TRANSIT-ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT CASE STUDY

TIME, North Vancouver, British Columbia

155, 157, W. 1ST STREET

Figure 1—Time with view of Burrard Inlet, downtown Vancouver and SeaBus ferry terminal in background

Project data

Project name	Time
Developer	Esplanade Capital Ventures Limited and Seagate Ventures Ltd.
Completed	2005
Site area	8,216 m² (2 acres)
Number, type, size of residential units	258 condominium apartments; seven townhouses. Unit sizes from 46 to 140+ m² (500 to 1,500+ sq. ft.)
Other land uses on the site	Grocery store 3,000 m² (32,000 sq. ft.); drug store; community centre 3,300 m² (35,500 sq. ft.)
Gross residential density	322 uph (units per hectare)
Parking	111 commercial spaces plus 1.3 spaces per residential unit provided by developer. Further 150 spaces for public use (cost-shared with municipality). All on-site parking is underground.
Maximum height	15 storeys
Unit selling prices, 2003	$260,000 to $400,000
Type of transit	SeaBus passenger ferry and regional bus depot
Distance to transit station	200 m (650 ft.)
Pedestrian connectivity	Very good

Canada

CMHC SCHL
HOME TO CANADIANS

PROJECT SUMMARY — TIME, North Vancouver

Time is a 265-unit, mixed-use project located within easy walking distance of the SeaBus passenger ferry terminal and market at Lonsdale Quay in North Vancouver.

The project was completed as part of the ongoing re-development of a former industrial area that is now part of a town centre that has the highest density in the Greater Vancouver Regional District, outside of the metropolitan core. Complementing and integrated with the two residential towers is a drug store, a grocery store and a community centre that is owned and operated by the City of North Vancouver. Assembly and marketing of the lands for the project was completed by the City, which selected the developer through a request for proposals.

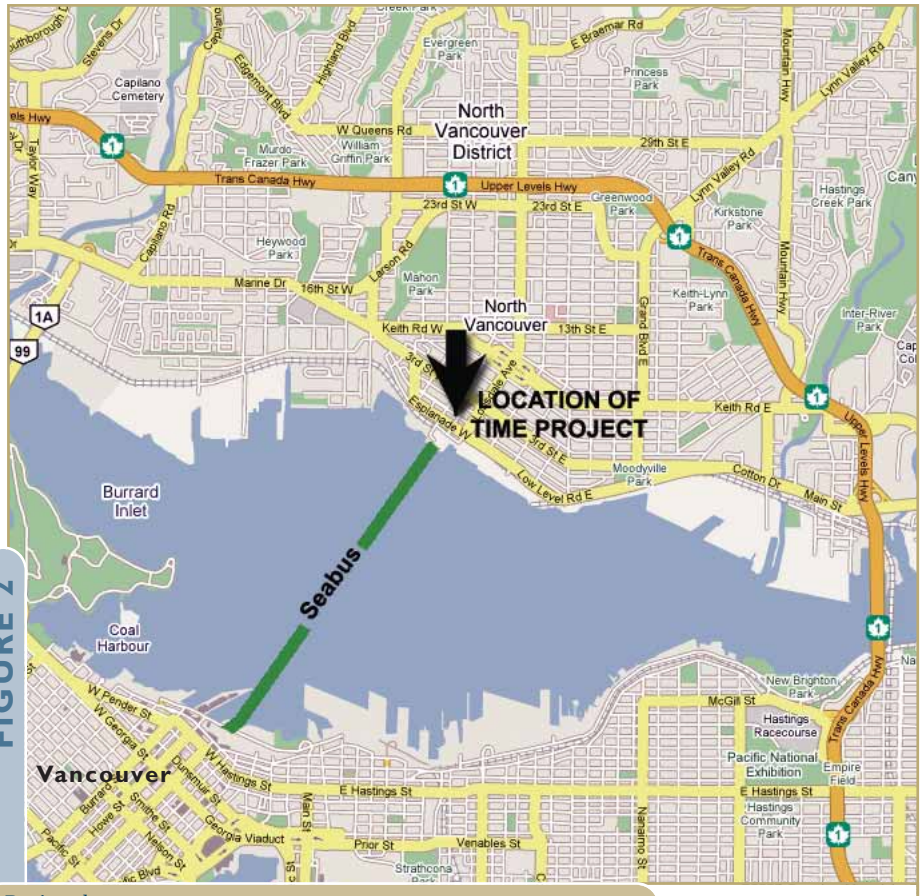

FIGURE 2

Regional context map

TRANSIT SYSTEM OVERVIEW AND PROJECT CONTEXT

Developed in 1977 by the province of B.C., the SeaBus passenger ferry system was the first component of a regional rapid transit network that now includes two SkyTrain elevated rail lines, the West Coast Express commuter rail system and a growing rapid bus system along the region's heavily populated major arterials. One more SkyTrain line is under construction and another is planned for 2011. TransLink, the Greater Vancouver Transportation Authority, plans a third SeaBus to provide more frequent service by 2009 or 2010.

TransLink investments must support the Greater Vancouver Regional District's Growth Management Plan (the Livable Region Strategic Plan), which calls for complete, compact communities that maximize transportation choice. This plan designates growth within a "Growth Concentration Area" centred around the Metropolitan core. Each municipality within the region is required to prepare a "Regional Context Statement" that describes how its Official Community Plan policies will support the Regional Plan.

Through the Urban Transportation Showcase Program[1] and through working policy, TransLink supports and promotes development around its rapid transit stations. Development patterns in the Lonsdale area both shape, and are shaped by, the development of the transit system. Station access priorities include walking, cycling and transit before automobile access.

[1] TransLink, *Urban Showcase*, English, retrieved January, 2007 from www.translink.bc.ca/Plans_Projects/Urban_Showcase/default.asp

The SeaBus, which travels frequently across Burrard Inlet between downtown Vancouver and Lonsdale Quay in North Vancouver, links the metropolitan core with the town centre, known as the Lonsdale Town Centre.

FIGURE 3

The location of Time and the North Vancouver SeaBus transit node

The SeaBus was selected as a way to improve travel options across Burrard Inlet without having to invest in new or expanded bridge infrastructure. It was also seen as an opportunity to spur development in the area around its northern terminal (Lonsdale Quay), which had suffered as a local shipyard struggled in the postwar economy and was ripe for redevelopment by 1977.

As the area became more attractive to home seekers, the City of North Vancouver, which owned many small properties in the area as a result of tax defaults, recognized the opportunity to assemble and sell these lots and help achieve the objectives of higher density mixed-use revitalization.[2]

Until 1958, there had been a ferry link between downtown Vancouver and Lonsdale. The SeaBus and resulting revitalization of the Lonsdale terminus area were made possible by the provincial government's purchase of land at and around this area, and by the creation of the Lonsdale Quay Development Corporation (a Crown corporation) to manage the land assembly, purchase and development.

Two Crown corporations, BC Rail and the Insurance Corporation of BC, were relocated from downtown Vancouver to anchor the terminal area development, and all area bus service was re-routed into the terminal area (to the discontent of many transit customers at the time), providing instant transit ridership and critical market mass to Lonsdale.

The SeaBus service is now very popular, consistently receiving very positive satisfaction ratings in TransLink market research, mainly because of its high reliability and speed. SeaBus carries more than five million passengers per year. In the first half of 2006, passenger numbers increased by seven per cent.

At its southern terminus at Vancouver's Waterfront Station, the SeaBus connects to downtown Vancouver, to the SkyTrain elevated rapid transit and to the West Coast Express commuter rail, creating a highly integrated, multi-modal transit hub.

SeaBus was planned as part of an overall transit and land-use planning strategy. It was seen as a catalyst for development of the area. Park-and-ride was discouraged in favour of good public transit, walking and cycling links to the terminal as a way of supporting overall transit use and transit-oriented development. Objectives for development around the Lonsdale Quay SeaBus terminal included opening the waterfront to public use and improvement of the area from declining industrial-warehouse use to a high-density, transit-oriented centre. Increased tourism was also seen as an objective.

Densities surrounding the station are highly supportive of transit ridership. Before the 1977 introduction of SeaBus, there was little development in the area. The former town site and heavy industrial uses were in decline. Today, it is a hub of high-density, mixed-use development. Lonsdale Terminal is considered very successful in terms of providing a multi-model transit hub and for having spurred transit-oriented, mixed-use development in this area. This development, of which the Time project is a part, continues today.

[2] "Marketing of City-owned Properties: North Vancouver: Residential Intensification, "*Municipal Initiatives Case studies.* CMHC, 2003. Bilingual, retrieved January, 2007 from. www.cmhc-schl.gc.ca/en/inpr/su/sucopl/sucopl_002.cfm

FIGURE 4

Lonsdale Quay Market at the SeaBus Terminal

DEVELOPER'S PERSPECTIVE

Replacing a vacant surface parking lot, the 265-unit Time project was developed through a partnership between Esplanade Capital Ventures and Seagate Ventures. The project broke ground in 2002; the retail component with a grocery store, drug store, office space and commercial underground parking was completed in December, 2003 and the community centre was opened in June, 2004. The two residential towers were finished in early 2005.

The project includes 258 condominium apartments and seven townhouses. The fact that the Lonsdale Ferry Terminal is only 200 metres away and pedestrian connections are good,was an important consideration for the developer. Project marketing promoted this benefit as well as the proximity to surrounding amenities.

The developer purchased the property from the City of North Vancouver through a request for proposals process. In addition to the residential and commercial components of the project, the developer was required to build a community centre for sale to the City. A green roof on top of the grocery store was encouraged by the City as many of the residential units look down on this roof in addition to many other benefits.

Parking and bicycle storage

The developer was required to replace the surface parking spaces lost as a result of the development. The project contains 111 spaces for the commercial component and a further 1.3 spaces for each residential unit, totalling 353 residential parking spaces. The City required the developer to provide an additional 150 public parking spaces above the minimum number required, and the City agreed to a cost-sharing arrangement for these extra spaces, which are in two underground parking garages.

The developer found that the number of spaces for the residential units was slightly too few as more people owned cars than was anticipated in such a transit-oriented project. There are 70 bicycle spaces, of which 53 are indoor.

Transit-oriented design considerations

The project is located only 200 metres from the SeaBus terminal. This was a fairly large factor in the developer's investment decision, as the SeaBus is very popular with commuters to downtown Vancouver. However, the age of the terminal (30 years) and the poor design of the bus terminal next to it mean that it is not the most welcoming place for pedestrians and it is hoped that it will be improved. Upon completion of construction, the City required the developer to reinstall a pedestrian access next to the east side of the project, which connects to a walkway-bridge crossing Esplanade to the SeaBus terminal.

Project success and costs

Built in two phases, the project's unit sizes range from very small apartments, less than 46 m^2 (500 sq. ft.), to townhouses of more than 140 m^2 (1,500 sq. ft.).

The developer estimates that 25 per cent of the buyers were investors and 40 per cent were first-time buyers. Prices in 2003 ranged from $260,000 to $400,000. This compares to the average new townhouse selling price in North Vancouver District in 2003 of $389,871 and average new high-rise condo selling price of $251,464.[3]

[3] CMHC, B.C. Market Analysis Centre, Vancouver

The project was considered very successful by the developer and met their profit expectations. All units were sold within 90 days of offering. The availability of transit allowed the developer to sell the units for a slight premium (perhaps five per cent) and was used in the marketing material for the project. There were no unusual financial or liability issues and no government financial assistance.

TABLE 1 Summary of costs

Land	$9.44 million
Construction	$44.27 million
Soft costs	$10.29 million
Infrastructure	Nil (existing infrastructure)
Site clean-up	Nil
Total	$64 million

Municipal support

The developer worked closely with the City, which was very supportive of the project. The City assembled the land and requested proposals for the redevelopment of the site as part of a larger marketing program for City-owned lots in this area.

The City also offered zoning flexibility and supported the zoning changes the developer proposed. This support allowed the project to proceed even though the largely residential project was somewhat different from the commercial development originally earmarked for the area. No further incentives were provided or needed.

The City also marketed the newly developing neighbourhood in Lower Lonsdale throughout the region, which built support and interest from the development community as well as potential purchasers.

Barriers and obstacles

The project encountered some opposition from neighbours, mainly because of concerns over building height and potential view loss. As a result of the opposition, the height of the buildings was slightly lowered. The public consultation process was standard, with the use of public open houses and meetings to present and discuss the design and eventually a public hearing before final approval of the project.

The City's requirement for a community centre did initially pose some financial challenges but this was clearly part of the request for proposals and was successfully integrated into the bid package and eventual design.

Key success factors and lessons learned

The developer attributes the success of the project to the variety of amenities surrounding the project and to a strong residential market. Good access to the transit station allowed the developer to add roughly five per cent as a premium on the selling price. This type of complex, mixed-use project requires a knowledgeable team (developer, consultants and so on) and a skilled contractor to ensure that costs are carefully controlled. The experience of the City in dealing with large, complex projects was also a contributing factor to the successful outcome.

MUNICIPAL PLANNER'S PERSPECTIVE

Planning objectives

When the SeaBus was introduced by BC Transit in the 1970s, The City of North Vancouver saw an opportunity for redevelopment of the area, which at the time was a deteriorating light industrial area with vacant land beside a shipyard.

The City has assembled properties in the area over a number of years, which included $150 million worth of consolidation and sales.[4] Site 5, as the parcel was then known, had been identified as a strategic location for commercial development and a community centre in the Lower Lonsdale Planning Study, which served as the master plan for redevelopment of the area. Land uses for Site 5 were not precisely defined in the plan. At that time, the site was zoned industrial including high-tech use, but the City was open to rezoning since the high-tech sector had crashed and an improving residential market presented an opportunity for a project with a higher proportion of housing than originally envisioned.

[4] "Marketing of City-owned Properties: North Vancouver: Residential Intensification," *Municipal Initiatives Case studies*. CMHC, 2003. Bilingual, retrieved January, 2007 from. www.cmhc-schl.gc.ca/en/inpr/su/sucopl/sucopl_002.cfm

Municipal process and support

The City issued a Request for Proposals that laid out certain requirements for Site 5. The requirements included a community centre, retail space, parking requirements (to replace surface parking) and a seamless pedestrian link with the SeaBus. The developer responded with a scheme that met these requirements but proposed a greater density of residential development with smaller footprints and higher buildings than the City had planned.

The municipality supported the project by doing the pre-planning work to establish the site as appropriate for a high-density, mixed-use project, consolidating the land and working out early issues such as views. The project required rezoning from industrial to a comprehensive development zone. The first energy-efficient boilers associated with the City's new district energy heating system were also installed on this site.

FIGURE 5

Pedestrian path leading to Time

As part of the ongoing development of the Lower Lonsdale neighbourhood and the marketing of City-owned lands, the City promoted the area through a program called "Lower Lonsdale Life Style." Media information packages, a website and a brochure were developed and distributed in the Greater Vancouver area. The information highlighted the North Shore quality of life and services and amenities in Lower Lonsdale. Response to this effort has been very strong, with rapid sales of condominiums and strong returns to the City for the land.

Public consultation

There was a long and involved public process to support the land use before issuing the request for proposals. The municipality was flexible in interpreting the rules (allowing more residential density and greater height) than originally planned, even though the public was somewhat concerned that the plan was being changed.

Public input regarding the project was gathered through conventional public open houses and meetings. Most local residents supported the project and wanted to see something positive happen in Lower Lonsdale. A smaller group vociferously opposed the project because of the density, view blockages and increased height compared to the master plan.

This public opposition was somewhat quelled when the developer reduced the height of the buildings to decrease view blockage. Most people now support the project, which has come to be seen as a positive contribution to the area.

Challenges

At the time SeaBus was introduced, the municipality didn't have much expertise in or influence over the design of the station and the working relationship between the City and Province was poor. The high cost of the system and emphasis on durability at the expense of esthetics resulted in a utilitarian station design that is spartan and uninviting. Even though the SeaBus journey across Burrard Inlet is spectacular, the arrival is disappointing.

More recently, a working relationship has been established in which TransLink and the municipality work together to develop station design guidelines. Through the Urban Transportation Showcase Program, the City and TransLink are working to improve the pedestrian realm to encourage the use of the SeaBus as a multi-modal transportation hub.

There has been a long-term deficit in parking associated with the older construction in Lower Lonsdale. However, the lack of available space near the waterfront makes it awkward to provide parking even though residents and businesses had strongly indicated that this was an important consideration in the Lower Lonsdale planning process. The Time project managed to replace and even increase the surface parking by creating underground parking, even though there was a high cost in doing so.

Success factors

Even though the area is now very successful and commands high land prices, when SeaBus was first introduced it was touch and go whether the area would develop enough momentum to be successful. Many of the local businesses had some lean years but stayed the course and are now flourishing.

The project manages to provide good pedestrian linkages to the Transit Station and is considered very compatible with the rest of the neighbourhood and with the overall planning intent for the area.

RESIDENTS' PERSPECTIVES

Thirty-three project residents were interviewed in the summer of 2006 to learn about their motivations for choosing a home in that location, their level of satisfaction and their transportation choices.

TABLE 2 Reasons for choosing Time

Reason	Main reason (%)	Some influence (%)*
Proximity to transit	27	36
Proximity to work	18	30
Proximity to amenities (for example, shopping, parks, trails)	24	63
Price of unit	6	12
Size of unit	9	24
Architectural features (for example, layout, look of building)	3	30
Other or don't know	12	24

* More than one response allowed so total may not equal 100 per cent

FIGURE 6

Courtyard between the two towers of Time

Reason for choosing this location

Proximity to transit was the most frequently cited main reason for purchasing in this location, with 27 per cent of residents choosing Time for this reason. Proximity to amenities also figured high on the list, with 24 per cent of respondents saying they chose Time mainly for this reason. Further, 18 per cent chose Time because it was close to work.

As a separate question, residents were asked to what extent the building's location near transit influenced their decision to live there. Overall, 85 per cent said that the building's location near transit had a strong or some influence on their purchase decision.

Overall, residents are very satisfied with the quality of the project, including 78 per cent of residents who are satisfied with the amount of parking provided for their personal use and 76 per cent who are satisfied with parking provided for visitors. Ninety per cent say they are very satisfied or somewhat satisfied with the character of the neighbourhood, that is, the style and type of housing, landscaping, shops and so on that contribute to the atmosphere of the area. Further, 97 per cent are satisfied with the amenities in the neighbourhood, such as shopping, services, schools and recreation.

Most—81 per cent—residents were very or somewhat satisfied with the overall cost of living in this location even though for 64 per cent, the purchase price was higher than that of their previous dwelling. Thirty-eight per cent said that they accepted the higher cost primarily because of the location close to transit, 29 per cent because of design features and 33 per cent because of neighbourhood amenities. The design and appearance of the buildings is very popular with residents, all of whom said they were very or somewhat satisfied with this aspect of the project. Ninety-one per cent said they were satisfied or somewhat satisfied with the size of their units.

Travel to work, shopping, school

The proximity and good connectivity to transit and amenities seems to have resulted in fewer households with two or more cars—about 22 per cent of households own two or more cars, compared to 37 per cent in the Vancouver CMA (Census Metropolitan Area). In addition, 21 per cent say they use transit daily and 45 per cent use transit at least once a week. In Greater Vancouver, the modal share for transit is 10.8 per cent.[5] Thirty-eight per cent of project residents travel to work by public transit or by walking, compared to 18 per cent for the Vancouver CMA.[6]

TABLE 3 Comparison of travel patterns of Time residents with Vancouver CMA

Travel variable	Time	Vancouver CMA*
Mode of travel to work	50% motor vehicle as driver 11% car pool 31% public transit 8% walk	72% motor vehicle as driver 7% car pool 11.5% public transit 6.5% walk 2% bike 1% other
Percentage of households with vehicle(s)	88%; 22% two or more cars	84%; 37% two or more cars†
Average length of trip to work	20 min. (one way)	67 minutes (round trip)‡

* Source: 2001 Census, Statistics Canada
† Source: *Spending Patterns in Canada, 2001*, Statistics Canada
‡ Source: *General Social Survey on Time Use: Cycle 19, The Time it Takes to Get to Work and Back*, Statistics Canada (by Martin Turcotte), 2005

All the residents interviewed rated the trip from home to the transit station as either very or somewhat pleasant and very convenient. For most (66 to 89 per cent), the streets and sidewalks felt safe. There are trees along the route, walking paths are separate for the street and buildings along the way are attractive.

Of those travelling to work, 31 per cent travel by public transit, eight per cent walk and the rest either drive alone (50 per cent) or with others (11 per cent). Of those using transit, all walked to and from the transit station. The average trip time from home to work was just under 20 minutes, which is shorter than the Vancouver CMA average of 67 minutes for the round trip. Twenty-one per cent said they use public transit to get to work more often since moving to Time. The majority cited convenience as the primary reason for this change. Only one resident now drives to work more often than before and one uses transit less often than before.

Of those residents making shopping trips, 76 per cent walk, three per cent use public transit, and the rest drive. Sixty per cent said they walk more for shopping trips than they did in their previous home location and none walk less. Again, convenience was cited as the major reason. One person uses transit less than before for these trips. Nearly all respondents did not make regular trips to school or daycare.

TABLE 4 Change in travel patterns since last home location

Change	Work trips (%)	Shopping trips (%)
Use transit more than before	21	3
Drive less than before	0	27
Walk more than before	3	60
Own one less car	3	3
Previous home was not a high-rise (High-rise—more than five storeys)	76	

[5] Translink, 2004 Greater Vancouver Trip Diary Survey.
[6] Source: 2001 Census, Statistics Canada

Demographics

Respondents tend to have smaller households, be younger and have higher household income than the Vancouver CMA averages. Only 24 per cent had previously lived in a high-rise (more than five storeys) and 36 per cent had previously lived in a single-detached dwelling. In Time, 97 per cent of the units are high-rise, indicating a strong willingness of purchasers to shift to a denser form of housing in exchange for other benefits.

TABLE 5 Demographic and income data

Demographic variable	Time	Vancouver CMA*
Number of people per household	1.6	2.6
Age range†	45% under 35 45% 35–65 9% over 65	20% under 35 61% 35–65 19% over 65
Household income (pre-tax)	16% under $50,000 51% $50,000–$100,000 24% over $100,000 9% don't know/refused	50% under $50,000 34% $50,000–$100,000 16% over $100,000

* Source, 2001 Census, Statistics Canada
† For Time, average age of survey respondents and for Vancouver CMA, average age of household maintainer(s)

SUMMARY AND LESSONS LEARNED

This project successfully builds on the original vision of the Province of B.C. and City of North Vancouver to redevelop the Lonsdale area for a new urban village centred around a passenger ferry terminal.

Guided by the Lonsdale Area Planning Study, the area is now flourishing with several high-profile projects developed in the last few years. The Time project is a good example of a private sector project delivering a high-density, mixed-use, transit-oriented project that is in keeping with the City's objectives to provide jobs, homes and amenities near a multi-modal transit hub. The project has been successful for the developer, who used the location to attract purchasers wanting a convenient location near amenities and transit.

The municipality successfully managed, through an RFP process, to attract a developer who would satisfy its objectives for the area. This required some flexibility and fortitude in the face of moderate public opposition to the project. City support for this project also included land assembly, rezoning and general marketing of the area.

Residents are generally very satisfied with their purchase and the proximity, convenience and quality of the connection to transit has resulted in higher rates of walking and use of public transit to get to work and for shopping.

Over half the respondents cited proximity to amenities or transit as their main reason for purchasing. Eighty-five per cent said proximity to transit had a strong or some influence on their purchase decision. Compared to their previous home location, 21 per cent now take transit to work more often and 60 per cent now walk to shopping more often.

Three-quarters shifted to a high-rise dwelling from lower-density housing forms when they purchased their home in Time, even though 64 per cent said the price was higher than that of their previous dwelling. Thirty-eight per cent said that they accepted this higher cost primarily because of the location close to transit, 29 per cent because of design features and 33 per cent because of neighbourhood amenities.

CONTACT INFORMATION

Developer

Shelley Lear
Investment Coordinator
Esplanade Capital Ventures Limited
20th Floor, 1040 W. Georgia Street
Vancouver, B.C. V6E 4H1
Telephone: 604-640-3508

Planner

Richard White
Waterfront Project
Development Manager
and Deputy Director of
Community Development
City of North Vancouver, B.C.
Telephone: 604-983-3909
e-mail: rwhite@cnv.org
Website: www.cnv.org

Transit authority

Joanna Brownell
Transportation Planner
Greater Vancouver Transportation
Authority (TransLink)
1600-4720 Kingsway,
Burnaby, B.C. V5H 4N2
Telephone: 604-453-3066
Fax: 604-453-4697
e-mail: joanna_brownell@translink.bc.ca
Website: www.translink.bc.ca

REFERENCES

Greater Vancouver Regional District.
Livable Region Strategic Plan Adopted Jan 20, 1996.

Translink.
Three-year Plan and Ten-Year Outlook: Strategic
Transportation Plan Amendment. Feb 2004.

City of North Vancouver.
Report: Re-Zoning Application Site 5 – 144 to 170 West Esplanade and 161 West 1st Street. April 17, 2002

Printed in Canada
Produced by CMHC 14-04-09

65508