations and private-public partnerships are two models that may be useful, and that warrant careful study. As well, financial mechanisms (such as the ‘Green Campus Loan Fund’) should be found to facilitate development while also respecting the ethos of sustainability.
Universities in the 21st Century

Human demands upon the planet are now of a volume and kind that, unless changed substantially, threaten the future well-being of all living species. Universities are entrusted with the major responsibility to help societies shape their present and future development policies and actions into the sustainable and equitable forms necessary for an environmentally secure and civilized world. - The 1991 Halifax Declaration

When university leaders from around the globe met over a decade ago in Halifax, they acknowledged not just the scope of the world’s problems, but their collective responsibility to do something about them. Today, climate change, resource depletion, energy limits, and collapsing ecosystems are our daily fare. These problems are the context for all life in the 21st century. Business-as-usual is not possible anymore, nor is it good business. Neither is education-as-usual.

UVic is also a signatory to the Talloires Declaration where, with other universities, we agreed to a set of ten actions designed to address “the unprecedented scale and speed of environmental pollution and degradation, and the depletion of natural resources.” These declarations go beyond merely promoting sustainability in academic thinking; they commit the university itself to finding innovative solutions to the challenges facing humanity.

Today, UVic is in a period of rapid growth. The provincial government has announced 1900 new full-time spaces for UVic by 2010, bringing the student body to 16,468. Including staff and faculty, UVic’s total population will soon exceed 20,000 people. Along with the expanding population comes the expansion of facilities. The 2005-2006 Capital Plan proposes the addition of 5 new buildings around campus: Classroom/Faculty Building, Learning and Information Commons, Science Building, Support Services Building, and First People’s House. With a traditional building-by-building approach, incremental planning policies will exacerbate pressures on the built and natural infrastructures.

With a different mindset, this growth could achieve quite the opposite effect, laying a new foundation for a more dynamic, and sustainable, community on campus. To help realize this goal, the present study explores a new vision for two critical sites identified in the new UVic Campus Plan, but not yet considered for action. One is the “urban village” (also known as the “village core”); the other is the Mystic Vale Farmlands, better known as the “CJVI lands”. This is new terrain here. We are tilling uncommon ground.

These sites are not the only areas of concern on campus. Nevertheless, they represent three key opportunities where the University can: (1) develop sustainable growth patterns that maintain greenspace, (2) become a model for innovative development, and (3) build a “complete community” that dramatically enhances campus life. Beyond the university, the vision presented here can also meet municipal and the regional needs, allowing UVic to catalyze leadership throughout the province. If sustainability is a difficult concept for the university to internalize, nevertheless, it offers significant financial, social, and ecological returns for the university and surrounding community. The key is academic leadership. This means expanding our concept of education, ourselves becoming a “learning organization” where, together, we solve tomorrow’s problems today.
Part I: The Urban Village

Foreword

This is an exciting time in the City of Victoria. The 2010 Olympics are bringing some new green energy, the Canada Green Building Council, BC Sustainable Energy Association, the Victoria Values-Based Business Network are all active and growing in our City, and the redevelopment of the Dockside lands by my company using a triple bottom line approach are all strong signals that the green building movement has taken off in our community.

Now is the time for UVic to embrace green buildings and sustainable community development in a very real, and very committed way. The campus wide stormwater management study and the two recent building projects at UVic – the Engineering/Computer Sciences Centre and Island Medical – are aiming for LEED Gold certification. This is a powerful signal that UVic is moving in the right direction to establish itself as a North American leader in sustainable campus planning. Yet many other building projects on campus are still using more standard practices, and there is not yet a concerted effort, campus-wide, to lead UVic into a more sustainable future.

We have the knowledge, skills, technology, and ideas around us to make a significant shift toward more ecologically and socially responsible building practices. We have new case studies emerging every week that prove green buildings can be developed in a cost-effective and profitable way. We have ratified the Kyoto Protocol nationally and now have to find ways to realize our greenhouse gas emission reduction obligations. Universities are particularly well positioned to take chances and lead new markets toward economic, ecological and socially sustainable solutions to our community development challenges. Universities are educating our children for our future where sustainability will be key to our economic future and facing the environment and social challenges we are and will continue to face in the future.

So what is holding us back? There is a saying that my generation will be the first to have understood all of the ecological and social problems facing our planet, and will have chosen not to take significant action to prevent these problems. What kind of legacy are we leaving future generations with this kind of attitude?

With two young children growing up in this city I have made a personal commitment to take action to leave a much more positive legacy, and to not stand back and passively allow myself to be a part of the ecological destruction and social inequity. The Dockside Green redevelopment project represents the most significant of our company’s contributions to date, and the world will be watching our city as this development project takes root and begins to grow. Our city is on the verge of becoming a model of green building and sustainable community development.

I challenge the University of Victoria, and all those reading this landmark study to take a serious look at where you can make significant changes in your work and personal lives, and be an active and positive participant in creating a better, more ecologically sound and socially just future for our community. UVic has an amazing opportunity to show the world what is possible, to be a model of green and sustainable community development in the Pacific Northwest, and for academic institutions worldwide. All you have to do is recognize and embrace this opportunity, and create a vision to make it happen. We need you to ensure our children are being taught the values of sustainability to embrace the opportunities and challenges our future.

Joe Van Belleghem, Partner
Windmill Development Group
The idea for a “village core” at UVic emerged 5 years ago. It has been present through many years of dialogue between the university administration and the community. With the increasing expansion of the university’s facilities on a finite portion of land, the way in which we plan for future growth is of the utmost importance. The prospect of a densified site of activity offers a solution to many planning issues at the university.

The Urban Village is conceived here as a dense, multi-use facility that would accommodate academic, commercial, and social uses. If handled properly, the village would establish a centralized area for community activities that would bring together on and off-campus residents in the municipalities of Saanich and Oak Bay. It also offers the opportunity to condense the needed capital expansion into one dynamic location that would help alleviate the pressures on green spaces. To achieve these gains, however, a broad approach should be adopted. At the moment, the campus plan sets out a limited concept of a “village core”:

“A mixture of small shops, services, recreation and entertainment facilities, activity offices, meeting rooms and eating areas will enhance the area as a centre of university life and provide services that help reduce vehicle travel” (UVic Campus Plan 2003: 30).

This view would provide the campus with little that does not already exist in the Student Union Building (SUB). To generate the level of activity necessary to maintain such a site the concept should also include classrooms, offices, and housing that can create a hub of activity to bring campus to life. A grand vision would examine the potential to transform UVic’s suburban character into a more urban (and urbane) university, for example, by acting as a catalyst for the creation of a main street along Sinclair Road.

In writing this document, some questions considered were:

- How can UVic accommodate a growing population while maintaining greenspace?
- What areas on campus best lend themselves for future development?
- What important lessons from recent urban planning might be beneficial for UVic?
- What is needed for UVic to have a more dynamic and complete community?
- How might an urban village generate positive impacts for the local community?
1.1 Planning at UVic

The model of planning at UVic has been consistent for the past 40 years, rooted in an original plan from 1961 that was explicitly conceived as “a monument to modernism.” Over the years, this modernist aesthetic scattered low buildings around quadrangles and lawns, with pedestrian walkways and courtyards connecting separate use zones. The result has been the creation of a green, and open campus with an easy appeal. Today, however, space is running out; building sites are hotly contested. Woods and vistas are highly prized; and planning values have changed. In response, some changes to the planning process have been instituted. Overall, however, the focus remains on the separation of use zones (arts from sciences, residences from athletic facilities), and the construction of buildings on a case-by-case basis, with no guiding vision of what the campus will look like in ten, let alone 50 years.

“The foundation of our current aesthetic of place is Modernism. Across political ideology, modernism defines the fundamental nature of our times: segregation, specialization, centralization, and an underlying dedication to technology. Implicit is its sense of progress and the ideology of materialism. It is systemic to almost all western cultures, beyond national borders, political structure, or cultural values. Modernism is clearly expressed by the evolution of cities and regions in the twentieth century: the segregation of activities and peoples, the specialization and isolation of professionals and the systems they create, the centralization of ever-larger institutions, and the monopoly of certain technologies, most notably the car.” [Calthorpe 1993: 11]

1.2 Building Complete Communities

“Complete Communities are areas where services and amenities are close enough to residential and commercial development that automobile use is minimized and individuals can take care of their daily needs in their neighbourhoods” [Curran and Leung 2000: 3]

The notion that ‘complete’ communities can be constructed is problematic. Communities are organic entities that evolve over time. In the case of a village, development generally occurs
over a long period, and in ways that serve the diverse, functional requirements of the inhabitants.

Modern planning often involves hierarchical processes that prescribe certain results through bylaws and zoning regulations. In the North American context, planning is designed to accommodate the automobile, in the process, creating a car culture that is unfriendly to community linkages. While some projects have attempted to replicate the ‘village’ atmosphere, often it is in name only.

To correct for this type of modernistic planning we can attempt to return to more haphazard forms of development by reducing the regulatory environment that controls planning. Or, as considered here, we can utilize more recent techniques that can correct the problems we have created. Many collaborative processes now exist that allow those affected by planning decisions to learn about, and participate in, the creation of outcomes with much higher common denominators. The following techniques and principles serve as our guide for this corrective process.

1.2.1 The New Urbanism

New Urbanism is a community development philosophy associated with the return of more traditional home design features such as front porches, multi-use buildings, and housing clustered around commercial services. It also seeks to reintegrate public spaces into the daily lives of citizens, promoting compact, pedestrian-friendly, mixed-use neighbourhoods less dependant on the car. It is the anti-thesis of sprawling malls, highways, and big box-stores. Two frameworks that help to guide this effort are the planning principles of Smart Growth, and the development principles promoted through Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED).

A Crisis of Place

“There is a growing sense of frustration and placelessness in our suburban landscape; a homogeneous quality which overlays the unique nature of each place with chain-store architecture, scaleless office parks, and monotonous subdivisions. These qualities are easily blurred by the speed we move and the isolation we feel in our cars and in our dwellings. At its extreme, the new forms seem to have a restless and hollow feel, reinforcing our mobile state and perhaps the instability of our families. Moving at a speed which only allows generic symbols to be recognised, we cannot wonder that the manmade environment seems trite and overstated. Americans moved to the suburbs largely for privacy, mobility, security, and ownership. Increasingly they now have isolation, congestion, rising crime, and overwhelming costs. Meanwhile our city centres have deteriorated as much of their economic vitality has decanted to the suburbs.” (Calthorpe 1993: 18)
“Smart Growth refers to land use and development practices that enhance the quality of life in communities, preserve the natural environment, and save money over the long term. The goal is to limit urban sprawl and save taxpayers money: developments that conserve resources cost less and increase property values when compared with conventional sprawl development” (Curran and Leung 2000: 5).

LEED is a rating system that recognizes projects that incorporate social and environmental aspects in their design and construction. LEED is not a prescribed building manual, but a system that defines and encourages the development of environmentally sensitive buildings by recognizing the value added when a triple bottom line approach is integrated in all elements of design and construction. In order to reach the higher levels of LEED design, a collaborative integrated process is key.

UVic has adopted a respect for the principles of Smart Growth (Campus Plan 2003, p. 25), and has also used the LEED system for several new buildings. Yet, a great deal remains to be done. Take, for example, the recent proposal to place a Services Building on a playing field. This single building would marginalize physical activity to the peripheries of campus, reducing campus vitality, sound and colour. It would also waste the opportunity these services would offer in an urban village where they could contribute still more dynamism to campus life. Rather than ignoring these considerations, we must act now to implement new approaches to planning that can stop further mistakes, and begin to create a complete community.

“We shall not attain to cities and villages that are beautiful until we learn artistically to plan them. Transformations may help us greatly, as London and Paris... but a mended article is never as good as one well made at first.” Charles Mulford, 1907 [Katz 1993: xi]

For more information see:
Canada Green Building Council (www.cagbc.ca)
Smart Growth (www.smartgrowth.ca)
Local examples of complete communities with a village atmosphere include the linear developments of Oak Bay Village and Cook Street Village. Reflecting on the popularity of both of these leads us to question: how could an urban village at UVic become such a popular site? Both villages offer a variety of services in close proximity to housing. They also provide warm, inviting areas for pedestrian and bicycle traffic. While UVic could certainly replicate such a development pattern on campus, the amount of land available under a single ownership offers even more potential for innovation.

A recent example under single-ownership is Victoria’s Dockside Lands. This contaminated site on the Inner Harbour has been slated for development as a mixed-use site that must meet LEED Silver standards. The call for tenders also encouraged alternative transportation, open space, and a triple bottom line approach. VanCity Enterprises together with Windmill Developments has won the bid with their proposal “Dockside Green.” Once completed, this site will be a world-leading example of sustainable development.

Operating with only a 12 acre parcel of land, Dockside Green offers many elements of a complete community: housing, public spaces and amenities, transportation links, and a variety of commercial and light-industrial employment. Incorporating ambitious environmental components such as a co-generation facility, on-site sewer treatment, green roofs, and bio-fuel production, with social components such as affordable housing, and a sustainability centre to house local community groups, the developers of Dockside Green have embraced the concept revealed in the Porter Hypothesis: that environmental protection does not cost, but actually pays.

For more information see: www.docksidegreen.com
1.2.3 Projects at Universities

Many Universities have realized that with expanding populations and increasing demand for services, treating campus like a community has many benefits. Financial benefits are clearly attractive in a climate of declining funding for post-secondary institutions. Social and environmental benefits lead to a more attractive environment for all on campus.

In this section, three institutional projects are considered. All have considerably larger land grants and student populations than UVic. This only furthers the argument that UVic must be more innovative with the land that remains. UVic shares with these three an expanding population, and the need to explore alternative financing mechanisms. Since these institutions have already initiated the creation of ‘communities’ with varying degrees of success, UVic has the opportunity to learn from their mistakes and develop real solutions.

University of British Columbia (UBC) – University Town

The University Town aims to create several neighbourhoods at the Point Grey campus to shift UBC from a car-dependent commuter campus to a more self-contained, live-work community. The hope is that by adding residences, and a town centre, residents will be able to fulfill a diversity of needs on campus and will not have to travel off campus as often. With added population density, better public transportation will be possible. The university also expects to benefit financially from this project; all proceeds are directed to the UBC endowment.

This development will incorporate more amenities needed for a complete community. A new school and two new community centres will be built. A grocery store, coffee shops, restaurants, specialty retailers, bookstores, and other university related services will help create vibrant meeting places that will continue well after school hours. Much of this will be located in the University Marketplace. The Marketplace is a mixed-use development 6 stories tall, covering an entire city block. It will combine office space, retail space, and residential apartments. The retail component of the Marketplace will be anchored by Staples, Starbucks, the Bank of Montreal, and BC Liquor Stores.

While this project will improve the amenities available on campus, it is not conceived within a larger commitment to urban sustainability nor, in fact, to the broader social or aesthetic values that could lend the development greater community acceptance. For example, although some of the market housing is intended for students, the prices of the units will arguably be well beyond student and faculty incomes. The project also utilizes chain stores, to the detriment of small business and local economic development.

Sources: www.universitytown.ubc.ca
www.UniversityMarketplace.net

Simon Fraser University (SFU)- UniverCity

On top of Burnaby Mountain, SFU is building the “UniverCity.” This development similarly aims to create a more dynamic atmosphere that would maintain a community on campus be-
Beyond school hours. Proposed as a model of sustainable community development it is built upon the “corner stones” of environment, equity, economy, and education. Environmentally, the site will integrate design features to manage storm water, protect fish bearing streams, and provide habitat greenways. Houses incorporate recycled materials, and are energy and water efficient, with improved indoor air quality. Bike paths and transit options lessen the number of cars commuting to campus.

The first neighbourhood, the “UniverCity Highlands”, will include 1,800 homes, a commercial district, elementary schools, recreation facilities, offices, shops, parklands, bicycle paths and public transit. Housing will incorporate a variety of options for all income levels, including townhouses, studios, and one-bedroom apartments. The mixed-use development also allows multi-family units to add rental accommodation, which is intended to make them more affordable.

Although this scale of development is beyond the needs and ability of UVic, it demonstrates what suburban campuses, based on outdated ‘modern’ planning techniques, can do to create a greater sense of community.

Source: www.univercity.ca

University of Alberta (UofA) - Hub Mall

The Housing Union Building (HUB) was built in 1972 in response to a shortage of affordable housing during a period of increasing student enrolment. Unlike the massive developments occurring in the previous examples, this project added one multi-use building to serve as a ‘HUB’ of activity.

Nearly the length of three football fields, the HUB has been described as a ‘skyscraper on its side’. It combines a shopping arcade containing over 50 shops and services with accommodation for 850 students above. In designing the HUB, student lifestyles were considered. Housing units provide private cooking and bathroom facilities, while features such as shutters that open out above the commercial arcade create a sense of community. Seating and lounge areas are ample, and have made the HUB a popular centre of activity. It has proved particularly attractive to foreign students, and has become one of the largest international living centres on any campus in North America.
Its innovative adaptation of a covered street figured prominently in many architectural publications around the world. Past president of the Royal Architectural Institute of Canada, Bernard Wood, has noted that the HUB is a ‘well known’ demonstration that ‘low-rise, high-density housing can provide an adequate alternative to high-rises, with perhaps more desirable sociological implications.’

Initially the mall was plagued with problems. Construction costs ran over budget and beyond deadlines. Siting was also an issue, as the building was positioned in an area that would become the ‘hub’ of campus. When development stalled, the HUB was at the edge of campus with inadequate pedestrian links. As a result businesses suffered, and deficits were incurred by the student union. The University eventually took over. Building defects were corrected and walkways were built to connect several buildings to the mall generating much needed foot traffic. Businesses began to tailor products to meet student needs and many have since prospered.

UVic certainly does not require a massive self-enclosed building like the HUB Mall. But the project offers many lessons. It is clear that businesses and accommodation can prove to be a prosperous combination, yet careful attention must be paid to student needs. Placing a building in an obscure location without the appropriate services makes it difficult to ensure enough traffic to support businesses.

Sources: www.ualberta.ca/ALUMNI/history/buildings/97authub.htm
www.ualberta.ca/~res/hub/

### 1.3 A Vision of Complete Community at UVic

The scale of the development occurring at SFU and UBC dwarf anything UVic could or should consider. Yet, this presents UVic with a tremendous opportunity. Rather than building a UniversCity, UVic can concentrate on the livable scale of a village, the walkable life of a main street. What follows is not meant to represent the vision of an urban village, but one vision that should encourage debate.

"Creating sustainable places is very much a process of thinking about and visualizing the future. It is as much a process as an outcome. It is about soliciting the input and participation, ideally, of all individuals and groups in the community. It is about carrying on a sustained dialogue about how the community wants to grow and evolve." (Beatley and Manning 1997:63)
Recent successes at UVic can be built on. UVic was awarded the Energy Innovators Initiative Award from NRC office of energy efficiency for consuming less energy than nearly all post-secondary institutions in BC. UVic was also a recipient of the CRD’s 2004 EcoStar Award for urban watershed quality, and Tourism Victoria’s Environment Award in recognition of the university’s new Campus Plan (2003).

Innovative features exist in many buildings around campus. The Computer and Medical Sciences buildings will both be LEED rated buildings, while the McKinnon Aquatic Centre has included solar panels to aid in water heating. These developments are important, but incremental, and often costly. Major gains are achieved when environmental considerations are integrated in the initial design stages, and in the processes to get there. Today, it is simply not possible to live a “complete” life on campus. At night, the campus is abandoned, only a minority staying to eat, or to seek out entertainment. The campus lacks vibrancy and community.

In planning for a complete community we must also recognize the role of “life-long learning.” By doing so, the university could become a better approximation of society at large, rather than a subset of a particular age group.

“Universities can be understood as learning communities par excellence. As such, the University of Victoria could welcome members of the University community who may be leaving an employment situation but continue to desire involvement -- in learning and in research. Being involved in such a community would mean having access to resources (housing, library, shopping, health services) that would support that involvement within circumstances that enhance health and independence.”

Dr. Mary Ellen Purkis
Director, UVic School of Nursing
Commentary on this study.

1.3.1 Place

UVic’s Land and Buildings Goal

“To evolve a land use and building pattern that supports the University’s academic mission, respects the unique physical environment, encourages lively social interaction, and promotes compact, pedestrian-friendly and sustainable development.” (UVic Campus Plan 2003: 25)

Although a site has yet to be determined for an urban “village core”, the area around the Bus Loop behind McKinnon Gym has been suggested (Campus Plan 2003, p. 22). This site is logical given its proximity to the cross-section of the Bus Loop, Bookstore, and University Centre. It provides considerable building room. However, a village “core” is not a “village”. The potential for greater dynamism exists where buildings congregate as a linear development in the tried and tested tradition of a “main street”. Such a street is much needed in Saanich!

Luckily, such potential is available. Sinclair Road is a two-lane street that extends from Mackenzie into the heart of campus, providing access to these parking lots, and continuing down the hill to Cadboro Bay. Today, however, this thoroughfare divides space, cutting the cam-
pus in two, funneling traffic through the area. Transforming this road into a main street, calming it, and giving it some life would bring the UVic community together, and bridge the arterial divide.

And this is only the start. A new main street could create linkages with the commercial district at MacKenzie and Shelbourne, which the municipality of Saanich has designated a site for future densification. Heading east, the site could also create enhanced links to support Cadboro Bay Village. Careful planning and a comprehensive TDM implementation would be required to ensure that this area would take on the dynamic character of a ‘Village’ such as in Cook Street or Oak Bay.

To create a sense of place, orientation should be determined to suit the variety of uses for the building; the sides that face the university could incorporate academic uses, while the side facing Sinclair Road could provide public and commercial uses. Such development would inevitably have implications for the Student Union Building (SUB), as many of the services presently found in the SUB could be included in the Urban Village. Integrating these two facilities is an opportunity that should not be missed.

1.3.2 Getting Here, Getting There, Getting Around

“Nothing we can do with mass transit can match the effect of lessening the need for people to travel.”
-Sam Smith, 1996 (Singer 2001: 81)

Transportation remains a key challenge for the university. To date, preliminary work has been done on UVic’s Transport Demand Management (TDM) strategy, and a TDM coordinator has been hired. The strategy must, however, be aggressively implemented to accommodate the expected growth on campus.

The university has developed a carrot-and-stick approach to implementing the TDM. The greatest carrot – reliable bus transportation – has recently been subjected to fare increases and schedule cutbacks. It is important that the University assume a leadership role here for the campus, and greater community. An even greater stick is to reduce automobile use.

Parking

Many options exist for the university to reduce parking on campus:

- Dramatically increase parking fees, while working with local communities to combat residential parking overflow;
- Reduce single occupancy vehicle use;
- Eliminate parking passes for students in residence (as is commonly done in other universities), and provide a “car share coop” for these students;
- Offer incentives for staff and faculty who live within a short distance of campus not to drive.
Walking

- High-density, mixed-use neighbourhoods lend themselves to walking;
- Eliminate the notion that commuters should be able to park near their workplace, although special consideration should always be maintained for people with disabilities.

Biking

- Offer free ‘yellow’ bikes to get around campus more effectively;
- Incorporate shower facilities, lockers, and covered bike racks in the Urban Village;
- Provide free bikes to students while at the University;
- Outfit buildings with bikes for staff and faculty use on the campus.

Bussing

- Expand the U-Pass program to include faculty and staff;
- Create a mini-transit system for under-serviced local neighbourhoods. Such a project would operate at a fraction of the cost of a parkade while creating jobs. The system could connect students from Gordon Head to University Heights and Cadboro Bay. (This idea will be employed at the Dockside Green development, and is being considered by merchants in Cadboro Bay.)

Streetcars

- The addition of a streetcar line would help to minimize the amount of car traffic accessing the university (as Portland has done), and would provide a major draw to local businesses and visitors;
- The urban village could work in synergy with a regional transit model, connecting Cadboro Bay Village, to University Heights, and eventually to downtown to connect with a regional LRT service;
- For more information on the potential of rail in Victoria see: www.vtpi.org

Carchitecture vs. Human Scale

“Planning for such sixty-mile-an-hour speeds, designing for wastelands of parking, for corridors of concrete, the architect’s work has inevitably become carchitecture. Denying the three-mile-and-hour pace of the walker, the world seen from the porch, the surroundings in all their tender detail at an easy pace, the once close scaled places have spread into a blur with all the individuality and identity of the freeway.” (Bell 2001: 12)

“Victoria was a town of streetcars; there were streetcars everywhere... from Oak Bay to the Gorge.”
-Pierre Berton
The BC Electric Railway Company once ran a sophisticated network of streetcars throughout Greater Victoria and across the length of the Saanich Peninsula. In this map, notice that the lines once stretched to Victoria College (currently home of Camosun College) and close to Cadboro Bay (a stones’ throw from UVic). (Ewert 1986: 152)

1.3.3 Future Buildings & Site Design Considerations

This study included an informal survey of faculty and design professionals. Future investigations should utilize such professionals, but also include an open process that elicits the voices of staff, students, and the local community. However, faculty interviewed were very sympathetic to the idea of developing a village on campus, and suggested that an Urban Village should:

- serve as a model to the community and region, focusing on many facets: ecological, economic, and social;
- not be treated as a cash source for the University, but as a break-even project;
- include a variety of locally owned, non-franchise businesses that operate independently from the university administration;
- include intergenerational housing for faculty, staff, and students with a mix of rentals and strata titles to be sold at subsidized prices;
- include a Community Health Centre with expanded services, and an opportunity for students in Nursing, Medicine, and Rehabilitation Therapy to gain experience;
house Support Services and allow relevant services to potentially develop a market orientation (such as graphics);
• house the Office of Sustainability, and Faculty offices that reach out to the community (for example, a Centre for Community Based Research);
• be composed of model green buildings, of a LEED gold and platinum standard;
• include an animated public space for discussion, and artistic performance;
• and include teaching facilities.

In developing the village, a number of design elements were raised that should also be incorporated in any future design plans.

• Traffic along Sinclair Road should be “calmed” and, to the extent possible, reduced.
• Built forms should come up to the road on Sinclair, and be developed on both sides of the road.
• Infill opportunities should be identified and taken advantage of. Any development on new sites should be clustered and located in parking lots.
• Varying heights should be incorporated. With a tree canopy approaching 50-60 ft. in some areas of campus, there is room to accommodate multi-story buildings. Continuing with 1 and 2 stories only increases the potential for sprawl, although building heights would also need to complement the village/main street character.
• All further development must be “future proofed” – with time taken to imagine campus demands in the next 20-50 years. Such a process is far from accurate but not impossible.

1.3.4 Enterprise Generation & the Local Impact

The value of this project extends beyond campus and community life, as there are significant potential financial benefits. Clustering services and buildings around a common core achieves cost efficiencies. Densification is attractive to businesses. By offering more businesses, students, faculty staff, and local residents will be more likely to patriate their earnings on campus, creating synergies with the business community in Cadboro Bay and building the local economy. The university will see financial benefits from either rental income, or sales of strata titles. The University does not need to provide these enterprises directly, but should allow local entrepreneurs to fill the retail components. The University would set appropriate parameters to
ensure a foundation in socially and environmentally sustainable practices. For example, all commercial business could fall under an ethical consumption code. The City of Vancouver has already adopted one, and SFU is in the process of doing so.

To build the local economy, and provide local character, all businesses in the urban village should be locally owned and operated. This can be accomplished in several ways. A simple planning tool is to limit the size of the floor plates for different businesses. Alternatively, SFU implemented a policy that disallows franchises in the UniverCity; by maintaining control of the commercial space, it is able to choose tenants based on numerous considerations.

**Community Impact**

Of particular concern is the potential economic impact of an Urban Village on the Cadboro Bay Village. The businesses in Cadboro Bay have formed the first Business Improvement Association (BIA) in Saanich. Many owners would like to see an expansion of services, and the community association has designated an area of 400m around the village for future densification. Concern exists that the growth of any commercial site at UVic could detrimentally affect Caddy Bay, especially given their sense that UVic has established an uneven (subsidized) climate for businesses without a genuine avenue for dialogue. Nevertheless, discussions with business owners has revealed an open mind on future possibilities.

Rather than blocking planning, such historic differences should be embraced to reach a higher outcome. Many opportunities can be collaboratively explored including, for example, a mini-transit system, or streetcar, to create new linkages between the two communities. Within an urban village, care should be taken to ensure that retail components enhance those in Cadboro Bay. One suggestion was to allocate space for a ‘Caddy Bay Floor’ where local merchants could offer a limited version of their stores thereby increasing their exposure to the campus community while adding amenities. The recent success of the People’s Pharmacy, with locations in the SUB and Cadboro Bay, suggests this may prove to be a ‘win-win’ strategy.

Whatever solutions are found, it is clear that they must be met through open, collaborative dialogue between all concerned parties. As the university continues to grow all efforts should be taken to ensure that it is to the benefit of the local community and economy as a whole.

**Potential Amenities**

Many potential enterprises would benefit the local economy while helping to complete the community on campus. With a focus on local entrepreneurs who conduct their business with a social ethic, the construction of an Urban Village offers exceptional educational opportunities.

**Hotel & Dialogue Centre**

A small boutique hotel, located in a dynamic village, would attract revenue by offering a welcoming atmosphere for visiting academics, researchers, small conferences and other events. At present, much of this revenue is lost to the downtown economy, and does not take advantage of the events that do occur; for example those at the University Centre, which is largely a single
destination venue. In conjunction with a hotel, UVic could provide a Centre for Dialogue, modeled on the great success that SFU has experienced with its large venue.

The Morris J. Wosk Centre for Dialogue is a conference centre dedicated to understanding effective communication. The centre is located in the heart of Vancouver and has become an architectural showpiece. It includes a gallery for major Canadian artists, and a site to test innovative ideas through dialogue. To date the centre has been the vessel for discussions on a wide range of issues: from restorative justice to real estate, health care to transit, and international law to art. [www.sfu.ca/dialogue/index.htm]

Research & Consultancy Clusters

UVic has many services that could be made more available to the public if they were concentrated in physical clusters. Presently these services are scattered throughout campus, but there is a plan to locate them in a single building: locating this building in a hub of activity would ensure that they are used to their fullest potential. Services such as graphic design and GIS could be marketed to showcase our skills, while providing valuable co-op positions for students. Other services might include legal aid, and counselling.

Researchers and ‘experts’ could also be clustered in offices that provide a more media-friendly environment. Offices adjacent to ‘Media Centres’ could support communication skills, as well as providing a valuable community resource. Facilitating this might be a ‘Centre for Community Based Research’ to support the extensive research taking place at UVic.

Community Health Centre

Incorporating an expanded health centre into the urban village would help to serve the needs of the community while providing additional opportunities for students to gain work experience. Many programs could contribute to such a facility: nursing, medicine, rehabilitation therapy, kinesiology, and counseling. Designing the facility with an educational aim would be a good way to attract provincial dollars, and finance a portion of the urban village. This could form links with a model of intergenerational housing discussed later (see section 2.3.2).

Food Distribution

Campus development must recognize the importance of food and agriculture on the island. Our campus community is largely unaware of the sources of the food consumed on campus; very little is local or organic. The Urban Village presents an opportunity to further promote the innovative research and entrepreneurial products and models derived from the project on the Farmlands (see Part 2).

Many innovative examples demonstrate how campuses are taking a sustainable approach to food pro-
duction and consumption. They include offering more options through campus food services, allowing students to take more responsibility in delivering alternative services, and opening the door to local entrepreneurs to fulfill this role. For example, both Yale and Middlebury College began projects to include local organic foods in their cafeterias. Some university students have also organized food co-operatives. UVic once had such a project –known as Amaranth– which shut down when it lost its space in the SUB.

More and More Universities Support Local, Organic Produce

"Mealy apples, boxed mashed potatoes, frozen veggie mixes and suspicious meats drive many a college student to the cereal and bagel bins. But dining halls from Bates College in Maine to the University of California at Santa Cruz are improving their food and helping their local agricultural economies by going straight to the farm. They're seeking out small and medium-sized farmers near campus for fresh produce, meat and dairy products. Most of the farmers grow organic crops or use pesticides sparingly and practice methods of sustainable agriculture, such as crop rotation." (Lee 2005)

"About 200 colleges nationwide purchase at least one product from a small farm in their community or state, according to Kristen Markley, National Farm to College Program Manager of the Community Food Security Coalition. The hook, many say, is that locally grown food just tastes better. "Produce that's meant to be transported is grown for durability," Markley said. "Local farmers grow varieties that are delicious, but not as durable." Last year, Yale undergraduates would often doctor their school-issued ID cards to get into the one dining hall that regularly cooked with farm-fresh ingredients." (Lee 2005)

Social Start-ups

The business component of the Urban Village could also act as a generator for social enterprises. These could be developed in conjunction with programs in the business school and Victoria's Value-Based Business Network. Examples might include the car co-operative, and mini-transit service previously discussed. Priority should be given to those business that offer innovative sustainable solutions, and to those that provide services that are lacking on campus.

For more information visit www.vbnetwork.ca

1.4 Implications for Planning

By examining numerous examples, this section has highlighted the enormous potential for an Urban Village at UVic. It could serve as a dynamic hub for a more vibrant campus community, a site for enhanced community-university relations, the conduit to market our expertise, an employer and catalyst for the local economy, and -if designed properly- a model of sustainable urban development.

In planning for such an important project, with competing interests, and potentially conflicting views, it is imperative that an open and collaborative process be adopted at the outset. Doing so
will create a sense of ownership that is so vital to a project’s success. It will also allow conflicting viewpoints to come together and potentially achieve a greater outcome in resolution. For a more detailed examination of the processes needed to develop the Urban Village please refer to Part 3 of this study.

Further Information

UVic 2001 Strategic Plan  web.uvic.ca/strategicplan/
UVic 2003 Campus Plan  web.uvic.ca/vpfin/campusplan
UVic’s 5 Year Capital Plan  web.uvic.ca/vpfin/budget/05-06capitalplan.pdf
UVic’s TDM Study  web.uvic.ca/fmgt/assets/pdfs/TDM/TDM-Sustain.html
UVic Sustainability Project  www.uvsp.ca
UVic Office of Sustainability  web.uvic.ca/fmgt/sustain.html
Smart Growth  www.smartgrowth.bc.ca

Conceptual Urban Village by Briony Penn
Foreword

It is my pleasure to offer some perspectives on the opportunities that Mystic Vale Farmlands offers the University of Victoria. Universities live with an inherent tension in land asset management. There is no doubt we need to plan for expansion of teaching and research. How much space will we need? How do we keep our options open? And what about funding? How do we optimize the potential for new revenues from the land to support those same teaching and research ventures? As usual, the question is one of balance.

The UBC Farm is a 40 hectare student-driven initiative where students, faculty, staff, and the local community have been working together to create a place where people can come to learn, live and value the connection between land, food and community. One of the central roles of the UBC Farm is to provide experientially-based environmental education opportunities. To achieve this we have integrated educational elements into all of our program offerings. Through our many community education and outreach activities we also ensure that these educational experiences extend out well beyond the boundaries of the University. UBC Farm is a unique asset born of the passion of many, offering unique learning and research opportunities. Perhaps most importantly, the Farm provides a friendly face to our local community through a unique setting to engage with past and future challenges of land, food and urban life.

Mystic Vale Farmlands offers similar opportunities for the University of Victoria. We think nothing of supporting the need for laboratories and places for “clinical trials” such as hospitals and clinics in other academic areas. Lands for cultivation offer similar living laboratories for field studies in a myriad of academic disciplines. It is obvious that the richness of academic culture at the University of Victoria could support and create new and innovative programs at the Mystic Vale Farmlands, which could connect the academic communities to each other and to the Capital Region itself. The reputation of the University in the environmental sciences area, for example, could be enhanced through an on-the-ground connection for research and teaching at Mystic Vale.

I urge my colleagues at the University of Victoria to take advantage of this unique opportunity, and use this gift of land wisely. We look forward to partnering with you in the future and learning from each other as we steward these precious lands.*

Moura Quayle,
Dean, UBC Faculty of Land and Food Systems (formerly Agricultural Sciences)
February 22, 2005

*The authors and Dean Moura Quayle would like to thank Derek Masselink and Mark Bomford for their help in the drafting of this section based on their experience at the UBC farm.
The Mystic Vale Farmlands occupy 30.7 acres in the southeast corner of the UVic campus. Its open, spacious fields lie beyond the southern border of Mystic Vale, flanked by housing to the east, and Cedar Hill Cross Road along the south. These UVic farmlands are home to an orchard of some 200 apple trees, set in a large meadow, and flanked by Douglas fir and Garry oaks. The Centre for Forest Biology occupies a small portion of the site. The site serves as a favourite spot for dog walkers from the surrounding community. This old farm is one of Gordon Head’s last pieces of agricultural land.

As development pressures continue apace, it is time to ask the question: **what is the best use for this remnant farmland in the city?** In answering this question, it is also important to consider how these lands may benefit the university in an imaginative way, and over the long term.

For example, any such lands offer research potential. As a result, rather than merely approaching them with an unreflective development rationale, care must be taken to think not only of the seeming “needs” of today, but the opportunities they present for the needs of a decade, or several decades, hence. Foresight is required, as is a process to turn that foresight into vision.

In a way, the choice is a simple one. Is the site simply real estate? Is it 30 acres for market housing, space for more buildings and a parking lot? Or are these farmlands a site for innovative education? 30 acres for inter-disciplinary teaching, research, and community outreach? UVic could also choose to do nothing with the site, but given the expansionist plans of the university, that scenario is most unlikely.

In drafting this section, we asked:

- How can UVic accommodate a growing student population while maintaining green-space?
- What areas on campus should be used for development of new buildings?
- Could the University incorporate more outdoor research and teaching into its mission?
- What might future demands be for unused farmland?
- How should the University support sustainable local/regional food initiatives?
- What obligations does the university have, as a member of the region, in addressing emerging problems? Can these obligations merge constructively with the University’s traditional mission?

In answering these questions, the future of these farmlands is related to other models of university development, including the vision of an “urban village”. How we choose to develop one will either help, or hinder the other.
A cursory glance at Victoria and the island community reveals that the production of organic food is of great interest. Agricultural land on the island is shrinking rapidly due to development. Only 50 years ago, 85% of the region’s food was locally produced compared to only 10% today (MacNair 2004). In the past 30 years, despite the existence of a provincial “agricultural land reserve” to protect farmland, some 50,000 acres were taken out of production on Vancouver Island (MacNair 2004).

Global trends in the future will also affect local options. It is now becoming accepted that we are witnessing a progressive decline in global oil reserves, the so-called passing of the age of “peak oil”. This has major ramifications for a food system based on petroleum at all stages of production from fertilizer-based food production, to resource-intensive processing and packaging, to long-distance transportation chains. At the same time, increasing impacts from climate change will alter many environmental variables in food production, for example, our regional water supply. The surge in local organic production is an early response to this situation.

UVic does not have an agricultural program. To many, this may be seen as an obstacle. To others, it may be seen as a blessing insofar as any future program could develop unhindered by past attachments and research ideologies. In addition, “food studies” may provide a vehicle to tie disparate research strains together, from engineering and nursing, to biology and business.

2.1.1 Recent History

From 1923 to 1939, the Turner family worked the area under study as part of the Hudson’s Bay Uplands Farm. At the time, the Gordon Head region was almost entirely a farming area, having hosted large farms since the 1860s. The Turner family ran a mixed farming operation growing hay, straw, and grain. The Turners also raised prize-winning cattle and horses. Since the family left, the land has been unused. In 1964, the University purchased the farmlands from the CJVI radio station (which had a radio tower there). This action spared these “CJVI lands” from the suburban development taking off in Gordon Head and, in so doing, fortuitously preserving “future options.”
In 1997, a student led group seized on one such option by proposing the establishment of Camassia—a Learning Centre for Sustainable Living. Facilities Management denied the request. The reasons given included a lack of longitudinal funding, support from academic departments, and volunteer labour.

Soon afterwards, the University Administration bulldozed the old Turner farmhouse that Camassia had proposed as its core instructional building. Perhaps because of the future development envisioned for these lands, no process was engaged in, nor consideration given by the Administration, to address the possibilities of the Camassia proposal. The site is presently designated for future development unrelated to its agricultural past or potential. As stated in the Campus Plan, this could include “academic expansion, faculty and student housing, sports and recreational facilities, parking, and any special opportunities that may arise” (UVic Campus Plan 2003, p.31). Given the site’s distance from the center of campus, the 2003 Campus Plan notes, “creative thought must be given to the best way to provide links and connections from those (CJVI) lands to other areas of campus” (p. 31). Previous plans showed a bridge for pedestrians and utility vehicles traversing Mystic Vale (Draft Campus Plan 2002).

2.2 Precedents and Purpose

2.2.1 Guiding Principles for Maintaining Green Space

While urban development is being reshaped by smart growth principles to create healthier communities, a parallel approach for agricultural lands is not yet established in the public con-
sciousness. Nevertheless, Smart Growth principles do address the negative consequences of encroachment on these lands. Similarly, the New Urbanist paradigm includes recognition of agricultural heritage, with greater importance placed on the integration of community gardens and greenspace into other forms of more intensive development. This is not merely an aesthetic choice, but seeks to transcend the artificial (“modernist”) urban-rural divide that impoverishes the richness of urban life. In the process, such integration brings food closer to home so as to address many important issues of food health, security, and distribution.

This is particularly appropriate for the city of Victoria, given its world renown as a “garden city.” The city might, in fact, be noticeably enhanced by imaginative development of these lands that take the “garden” beyond mere beautification. At the same time, an innovative landscape level project by the University might build on the region’s larger reputation.

Although little noted, an examination of the demographic trends affecting the city of Victoria raises another issue of potential academic and research interest: aging. Victoria and Vancouver Island are already a gardener’s haven, and host tremendous local efforts to increase food security. The area is Canada’s premier retirement destination. Could a responsive project incorporate these elements into its research and teaching activities, and the use of these lands, particularly addressing the relationship between aging and gardening?

Overall, and given the many projects already underway in the region, careful consideration should be given to site uses so that synergies are developed and duplication avoided. As guiding principles, future uses should:

- address existing trends, future needs, and innovative opportunities;
- fit with emerging regional and global needs and concerns;
- enhance the university’s academic mission;
- expand research and teaching in ways that can produce state-of-the-art knowledge.

### 2.2.2 Models of Food-Based Projects

All of the models included in this section incorporate some food-systems as a core component. While models without this component are also relevant, our climate, the site itself, and the level of community capacity in food systems all suggest that food be a core facet of any research project for the farmlands.

Examining models from other institutions allows us to focus on working examples of outdoor research centres. Some institutions have already incorporated farm-based programs. Creating a unique approach here is essential to put UVic on the path to innovation. For example, many models at universities remain rooted in a 1950s paradigm of industrial farming. Other research in the food sector involves organic and non-traditional strategies. Few have sought to address the myriad climatic and social changes that face 21st century society that must be addressed with an integrated approach.
California State Polytechnic University (Cal Poly), Pomona

The John T. Lyle Centre for Regenerative Studies (The Lyle Centre) conducts research, education through hands-on demonstrations in regenerative and sustainable systems. The Centre is part of a 16 acre site designed to accommodate 100 residents. More than merely accommodation, the centre is a living research facility for faculty, students and visiting scholars working on integrated approaches to sustainable systems. Research components include: passive solar buildings, renewable energy, integrated waste management, water cycling, sustainable food systems, native habitat preservation and human communities.

Through “Habitat 21: The Lyle Centre Project for Sustainable Settlements,” direct benefits from research are available to communities in need. Habitat 21 “…designs sustainable facilities and develops sustainable operating procedures that provide security, housing, safe drinking water, sufficient food, and social services for disenfranchised populations, with the intention that such innovations will also have applications in developed nations.”

In addition to the research and demonstration components of the site, courses are made available to students from any discipline on campus. Recently, the Master of Science in Regenerative Studies (MSRS) was launched. This multidisciplinary graduate program integrates principles from agriculture, physical sciences, environmental design, business, engineering, social sciences and humanities. It examines how, in the future, human life can be supported without environmental degradation, and within the limits of declining renewable resources.

This model is unique, and no parallel program exists in Canada. It offers a comprehensive approach to sustainable human settlements that will enable it to address many of the problems facing human societies in the 21st century. Adopting a similar multidisciplinary focus, and an integrated research/teaching/housing strategy would enable UVic to create a unique program with high local and national profile. This type of research focus would also link well with many already established research projects at UVic such as PATH, which is outlined in later sections.

Sources: www.csupomona.edu/~crs/
www.habitat21.org

UnCommon Ground 27
**Humboldt State University: Campus Centre for Appropriate Technology (CCAT)**

CCAT is a live-in experiential learning facility that demonstrates the potential for appropriate technology, and resource conservation in a residential setting. Its goal is to dispel the myth that living with less impact on the earth is difficult or burdensome. Program elements include: alternative building techniques, energy conservation, sustainable agriculture, waste reduction, water conservation, alternative and renewable energy, and appropriate technology.

The project began in 1978 when a group of faculty, staff, and students renovated a dilapidated house on campus to become a model of sustainable living. Today, three students live in the house and act as program co-directors for staggered one-year terms. In return for volunteer services, the directors receive accommodation in the house, and gain leadership experience. They oversee CCAT’s $35,000 annual budget, along with hiring and supervising 14 student employees.

CCAT works with 15 university classes each year to incorporate new technologies. They represent a diverse range of faculties and departments: Engineering, Biology, English, Fine Arts, Botany, Environmental and Political Studies. Tours, workshops and volunteer opportunities are also offered to the general public. CCAT has proved to be a very successful model, creating a facility that uses less than 5% of the energy consumed in an average American home, and produces very little waste. The project develops practical knowledge and leadership skills, and is a good model for UVic to emulate.

Source: www.humboldt.edu/~ccat

**University of California at Santa Cruz (UCSC)**

The Centre for Agro-ecology & Sustainable Food Systems (CASFS) is “a research, education, and public service unit of the Division of Social Sciences.” The Centre’s Alan Chadwick Garden, and the 25-acre UCSC Farm combine organic demonstration, education, and research sites. Research and education programs are both theoretical and practical. Audiences range from international grower groups to local school children.

The Farm & Garden Apprenticeship is a six-month training program held annually at the Centre’s farm and garden sites. Initiated in 1967, this full-time course has educated more than a thousand students. The program combines classroom instruction and small group demonstrations with hands-on learning. A farm manager, two garden
managers, and a Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) manager are the main instructors. UCSC faculty, researchers, and members of the agricultural community add expertise to the course. In conjunction with a community support group, the Friends of the UCSC Farm & Garden, the Centre also offers a year-long series classes for the public.

This model is relevant to UVic because it offers agricultural instruction that is not part of a school of agriculture. The Centre has published a 600-page instructors manual that could form a ready basis for a course at UVic. Establishing a society of community volunteers would also address issues of longevity of labour for a project at UVic. This would also be an excellent way to forge new university-community relationships.

Source: www.ucsc.edu/casfs/

University of British Columbia (UBC)

The UBC Farm initiative began in 2000 when Agricultural Sciences students protested the development of the UBC South Campus Farm. The Farm took root thanks to the presence of a far-sighted dean in the (then) Faculty of Agricultural Sciences. Working with student advocates, Dean Moura Quayle proposed an alternative vision to the university campus planning committee. During the summer of 2004, the UBC Farm had a staff of five, four of whom came from UBC’s Faculty of Agricultural Sciences. This faculty is in the process of changing its name to ‘Land and Food Systems,’ reflecting the importance and diversity of food systems.

Several educational gardens exist on the farm, as well as an open grassed area where special events are held in the summer. There is a vineyard and an Agroforestry and Ecology Trail where students are building a trail through a selectively logged forest. The market garden grows over 60 varieties of fruit and vegetables for Saturday markets. The Maya Garden Project offers space for Mayan community members to cultivate a traditional garden and provide traditional education. A greenhouse/classroom produces peppers, tomatoes, u-cut flowers and fresh herbs, while an arboretum contains a variety of tree species. The “Land, Food, and Community Garden” serves as the main education site. It was developed based on the “Life Lab” garden in Santa Cruz, and Victoria’s own “The Hive” demonstration site run by the LifeCycles Project Society. Demonstrations include cob building, rainwater harvesting, and an Integrated Landed Learning project created by the Department of Curriculum to model intergenerational and hands-on environmental education.

The UBC Farm is an excellent example for UVic, because it clearly demonstrates what we can and cannot do. With no Dean of Agricultural Sciences to take the lead, students and faculty must take the initiative to create a vision for the farmlands. UVic also has considerably less

Macoskey Center: Slippery Rock University of Pennsylvania

“The Macoskey Center is an on-campus facility that serves host to a variety of education, research and social activities associated with the Masters of Science in Sustainable Systems (MS3) Program. Conceived by the late Robert A. Macoskey, this Center promotes the transition to sustainable systems through education, research and demonstration. The Center includes organic community and market gardens, a small wood lot, a composting research and demonstration project, and a restoration ecology project.”

“Harmony House, a multipurpose renovated farmhouse located at the Macoskey Center, serves as secondary space and as a gathering area for program activities. The building also contains a library, student workspace, and serves as the residence for two graduate assistants. It has been redesigned for energy efficiency, indoor air quality, and utilization of environmentally friendly materials. The Center is a result of the on-going combined efforts of MS3 students, faculty and administration, MS3 alumni and local community members.” [www.sru.edu/pages/6780.asp]
land available for any such project. With that in mind, we must develop a niche in which UVic could excel. For example, what could be done in conjunction with UBC that would complement their program? The Dean, and Associate Dean of Agricultural Sciences have already indicated that they would be willing to create a partnership, sharing curriculum and sending international students as part of an exchange program. Such a partnership would also create more opportunities to apply for joint funding on large research projects.

Source: http://www.agsci.ubc.ca/ubcfarm/index.php

Ryerson Centre for Studies in Food Security

Established in 1995, the centre focuses on the problems of urban food systems, and how these systems are linked to rural communities and the agricultural sector. The centre offers courses and a certificate to those with an undergraduate degree, or 5 years relevant experience. The certificate program requirement is 6 courses (3 required, and 3 options). It is available entirely online, although field courses and in-class courses are also available. The centre also holds conferences such as the “International Conference on Urban Food Systems” that was held in 1997.

While some have suggested that a school of agricultural studies should be created at UVic, a short-term goal might be the creation of an interdisciplinary certificate that examines the impact of climate change on food systems. Such a program would draw upon the wealth of knowledge already at UVic. Creating an online course helps to limit the strain on campus infrastructure while expanding the audience for such a program to those living around the globe.

Source: http://www.ryerson.ca/~foodsec/

Berkeley’s Edible Schoolyard

This project, initiated by Alice Waters at Martin Luther King Junior Middle School, began in 1994. The program provides courses in gardening and cooking to students in grades 6-9. Chefs, designers, architects, and many other professionals (presumably parents of students) have been involved. The program has also led to a district food policy that emphasizes organically grown produce in the lunch program.

“The Farm-to-School salad bar at Malcolm X Middle School in Berkeley, CA, proves that the fresh taste of locally-purchased foods appeals to kids of all ages. Consumers overall are disconnected from one of the most important components for their own health and happiness—the food they eat. Rarely do they have contact with or personal knowledge about the farms and farmers who grow their food. As a result, most consumers have very limited control over the quality and safety of their food. When small-scale farmers are able to sell their products to local stores and institutions, they gain new and reliable markets, consumers gain access to what is often higher-quality, more healthful food, and more food dollars are invested in the local economy.”

The Edible Schoolyard is not linked with a university, but provides a model for environmental educators. Victoria’s Lifecycles Project offers a similar project for local schools (see section 2.2.3). Incorporating environmental studies and education students in the program provides an opportunity for students to gain experience as educators, while building healthier communities. A section of the Farmlands could be maintained to engage students from schools that are unable to develop their own garden.

Source: http://www.edibleschoolyard.org/homepage.html

“The challenge for many schools in starting up a school garden project is the application and approval process of the School District Departments. As the School District is unionized and faces many budget constraints, initiating new projects or work on the school grounds is undesirable by the administration. Therefore processes are put in place in order to deter active teachers or parents from starting up a project like this. As staff and parents are already overworked they look for demonstration facilities, where they can visit with the students to illustrate the importance of our connection to food, health, and environment that also offers educators that are positive role models. In Greater Victoria, there is a diminishing farming community and few agricultural demonstration sites. Children, public and consumers need to access positive capacity building learning sites such as an agricultural demonstration farm to connect them to our food system and support a change for a more localised agricultural and food economy for the future.”

Kezia Cowtan, LifeCycles Co-Director
Commentary on this study.

2.2.3 Local Organizations and Models

Drawing on the experience of local organizations would increase the potential of programs at the farmlands. Doing so builds relationships that help guide research to suit community needs. Many local projects are looking to expand linkages with the university. Some combine an entrepreneurial spirit with food and agriculture initiatives, all of which would aid in providing guidance for activities at the site. In these cases, they would benefit from partnering with, being replicated at or even relocating to the farmlands. As part of university educational programs, these initiatives would raise their profiles, tapping a large pool of young volunteers, and drawing into the region more support for their work. In turn, the University would benefit in both research and direct educational opportunities, and in its comprehensive relations with the regional community.

The following is by no means an exhaustive list of local organizations – it only highlights those that may have the most immediate interest in program development for the farmlands.

**Lifecycles:** Lifecycles Project Society is a non-profit, community based organization dedicated to cultivating awareness and initiating action around food, health and urban sustainability in Greater Victoria. It is a very successful organization that would like to expand its links with the university. They run several relevant programs:

- The HIVE: this 1/2 acre demonstration garden site has began a youth apprenticeship pro-
gram. It is presently looking to relocate and would benefit from the additional exposure to students and faculty. While there are several organic farming apprenticeship programs on the coast, coordination is lacking. In this regard, UVic could act as a catalyst by, for example, providing an information clearing-house for curriculum development.

- **Growing Schools**: based on the Berkeley model, this program builds schoolyard gardens, integrated with the school curriculum. A model of this project at UVic would be an asset for Education and Environmental Studies students. It could be made available for schools that are unable to construct garden on their grounds.

- **Youth Community Entrepreneurship Program**: this project takes at-risk youth and builds their capacity to become local entrepreneurs. This program could be integrated with many programs at the farmland and would benefit from the guidance of Business and Psychology professors.

“LifeCycles would welcome the opportunity to partner with the University of Victoria to help with the visioning and development of the UVic Farmlands, thereby increasing the potential of community gardening and urban food security initiatives in Victoria. This partnership would allow us to link our hands on local agri-food programming (10 years of food security programming experience) with the research and educational strengths at UVic. A number of LifeCycles programs combine an entrepreneurial spirit with food and agriculture educational initiatives, all of which would aid in providing guidance to the sustainable development of the site. We believe that a partnership between UVic and LifeCycles would lead to a long term relationship which would ultimately support and enhance our local community’s food security needs through enhanced research, education, and on-site programming in the years ahead…”

Tim Ewanchuk, LifeCycles Co-Director
Commentary on this study.

**Compost Education Centre**: This centre educates people on how to compost effectively in a community garden setting. It is located in Fernwood. Expanding their facilities onto the campus would complement projects of Facilities Management and the University of Victoria Sustainability Project. A small demonstration facility could be used to educate faculty, staff, students and community members on the benefits of composting. Local municipalities would be excellent partners.

**Haliburton Community Organic Farm Society (HCOFS)**: This new, not-for-profit organic agriculture project is located on a 10 acre site in Cordova Bay, Saanich. In response to threats to remove the land from the Agricultural Land Reserve, the Land for Food Coalition and the municipality of Saanich worked together to protect the land. An agreement between the CRD and Saanich saw the land exchanged for $400,000 and an additional land exchange. The Municipality of Saanich has taken the lead on this project, and has entered into a leasing arrangement with HCOFS.

HCOFS is dedicated to developing a small-scale, economically sustainable organic farm and education centre. They are seeking to train future organic farmers and local community mem-

UnCommon Ground 32
members in organic methods. The education centre is seeking to partner with college and university departments, and secondary schools, which presents an excellent opportunity for any work on food issues at the Mystic Vale Farmlands. The positive linkages with the Municipality of Saanich would be strong.

**Promoting Action Toward Health (PATH):** This project is led by researchers at UVic, and involves both UBC and SFU. The 5-year project examines community-based models of health promotion among mid-lifers. Although focused on the Hillside-Quadra community, opportunities could exist to link this project to a component of the UVic farmland site. One element of the PATH program has focused on building backyard gardens. This could tie into training programs held at UVic.

“PATH believes that being healthy is more than not just being sick. Being healthy depends on such things as having a secure and nutritious source of food, a safe home, friends, and being able to handle stress. By joining together, the community can change.” [www.coag.uvic.ca/research/path/community.htm]

### 2.3 Potential Uses

The following is a list of potential uses for the UVic Farmlands, based on the guiding principles and the models previously discussed. Perhaps the best way to unite these diverse uses is through a Centre for Sustainable Systems similar to the one at Cal Poly and Humbolt State. This type of project would combine both social and physical research components, integrating a diverse array of disciplines. Including a small housing component would focus on state-of-the-art design (as at Humbolt), while also providing a residence for the project managers. Such a dynamic facility would not only attract students looking for practical skills in an academic setting, but also established academics with research funding. This approach can test market practical solutions in a situation that is more realistic than the laboratory.

#### 2.3.1 Academic

The academic components at the Farmlands should reflect the complexity of 21st century problems. Rather than compartmentalizing knowledge, initiating a comprehensive problem-based learning strategy would provide a new avenue for student research and teaching at the University. Some departments, such as Agricultural Sciences at UBC, have made this shift but much remains to be done in the pursuit of practical transdisciplinarity. For example, by locating climate change studies within the natural sciences alone, the university fails to address many of the major challenges involved in adapting to climate variability. In contrast, a field centre would directly address techniques for overcoming entrenched social and institutional obstacles that impede effective action even when technical solutions do exist.

---

"The point of becoming more conscious of places in education is to extend our notions of pedagogy and accountability outward toward places. Thus extended, pedagogy becomes more relevant to the lived experience of students and teachers, and accountability is reconceptualized so that places matter to educators, students, and citizens in tangible ways. Place-conscious education, therefore, aims to work against the isolation of schooling’s discourses and practices from the living world outside the increasingly placeless institution of schooling. Furthermore, it aims to enlist teachers and students in the firsthand experience of local life and in the political process of understanding and shaping what happens there.” [Gruenewald 2003]
With this in mind a portion of the farmlands could be devoted to **Urban Agriculture and Food Studies** in the 21st century. Intensive organic test plots could be used to assess and demonstrate issues of climate change on crop development, while discussing research into production and distribution methods in a world of declining oil reserves. It should be noted that no information could be found in our research on current soil quality or potential contaminants. Regardless, even negative results would offer the opportunity to develop small-scale soil remediation techniques! This component would offer hands-on learning based on existing courses at UVic, in collaboration with local organizations. An entrepreneurial component would teach students how to market solutions for more sustainable food systems.

Parts of the site would also be suitable for an expanded **Habitat Restoration** program. With a commitment to densification, ecological restoration on campus is not that difficult to achieve. For example, the University launched a unique partnership of students, staff and faculty to restore Mystic Vale by trying to control the sedimentation that damages water quality and prevents the return of a healthy fish population (Winterhoff 2001). A Garry oak restoration site is also being developed by students from Environmental Studies in conjunction with Facilities Management, near Henderson Road. Given this success the University should secure more space for research for future demands in the growing field of ecological restoration.

The **NatureScape BC** program is also ideally suited for the Farmlands. This program aims to have residents incorporate native plants in their backyards as a way to enhance local ecosystems. It combines ecological, agricultural, business and community development components, with an entrepreneurship component that may enable native communities to begin producing these plants for market. A portion of the Farmlands could have a small production facility demonstrating propagation techniques. Plants produced could be sold to the public in a shop located in the Urban Village. It would link well with the new First People’s House.

A more technical academic component of the site could focus on **Water and Energy Management**. In conjunction with professors from disciplines such as Engineering, Biology and Environmental Studies the program could develop new techniques to address the region's water and energy management concerns. The living-laboratory at Humbolt’s CCAT presents an effective model to explore such innovations. Technological innovations would be fostered while addressing cultural and governance aspects of usage.

---

**Garry Oak Restoration Project**

Rare, unique, and very threatened, the Garry oak ecosystems occur only in BC, almost exclusively along Vancouver Island’s southeast coast and neighbouring Gulf Islands. Although Garry oak and its buffer ecosystems support more plant species than any other terrestrial ecosystem in Coastal British Columbia, only five percent of the Garry oak ecosystems remain in tact today. The rest have been displaced by agriculture projects, residential, commercial, and industrial development.

While this may seem just another fatality in a world of deforestation and species extinction, Garry oaks, it seems, have a special role to play in BC’s adjustment to a changing climate. As our climate becomes warmer and Douglas fir forests disappear from the landscape, Garry oak’s tolerance for warm, dry conditions could provide the biological material needed to fill this void. (Gelwicks 2004)

**Creating Possibilities**

"When Rachel Carson wrote Silent Spring, no one had heard of deep ecology. When Naess coined the term deep-ecology, nobody had heard of the term sustainable development. When sustainable development became popular (World Commission on Environmental Development, 1987), eco-feminism was virtually unknown and in its infancy. In other words we have no idea where we might go next. Higher education has first and foremost something to do with creating possibilities, not defining or prescribing the future for our students. These possibilities arise when universities promote the exploration, evaluation, and critique of emerging ideas and the creative contribution to their development. Viewed as such, sustainability is best seen as only one of many stepping stones.” (Wals and Jickling 2002: 230)
“Environmental challenges, such as those posed by patterns of energy use in contemporary society, are complex and inherently interdisciplinary. Addressing them requires innovative cross-disciplinary work, and a diversity of learning and teaching methods. Increasing the capacity to pursue interdisciplinary hands-on research on campus would open new possibilities for our students to develop the skills necessary to understand and effectively address these challenges.”

Dr. Kara Shaw, UVic School of Environmental Studies
Commentary on this study.

2.3.2 Research

Research uses at the farmlands would also emulate a problem-based learning approach. The potential interdisciplinary research projects are diverse. Some obvious examples include: Organic Farming, Aging and Gardening, Habitat Restoration, Water and Energy Management, and Community Economic Development. These projects could develop templates and exportable models for other universities and regions, thus dramatically increasing the university's profile as a centre for innovation.

Consider a hypothetical example of the research opportunity offered by linking Aging and Place. A significant issue facing society is the growing number of “baby-boomers” preparing to enter seniors’ homes, many of which are sterile, devoid of connection to the land and the community. Not surprisingly, this large demographic bulge is not elated with the notion of traditional “old age homes.” By developing an on-site institutional model based in an alternative design with both “intergenerational” and land/gardening components, the relation between aging and gardening could be explored. This research could incorporate elements of assisted living, which would be an asset for students and researchers in the faculties of Sociology, Medicine, Nursing, Rehabilitation Therapy, in conjunction with the Centre on Aging and the PATH project. This is simply an example of the sort of innovation that is possible when we open ourselves to planning “outside the box.”

“In Victoria, we enjoy an environment that makes being active year round very easy for people of all ages. In such an environment, you would think we would have figured out how to create appropriate living spaces for aging citizens -- but I think we are only beginning to explore creative solutions here. There is so much more to do. A housing development where such innovations could be studied on the campus would add tremendous value to the wider community.”

Dr. Mary Ellen Purkis, Director, UVic School of Nursing
Commentary on this study.

Facilitating these research efforts could be a Centre for Community Based Research (CBR) that is presently being evaluated by the office of the Vice President Research. CBR is definitely one of UVic’s strengths, but its practice is uncoordinated among diverse disciplines. Resources and ethical guidance would be provided to researchers working with local communities. The work facilitated by the centre would help to legitimate the work of researchers by incorporating and addressing community concerns. The physical location of a CBR centre could be either on the farmlands or at the urban village, though its presence should be felt in both.
“Community-based participatory research is not a new idea, but the time has finally come where it is impossible for universities not to actively support its implementation. How UVic will choose to do this is still under discussion but I envision an office that facilitates community-based research collaborations, providing an access point for communities to link with appropriate UVic researchers and resources, assistance in developing research projects that meet both community and university needs, and plain language communication on the results and applications.”

Dr. Kelly Bannister, Research Associate, POLIS Project
Commentary on this study.

2.3.3 Social

The UVic Farmlands have the potential to enliven the social learning and active community on campus, while also addressing major social issues of the 21st century. In conjunction with the urban village, it could play a key social role in developing a “complete community”. The opportunity to provide both a physical and intellectual space where the on- and off-campus community could interact would be a great benefit. Social elements might include a community garden, and an off-leash dog park to maintain university-community relations. Academic uses, if extended to the general public would expand these relationships by drawing more people onto the campus. Intergenerational life-long learning could truly be supported. In order to facilitate this role, classes, workshops and volunteer opportunities should be offered in conjunction with continuing studies. Forming a group such as a Friends of the UVic Farmlands, would give this new segment of the community a voice and create a sense of partnership in the project.

Community Reflections on Mystic Vale Farmlands

“The community and the university in a lot of ways have grown up together,” says Russell Irvine, an Oak Bay Municipal Councillor. “For years the horse riding academy was across the street,” he explains, noting that before the Uplands Estates was developed, riders from the academy would use UVic’s grounds to exercise their horses.

“I think that in the last 20 years the community has watched with interest proposals to intensively develop the CJVI land,” says Irvine, explaining that it is subject to residential zoning on three sides, two in to Oak Bay and one in Saanich. “Ultimately if the University put up major buildings and parking lots there, residents would be concerned.” “People have questioned CJVI as distinct block of land because it doesn’t easily integrate with the rest of the university plan. It is based on separate street access, separate services for the municipality to provide, and is not in the route of where the traffic normally flows. If your going to use that land your going to have to drag traffic further into Oak Bay, and there is therefore a certain sensitivity as to how development would occur.”

“I really hope they continue to welcome the community here. My life has become so rich in community and social belonging.” (Russell 2004)

Mystic Vale Farmlands: Where Community and Dogs Meet

The CJVI park changed Mrs. X’s life: “We had a big house in South Oak Bay, raised our kids, had a place in Shawnigan Lake, and we thought, oh this’ll be good, we’ll get a townhouse. Well for two years we lived in Uplands Estates [a gated community across the street from CJVI], and we looked across at these beautiful fields with all the dogs and the culture and thought, ‘there’s another life over there . . . and we want to be a part of it!’ We watched for two years from our dining room window as people met each other and talked and walked. At Christmas time everyone was out with Santa hats and eggnog and the dogs were running and you see people waving and meeting. I said to my husband when a house comes up for sale close by, I think its time for a dog, and being part of the community again. So we bought last spring, and renovated a house on the corner of Crestview and Cedar Hill. We bought because of the proximity to the park and the culture that is here.” (Andee 2003)
2.3.4 Economic

The Mystic Vale Farmlands offer a potential economic engine for campus development without generating income directly. By offering several hands-on research and academic projects for staff, students and general community, the site has the potential to generate significant financial support from grant-making agencies and local benefactors. It could even become a tourist destination. With careful thought given to the overall aesthetics of the site, summer visitors could help to support the facilities at the urban village, making the university more of a viable community throughout the year.

There is also tremendous potential for addressing future economic development. How will local economies organize in the post-oil world of dramatic climate change? Will global interdependence make room for new patterns of local economic sustainability, strategies for transportation demand management, and local organic agriculture? How will food security be conceived?

Much of the community-based work on the island has focused on promoting a sense of terroir and regionalism to support the local economy. Already new business models are being explored. For example, social entrepreneurialism combines for-profit motivation with community-mindedness by integrating a “triple-bottom” line (of economic, social and environmental sustainability) in the heart of transactions. Incorporating this model throughout a region would have ripple effects throughout society. Such a shift in the notion of wealth, and of accumulation for accumulations sake, supports the most cutting edge work of participatory, and steady-state economics. Incorporating these notions into the foundation of the urban village and farmlands would create an economic laboratory from which innovative solutions could be drawn with global academic and practical resonance.

2.4 Implications for the Farmlands

“...The University of Victoria does not offer any education relating to agriculture. Considering that southern Vancouver Island remains one of the hubs of farming in the province, this is a substantial gap.” (MacNair 2004: 13)

The UVic Farmlands offer a tremendous opportunity for innovation in sustainable systems. This site could house a flagship interdisciplinary project that enhances the university’s academic mission. It could add depth to our taught programs while forging links with active local organizations and building stronger university-community relations. Research programs could address key questions of sustainable human settlement in a living laboratory, delivering practical solutions to complex problems. These solutions could then be exported and applied in ways that positively contribute to the local and regional economies. In order to achieve this vision, the farmlands should be treated with utmost care and attention. The following section highlights some processes and mechanisms that will help move from vision to reality.
Implementing these innovations at UVic requires both a deepened substantive commitment to “smart growth on the ground”, and an openness to the processes that will get us there. By ensuring the participation of a wider community in planning and decision-making at early stages, innovation is possible. The following section elucidates some of these processes. This discussion should be understood as exemplary only; it is not exhaustive as it is not based on a comprehensive analysis. Indeed, developing an understanding of the range and possibilities of such practical strategies is an urgent challenge for the University.

Despite recent changes, university-level planning remains a top-down affair rooted in decisions made in Facilities Management, with only reactive commentary from the new Campus Planning Committee (CPC) and Facilities Development Sub-Committee (FDSC). At the provincial level, policies that determine where and when funding will be allocated further jam the university through sporadic development patterns. Capital funding formulas also constrain innovative designs, which are disallowed because of their higher upfront capital costs even though their lower operational budgets make them easily self-financing in the short-term. These problems are perhaps the most difficult to alter but much can be achieved at the University even while work is ongoing at reforming provincial practices.

### 3.1 Enabling Constraints

Many planning constraints exist that could drive innovation at the University if they were adopted. For example, by treating the amount of land (and water, and green space) at UVic as limited can present an opportunity (for densification) rather than an obstacle (to more sprawl). *Constraint is the mother of innovation*. In this section we consider a list of constraints that can enable innovative sustainable development.

**Containment Boundaries**

Containment boundaries are oriented to ensure that most new buildings are confined to a demarcated area. For example, what if 70% of all new buildings were mandated to be built only within the Urban Village and that, to build outside the boundary, a particular building would have to be justified as exceptional according to pre-determined criteria? Municipalities (including Saanich) have long utilized such boundaries and, in this regard, UVic could be seen as akin to a municipality with limited space for expansion, and clear costs associated with impinging on green space. This strategy would begin the transformation of UVic from a 1960s suburban, commuter destination to a complete urban community, shifting the ‘centre of gravity’ of the university from sprawling development areas to a core neighbourhood.
**Densification & Infill**

"Densification need not be equated with high-rise structures and no open spaces. Rather, densification can be achieved through “redeveloping urban land and ‘filling in’ where land can be used more efficiently. Infill refers to development on land that is already serviced but is vacant or underused.” [Curran and Leung 2000: 13]

The constraint-based model challenges the continuing pattern at UVic of developing new, stand-alone buildings on green space. This is apparent in the recent suggestion that, for example, the new “services building” should be built on the playing fields adjacent to Ring Road. Not only would this remove valuable green space, marginalize physical activity from the heart of campus, and block the last landscape view of southern Vancouver Island, but it would also fail to take advantage of the opportunity to situate these services within a hub of activity at the urban village. Instead, constraints would force us to “do the right thing.”

**Mixed-Use Zoning**

"Mixed use development is a key strategy for building complete communities.” [Curran and Leung 2000: 12]

In contrast to the University’s continuing focus on separate zones (such as the “academic core”), the world outside UVic’s borders has shifted to planning for mixed-use developments that capture the social, economic and environmental benefits of creating “complete community,” and the greater aesthetic appeal of a “new urbanism.” By providing multiple amenities within a walkable distance, citizens can limit the dependency on transportation infrastructures. Citizens are also able to reacquaint themselves with neighbours which also helps build strong communities. Many private urban developers have embraced the notion and are paving the way through rigid zoning restrictions. Local examples are numerous. One oft-celebrated development is the Selkirk waterfront that combines services, housing, schools and workplaces in one walkable neighbourhood. This is really UVic’s joint challenge with the Urban Village and the Farmlands.

**Transport Demand Management (TDM)**

TDM is an effective cost-cutting tool. By implementing constraints on automobile use, and encouraging alternative modes of transportation, money can be redirected from infrastructure upgrades for growth in vehicular traffic towards more environmentally responsible means of transport.

UVic has developed a basic TDM strategy, and is in various stages of its implementation. To date, UVic’s major achievement remains the student-initiated U-Pass with BC Transit that dramatically increased student ridership. UVic also now has a TDM co-ordinator. However, progress is slow especially given the projected growth in the campus population. More effective policies will be needed, and quickly, to forestall the development of such regressive options such as a proposed multistory parkade. While some parking facilities will always be required, these can be reduced by adopting appropriate pricing structures, limiting universal access to parking passes, working with municipal authorities to reduce parking requirements, educating commuters on the need to limit single-occupancy-vehicles, and implementing improvements in transit service and bicycle corridors.
An aggressive TDM strategy is important to both the Urban Village (which would be built on freed-up parking lots) and to the innovative use of the Farmlands (which would not be needed for peripheral parking lots). The true costs of the University’s dependence on the private automobile, and the huge opportunity costs being inflicted on the University’s future by not moving more expeditiously to change the car culture at the University, must be appreciated if UVic is to develop its potential.

For more information on UVic’s TDM strategy see:
uvsp.uvic.ca/pdf/transportation.pdf
web.uvic.ca/fmgt/assets/pdfs/TDM/TDM-Sustain.html

**Eco-Logical Design**

Rather than adding costly environmental ‘features’ to buildings that are already built, real thought should be given to more comprehensive eco-logical design at the beginning of the process. While this type of planning and design may appear to constrain and lengthen the process, buildings designed with other facilities and the environment in mind can take advantage of otherwise overlooked synergies. UVic’s recent coordination of the outflow from aquatic tanks in one building to flush toilets in another is one such example. The urban village and any development on the Farmlands should incorporate comprehensive eco-logical design, saving the university money and increasing its sustainability.

### 3.2 Integrated Planning

Traditionally, communities have evolved slowly, their shapes emerging and changing over a long, historical period. The form of many European cities, for example, changed gradually to suit the functional activities of a growing village, then town, then city. Given the pace of modern growth, however, especially in North America, planning has overridden such incrementalism by imposing large-scale developments onto the landscape and its communities. The automobile has been the key consideration driving design parameters.

“Integrated planning” is a concept frequently considered as the way to redress this situation. Such planning requires a proactive commitment to consider all interests affected by planning decisions (from the builders to the end users), rather than merely doing what one must to comply with existing bylaws and zoning requirements. The University has several elements in place...
that can contribute to integrated planning: a strategic plan, a campus plan, a capital plan, and a newly hired full-time planner. Yet these elements have not lead to integration; developments are still considered separately and no integrated planning process or long-term vision exists. Creating these remains a priority for the University despite the acceptance of a new Campus Plan and Campus Planning Committee. A transformation in the governance structures that oversees planning remains the critical priority for change.

**Governance**

“*It is simply unrealistic to expect that the governance mechanisms developed decades or even centuries ago can serve well either the contemporary university or our society more broadly. It seems that the university of the twenty-first century will require new models of governance and leadership capable of responding to the challenges of our society and its educational institutions.*” (Duderstadt 2000)

Issues of governance are central to the implementation of integrated planning. UVic has responded to previous demands for improved governance with changes to its main planning body. It is beyond the scope of this report to review these changes in detail. Overall, however, as indicated above, the changes are slight because decision-making continues to function in an ad hoc top-down fashion that will inevitably produce both poor decisions, and external conflict.

In contrast, more open, democratic, state-of-the-art contemporary processes would actively seek to integrate conflicting viewpoints within processes of cooperative dialogue. It is such an approach that produced the present (and vastly improved) Campus Plan. Some universities have recognized that poor governance can hamper sustainability efforts, and have sought to integrate high-level positions to promote sustainability through cooperative dialogue within governing bodies.

Sources: www.sustainablecampus.cornell.edu

**Collaborative Planning Processes**

Throughout decision-making for the Urban Village and Farmlands, maintaining an open dialogue is imperative. Such dialogue is consistent with Principle #2 in the Campus Plan (2003):

*The University is committed to developing and maintaining active collaboration with those affected by its physical changes.*

Recent experiences in the siting of proposed new buildings suggest that this principle is being sorely tested.

At the same time, the Campus Planning Committee is adopting principles of collaboration to facilitate public participation. However, these principles may actually encourage incremental development as projects that are deemed “small” will require consultation, but not collaboration. Thus development may continue on a building-by-building basis in order to avoid public involvement. Integrated planning requires the use of a range of new planning techniques—not out of a grudging requirement to “consult,” but with an enthusiastic embrace of the vision and
innovations that extensive consultation can produce. In order to ensure responsive plans are developed, *collaboration must begin at the conceptual stage, not when specific decisions have already been made internally.*

The following highlights a few creative ways that the public can be engaged in the planning process.

**Conceptual Visioning**

With both the Urban Village and the UVic Farmlands, a vision of what the campus will actually look like, and how it will integrate with its neighbouring communities, must be established. General principles are not enough; practical choices must be made. A collective visioning process would provide for more productive public consultation as it is often unclear what the impact of developments will be. Interestingly, the creation of a ‘dialogue centre’ would assist in this process (see section 1.3.4).

Such a process will not result in complete consensus. Many outstanding community concerns will likely surface. In order to address differences and not stall the process the use of state-of-the-art visioning tools will be required.

**Design Charettes**

Once a conceptual vision is in place, this collaborative design tool allows a group of professionals, experts, officials and citizens to draft site specific proposals based on a ‘design brief’. The brief contains background information into the project such as: site descriptions, end-use, history of the area, objectives, and so on. The exercise can be conducted over several hours or several days depending on the amount of detail desired.

UVic has used such charettes in the past. This process can be an effective way at including the opinions from a wide range of individuals, when held in conjunction with public forums. Hosting design charrettes can, however, easily become a limited exercise in tweaking details or, if it is not initiated early in the process and if its outcome does not correlate with the end-product, in public relations. The way in which the charrette is designed, conducted, and its information utilized should itself be carefully articulated through co-operative dialogue well before the process is initiated.
Design Competitions

Additionally, a design competition could be held to attract publicity and top talent to developing innovative ideas for both sites. Design parameters could be established by the collective visioning process, and entries to the competition then assessed, and used as the basis of public design charrettes. UBC launched such a competition for its “University Town”, although the criteria were significantly less challenging than what is proposed here for the Urban Village. The criteria recently drafted in Victoria for the development of the Dockside Lands would serve as a more appropriate model.

For UVic, such a process would be of special value since we don’t have a school of planning, or architecture. Victoria does, however, possess much local talent. By creating far-reaching design parameters rooted in urban sustainability, and opening the competition to the world, such a competition would give UVic international cache, while also highlighting this local talent. This would provide an excellent external relations opportunity, with long-term benefits.

3.3 Financial Mechanisms

In order to encourage innovative development, alternative financing mechanisms must be explored. Government funding is often restrictive, unpredictable, and unsupportive of innovation. It is also unlikely that financing for the Urban Village and for projects on the UVic Farmlands will be made available through regular provincial channels, although federal interest could be very high.

Since government funding is problematic, it is thus extremely important for proposals—such as the University-financed support services building—to be considered for inclusion within an Urban Village. Given some of the functions included in this building, these services could even form the anchor of a mixed-use building that, for example, included stores at street level that could, themselves, be financed in a non-traditional fashion. In this situation, it is especially important for the University to develop a comprehensive plan before development proceeds.

Another aspect of sustainable campus development mandates innovation in capital funding. This is particularly the case for green buildings that possess higher initial costs, but that can pay for themselves through operational savings during the life of the facility. Given the ministerial funding formula, it is important for the university to work with other institutions to change the provincial approach, while also addressing new funding strategies, such as the creating of a special fund. Models exist that can serve as a guide for development at UVic, and these should be studied systematically, perhaps through the Business school. Here we will highlight just three potential models (development corporations, private-public partnerships, and initiating development funds) that might be combined for different aspects of any projects. More models exist that should be explored.
Development Corporations

Development corporations offer some legal benefits to universities. As they are considered outside of normal university processes, care must be taken to ensure that public consultation and collaboration are maintained. The pros and cons to such an approach should be carefully identified before adopted.

Some of the development of SFU’s UniverCity has been managed by a development corporation called the ‘SFU Community Trust’. The trust was created for both legal and practical reasons that limited the university’s liability. The SFU Community Corporation has carried out the work and employed a number of financing mechanisms:

- A loan from the endowment funds was used for initial planning;
- Private funding was secured from HSBC for more detailed planning;
- Land leased to private developers for residential development will pay for the start up loans;
- The corporation is building the village core itself with a construction (75%), and equity (25%) loan from HSBC;
- SFU will maintain control of the commercial space, but will sell the residential apartment to a management company to cover the loans.

While there are clear benefits to such an approach, care must be taken to ensure that the corporation does not become a way to keep public consultation at arms length.

Source: http://www.univercity.ca/

Private-Public Partnerships

Many universities are entering into partnerships with developers to complete portions of their campuses. The university can maintain as much or as little control over the project as it desires. In the case of an urban village, the university could lease land to a developer with constraints on the management of residential and commercial components. One concern with this type of project is maintaining effective control. At SFU and UBC there have been complaints that the housing developed has been beyond the budgets of students and staff.

An Emerging Private-Private Partnership at Royal Roads University

“Royal Roads University is seeking expressions of interest from the private sector for a partner to design, build, finance, operate, and maintain a 150-room hotel/conference facility. Royal Roads wants to build the new facility to meet the needs of its rapidly growing enrolment as well as those of tourists and other external visitors the university hopes to attract to the site through its new tourism outreach initiative. “These two factors – heritage requirements (its financial obligation to maintain Hatley Park National Historic Site – its campus) and fiscal sustainability – require the university to act in an entrepreneurial, non-traditional manner,” said Skinner, who describes the proposed partnership as a distinctive and unprecedented opportunity. “We want to leverage the natural and cultural assets of the site and pursue our core business of education while working with partners to deliver non-educational services such as accommodation management.”” [www.royalroads.ca/Channels/about+rru/news+and+events/news+releases rru+seeks+private+partner+to+build+and+run+hotel-conference+facility.htm]
One example is the University of Akron, which has entered into a public/private partnership with Signet Development Ltd. to build student residences. Signet will act as project managers, and the university will take over the residences and make lease payments to Signet using the funds from rent. This type of partnership can be risky, but has been undertaken by universities that have ambitions beyond what their capital funds allow. This may prove to be a helpful strategy for developing the urban village, and warrants further study. Concerns about conflicting mandates between the university and the private developer can be minimized where the mission of the development partner is also oriented to advancing social and environmental goals. This is, for example, the nature of the partnership between Windmill Development and VanCity in the recently approved Docklands project on the Gorge waterway.

**Green Campus Loan Fund**

Another vehicle that could support innovations in design (e.g. a cogeneration facility) would be a green fund to loan the university monies required for these special purpose additions.

One model is the Harvard Green Campus Initiative (HGCI). With donations from the Offices of the President and Provost, a $3,000,000 interest-free revolving Green Campus Loan Fund (GCLF) was established to finance environmentally and economically beneficial projects that:

- involve infrastructure or behavioral improvements that reduce the University’s environmental impact, and
- that have a financial payback period of less than five years.

While UVic might not have 3 million dollars to establish such a fund (although it could fund-raise for this purpose), complementary avenues should be explored. For example, the UVic endowment fund might be a source of potential revenue to capitalize this fund. Indeed, where the fund’s investment makes comparable or better returns than current investment strategies, the benefits to the university are doubled! For example, if investments in enhanced energy efficiency produced returns on investment of 6% over the 5 or 10 year payback period, the endowment could grow; at the same time, that investment is creating a direct university benefit through higher quality infrastructure than would otherwise be unattainable. Another early suggestion is that pension funds of staff and faculty could (voluntarily) be directed to such a fund. It makes good economic sense as it would provide a locally-based opportunity for social investment that would benefit the place that many individuals spend most of their time; investing in your own backyard.

This is an area of great potential for UVic and warrants further investigation. An interdisciplinary team of graduate students might be established to investigate the potential for such a fund at UVic.
This study has presented a vision of the university as a model of urban sustainability and academic innovation. Incorporating a new, broader, integration into the fabric of the University will expand our, and the world’s, conception of what ‘education’ is all about.

This work also highlights an opportunity to enhance relations with local municipalities and the region, where UVic could be a visible leader in the sustainable movement by developing innovative approaches that address 21st century concerns in a more cooperative fashion. Sustainability and innovation are relatively simple concepts for the university to offer in classrooms, but comparatively difficult to internalize in its own facilities. Yet, integrating these concepts at all stages of planning offers great financial, social, and ecological returns for the university and surrounding community. As both Joe Van Belleghem and Moura Quayle suggest, the Pacific Northwest is ripe with opportunity for field-based and urban development projects.

This study is only a preliminary step in the process; our document is not prescriptive in its details and outcomes. From here, it is up to the community – staff, students, faculty, administrators, and UVic’s neighbours – to initiate a cooperative and comprehensive process. What can we do to address the challenges hanging over our shared humanity? What do you want UVic to look like in 20 years? In fifty years?

It is time to act. It is now time to build common ground.
Bibliography


