Sustainability For Uncertain Times:
The expanding roles of critical engagement in urban environmental planning for community development

26 September, 2011
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This presentation is on my scholarly achievements to date and a research plan for the next 3 years. My work is in the field of environmental planning. Often this work is in conjunction with urban and regional planning, at broader scales, and urban design, site planning, and public art interventions at finer scales.
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Today, there are divergent approaches to urban environmental planning – especially related to strategies for sustainability, protection of natural and cultural heritage, infrastructure expansion, averting hazards (increasingly related to global change), and the roles of culture and aesthetics in community development.
The central argument in my work is that for urban environmental planning and design to contribute to sustainability initiatives, especially in these uncertain economic times often with hazards intensified by climate change, more critical and comprehensive sets of environmental planning methods are necessary.
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With greater pressures for sustainability, in the context of movements for better protections from hazards and more just distributions of the costs and benefits of community change,
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scholars of urban environmental planning are compelled to explore implications for better identification of the groups served (stakeholder analysis), programming for social needs in spatial planning.
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the roles of biophysical and social data, analysis, aesthetics, contemporary culture, and how particular combinations of social and political economic pressures influence governance and implementation.
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By more ‘critical’ environmental planning, I mean far deeper and reflexive engagements in stakeholder analysis, the use of natural and social data in site analysis and programming, the adequacy of data, decision-making and governance frameworks related to risk, community engagement, and communication of decisions.
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In viewing urban environmental planning as a cycle of research and decision-making activities, my research has been focused on questions related to the following phases.
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primary research fields for urban environmental planning
1. factors initiating environmental planning
   a. social & state responses to environmental change
   b. political economy
   c. stakeholder analysis
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primary research fields for urban environmental planning

2. analysis
a. field data collection
b. literature review
c. time series and historical reconstructions
d. statistical analysis
e. political economic analysis
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primary research fields for urban environmental planning

3. identification of scenarios (that satisfy human needs including for sustainability)

a. regional and international scale
b. metropolitan and provincial scales
c. neighbourhood and site scales
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Primary research fields for urban environmental planning

4. Choice of scenarios identified in planning studies
   a. Political economic analysis
   b. Cultural and aesthetic analysis
   c. Margins of risk (and acceptable costs of hazards)
   d. “Irreplacability” and the permanence of a decision
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Primary research fields for urban environmental planning

5. Communication of environmental planning decisions (to various parts of society and government agencies)
6. Implementation of decisions
7. Monitoring of implementation, evaluation, and initiation of subsequent planning cycles
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In short, my research in urban environmental planning centres on expanded conversations around site planning, better integrating a wide range of scales, combined with interdisciplinary investigations on exploring new forms of
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stakeholder analysis,
integration of science and other forms of knowledge, the recognition of cultural landscapes as part of more effective and transparent forms of decision-making and governance – for sustainable community development.
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All of this research, over the last three decades, focuses on finding more socially satisfactory forms of site planning to create and maintain a wider array of infrastructure.
Sustainability For Uncertain Times: The expanding roles of critical engagement in urban environmental planning for community development from that necessary to satisfy basic human needs to maintaining ecological services and regional ‘life support’ to education and culture – all while better stewarding and rebuilding ecological infrastructure.
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infrastructure
(ecological + social) → economic development
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This expanded focus on "site planning," includes concerns for built and 'unbuilt' space and a wide range of design, planning and policy-related interventions.
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Engagement in scales can span 1:500 to singular, built structures and outdoor sites to neighbourhood texture to regional policy (>1:50,000) and implementation.
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Much of my work has been in the Pacific Rim and...
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In working in the Pacific Rim and Asia over the last 25 years, my work has focused on two frontiers of environmental planning on public space and infrastructure:
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1. planning protected areas for both better protection of ecosystems and biological resources and sustainable development for human communities
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The expanding roles of critical engagement in urban environmental planning for community development with a focus on forested coastal areas and islands and;
2. heavily contested urban open space where there are pressures from a range of social groups for greater sustainability (and enjoyment of related amenities).
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Dinghushan, Zhaoqing, Guangdong: Forest conservation in China remains problematic.
The forests, habitats and cultural landscapes of Dinghushan are increasingly vulnerable because of intensifying urbanisation in such coastal regions and warrant increasingly comprehensive environmental planning.
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Ecosystem recovery strategies & fostering sustainability on developing coasts
entire range of Garry Oak Ecosystems  areas with Northern Garry Oak Ecosystems
Regional Ecosystem Recovery Strategies & Site Planning Spanning Rural and Urban Areas
Urban and landscape design and land use planning, as part of ecosystem recovery strategies, requires in-depth stakeholder analysis. Few designers and planners, and even fewer biologists, are prepared in their educations for the necessary levels of social science and critical theory.
Conservation planning circa 1980, Mount Maxwell, Salt Spring Island, British Columbia
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Environmental planning for Island Communities:
Community-based development & conservation initiatives
Council of the Haida Nation
Protected Areas

Areas are in approximate hectares

Qanuu Gandll - 80
Qanuu - 290
Kumdis Slough - 1,340
Tsuuguus Gandll - 1,700
Jinanga - 1,790
Qaydgayuaaw-Qaysun - 2,180
Kunxalaas - 2,780
Gawii Gawagaay - 3,650
Nang Xaldangaas - 5,620
Community planning and design initiated by indigenous, tribal and other traditional communities.
Protecting a vulnerable site of a former long-house, Burnaby Island, Gwaii Haanas, Haida Gwaii, Canada
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Coastal Communities: Responses to global change & hazard risk
Archipel des Tuamotu, French Polynesia, 19 May, 2010
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1. ongoing research questions around conservation planning especially for coastal regions
   a. strategies to minimize fragmentation of strategic areas of forest, shore, shallow marine
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a. cont’d - habitats on islands and peninsulas;
b. frameworks for indigenous and other traditional communities asserting conservation and development priorities
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c. scenario generation balancing conservation and development pressures especially related to tourism, urbanisation, maintenance of ecological infrastructure such as watershed for urban water supplies, protected areas, logging, and heritage landscapes
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d. the expanding set of digital-spatial tools for environmental analysis and decision-support for planning and design

e. photographic documentation as part of the research and communication phases of urban environmental planning

neighbourhood development
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2. urban open space and pressures for sustainability
The Vancouver Peninsula has some of the highest populations densities and greatest disparities of wealth, consumption, health, and security per square km in Canada.
Urban environmental history, public art & cultural infrastructure for neighborhood development
Lookout (2001)
by Kristos Dikeakos and Noel Best
NOT EVEN A MEMORY NOW
Design & Planning for Green Roofs
Vancouver’s first formally planned and permitted green roof combined with housing
growing grapes in a roof garden
growing apples in a roof garden
some conversations on Vancouverism

What are some viable financing models for community development?
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How do these towers actually contribute to sustainability if they do at all?
Planning, Designing & Developing Entire Sustainable Neighborhoods
Vancouver’s Olympic Village in the months before its completion in early 2010. This new neighbourhood is the largest single sustainability project so far seen in North America involving $500 to $700 million of public and private financing. With falling sales and prices, the City of Vancouver could lose $200 to $300 million of taxpayer money – putting other city programs and infrastructure at risk for a decade or more.
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some conversations about local vernacular
from shangri-la to shangri-la, 2010, Vancouver by Ken Lum
Stakeholder Analysis: Gender, Sexual Minorities, Public Space, and Neighbourhood Development

Homomonumenten, Amsterdam
A well-loved open space along English Bay on the edge of Stanley Park, Vancouver - an area of conflict between the police and gay men in the 1970s – and where well into the 1980s, the problem of harassment of women (and violence) was largely ignored.
Reinstating Transgression Conference

Reinstating Transgression: Emerging Political Economies of Queer Space

Questions?

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Conference Goals

Mindful of the conference commitment to build tighter connections between political economy, queer theory, and studies of sexual and spatial transgression, presentations and discussions at “Reinstating Transgression” will use case studies of neighbourhoods and broader metropolitan areas to address two general themes:

- When and why are certain groups and individuals tolerated, often only as exceptions, while others are reconfirmed as deviant, and often made abject, re-marginalized by the state often through less overtly repressive means?

- How are more privileged and better-protected strata of sexual minorities competing with and sometimes being used by other local interests, and by aspects of state authority, in contest with more vulnerable social groups, e.g. the impoverished, the disabled, migrants and natives?

When/Where

April 17-18, 2010
American University,
Washington, DC
(Conjoined with the annual
Lavender Languages & Linguistics
Conference, April 16-17)

***Available for download

(All revised 4/12)
Conference Program
Conference Abstracts
Confirmed Contributors

Submit Abstracts

Please submit abstracts for conference presentations to Gordon Brent Ingram by March 15:
studio@gordonbrentingram.ca

The presentations in the colloquium are intended for a university press anthology. Discussion at this colloquium will support contributors in developing their papers into chapters for the book.

Conference Sponsors

American University
Lavender Languages and Linguistics Conference

Special Thanks to

The American University
Lavender Languages and Linguistics Conference

For their help in planning this conference.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Beach Instruction</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Please Do Not Swim After Sunset.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Please Do Not Swim If Red Flag Is Raised.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Please Do Not Swim At Current Areas Or Close To The Rocks.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Children Are The Responsibility Of Their Accompanying Adult.</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Please Conserve Marine &amp; Territorial Environment &amp; Do Not Damage It.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Please Keep The Beach Clean &amp; Do Not Leave Garbage.</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>No Pets Allowed On The Beach.</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>No Barbecue Or, Using Fire Or Camping On The Beach.</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>The Administration Will Not Be Responsible For Any Rental Accident Or That Negligence.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Legal Action Will Be Taken For Not Complying With The Above Instructions.</strong></td>
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**Thank You**

[www.publicparks.dubain.gov.ae](http://www.publicparks.dubain.gov.ae)

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**Notice:**

Swim with caution when yellow flag is raised.

**Notice:**

The beach is closed when the red flag is raised.
Dubai: Conservation of Heritage Neighborhoods & Ecological Infrastructure
The contrasting treatments of two of the older neighborhoods of Dubai, Bastakaya and Satwa, illustrates the tremendous pressures to discard traditional ecological (and social) infrastructure in favor of volatile global relationships.

Al Bastakaya
Misfat Al A'biyeen, Hajar Mountains, Oman – A high-density community that has proudly maintained traditional sustainability infrastructure and related knowledge.
Learning from and Restoring Mughal Gardens and Sustainability Practices
The irrigation system of the gardens of Humayan’s Tomb in New Delhi was recently reconstructed by a foundation funded by the Aga Khan Foundation.
Fatehpur Sikri, Uttar Pradesh, the celebrated planned capital of the Mughal Empire that was abandoned after fourteen years.
2. ongoing research questions on urban open space and sustainability transitions

a. strategies to better recognize and involve historically marginalised stakeholders
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b. expansions of best practices for urban sustainability to better engage in open space (‘sustainable landscapes’)

c. green roofs and urban food production (and native vegetation)

d. development of public art and other cultural infrastructure for neighbourhood development
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e. conservation of heritage neighbourhoods and landscapes
f. the reconstruction of urban environmental histories and the implications for contemporary environmental planning
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g. photographic documentation as part of the research and communication phases of urban environmental planning neighbourhood development
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INGRAM’S RESEARCH PRODUCT FOR THE COMING 3 YEARS:

1. completion of book manuscripts (some under contract);
2. more web-based presentations; and
3. exhibitions of text, photographs & plans
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Scenario generation in environmental planning

Tradeoffs in Biological Diversity Conservation: Alternatives in planning networks of protected areas. This project is on contract in the Springer-Verlag series on international environmental management.

additional research while completing the manuscript and teaching in China: An example from the south coast of China would be beneficial and could involve colleagues and students.
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Heritage conservation strategies for neighbourhoods and landscapes as part of urban sustainability transitions

Re-Ordering & After: Heritage landscapes and neighbourhoods under globalization. This book is an expansion of a 2005 monograph published through the University of California, Berkeley.

Additional research while completing the manuscript and teaching in China: An example from the central coast of China would be beneficial and could involve colleagues and students.
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Environmental planning strategies for islands with traditional communities under intensifying pressures from land use and climate change

Ingram, G. B. Islands in a Storm: Globalization, global change, and locally initiated conservation planning in some margins of the Pacific Rim.

Additional research while completing the manuscript and teaching in China: Some island examples from the south coast of China would be beneficial and could involve colleagues and students.
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Exploring urban planning and design frameworks that better involve historical marginalized stakeholders

Reinstating Transgression: Emerging Political Economies of Queer Space. This is an anthology based on a 2010 conference in Washington, DC, USA. 

Additional research while completing the manuscript and teaching in China: There are two chapters involving Chinese neighbourhoods (on the south coast and in Singapore) and more discussion with colleagues in Hong Kong would strengthen the entire anthology.
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Contemporary culture and social movements expressed in public space and implications for heritage conservation and urban design

dall oscurita all oscurita: The ecology of imagery, ideology & public open space in Rome.
additional research while completing the manuscript and teaching in China: The final phases of the research could involve some field and library work for students and colleagues in Italy.
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Environmental planning for conservation and restoration of heritage sites and landscapes

Shifting Islands: Aboriginal legacies in northern Garry oak ecosystems [on the Pacific Coast of Canada].
additional research while completing the manuscript and teaching in China: The final phases of the research could involve some field and library work for students and colleagues in Canada.
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Conclusions:
Fostering innovative research & design on environmental planning for sustainable community development in China
The kinds of site planning of landscapes and neighbourhoods necessary for adequately serving communities, including more proactive from hazards and threats to public health, require that urban environmental planners engage in a wider range of modes of research and critical evaluation of
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data collection and analytical frameworks as well as spatial planning and design methodologies.

March 1964
tsunami damage in Port Alberni, Vancouver Island, British Columbia, Canada
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In these uncertain times, policy, planning, and design are only as effective, in serving needs for housing, public space, and other forms of infrastructure, as the extent of the research and subsequent implementation, construction, and management at the site level.
The crisis ideograph consists of the character for danger followed by that of opportunity as in ‘danger-opportunity’.
In closing, I want to leave you with an image, that can be used as something of a metaphoric goal for environmental planning education for the coming decade – focused on building modest, safe and liveable communities that in this way are sustainable.
The Norwegian painter, Edvard Munch is most known for his iconic 1893 painting, *The Scream*. The painting has also become symbolic for the kind of chaos and despair that urban planners and designers attempt to alleviate and preclude (but that can often prevail in our own offices).
Munch painted a wider range of experiences. Less than a year before painting *The Scream*, he portrayed a far different vision in *Kiss By The Window*. The neighbourhood in the painting is safe, communitarian, and allows for an array of private and public space. But that ‘space’ was probably not so affluent in terms of catering to the most privileged sectors of today’s consumer society. For me, this vision could symbolized some goals for urban planning and design education at Xi’an Jiaotong - Liverpool University.
Edvard Munch, *Kiss by the Window*, 1892
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In the coming years, these kinds of modest goals for community, higher levels of protection from hazards, prosperity, and liveability, often involving questions of ‘quality of life’, will be as central to envisioning sustainable communities as new technologies, comprehensive plans, and expensive and supposedly iconic, ‘public-private’ developments.
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Sites related to this work.
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email: studio@gordonbrentingram.ca