

Gordon Brent Ingram PhD *side stream environmental design, Vancouver*

# Sustainability For Uncertain Times:

The expanding roles of  
critical engagement in urban  
environmental planning for  
community development

26 September, 2011

Department of Urban Planning and Design

Xi'an Jiaotong-Liverpool University

Suzhou Dushu Lake Higher Education Town, Jiangsu Province CHINA

## Sustainability For Uncertain Times:

The expanding roles of critical engagement in urban environmental planning for community development

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.

## Sustainability For Uncertain Times:

The expanding roles of critical engagement in urban environmental planning for community development

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.



## Sustainability For Uncertain Times:

The expanding roles of critical engagement in urban environmental planning for 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.



**Sustainability For Uncertain Times:**

**The expanding roles of critical engagement in urban environmental planning for community development**

**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,**

## Sustainability For Uncertain Times:

The expanding roles of critical engagement in urban environmental planning for community development

**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,**

**Sustainability For Uncertain Times:**

**The expanding roles of critical engagement in urban environmental planning for community development**

**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.**



## Sustainability For Uncertain Times:

The expanding roles of critical engagement in urban environmental planning for community development

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.

## Sustainability For Uncertain Times:

The expanding roles of critical engagement in urban environmental planning for community development

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***.

## Sustainability For Uncertain Times:

The expanding roles of critical engagement in urban environmental planning for community development

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



## Sustainability For Uncertain Times:

The expanding roles of critical engagement in urban environmental planning for community development

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

## Sustainability For Uncertain Times:

The expanding roles of critical engagement in urban environmental planning for community development

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



## Sustainability For Uncertain Times:

The expanding roles of critical engagement in urban environmental planning for community development

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



## Sustainability For Uncertain Times:

The expanding roles of critical engagement in urban environmental planning for community development

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

## Sustainability For Uncertain Times:

The expanding roles of critical engagement in urban environmental planning for community development

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

## Sustainability For Uncertain Times:

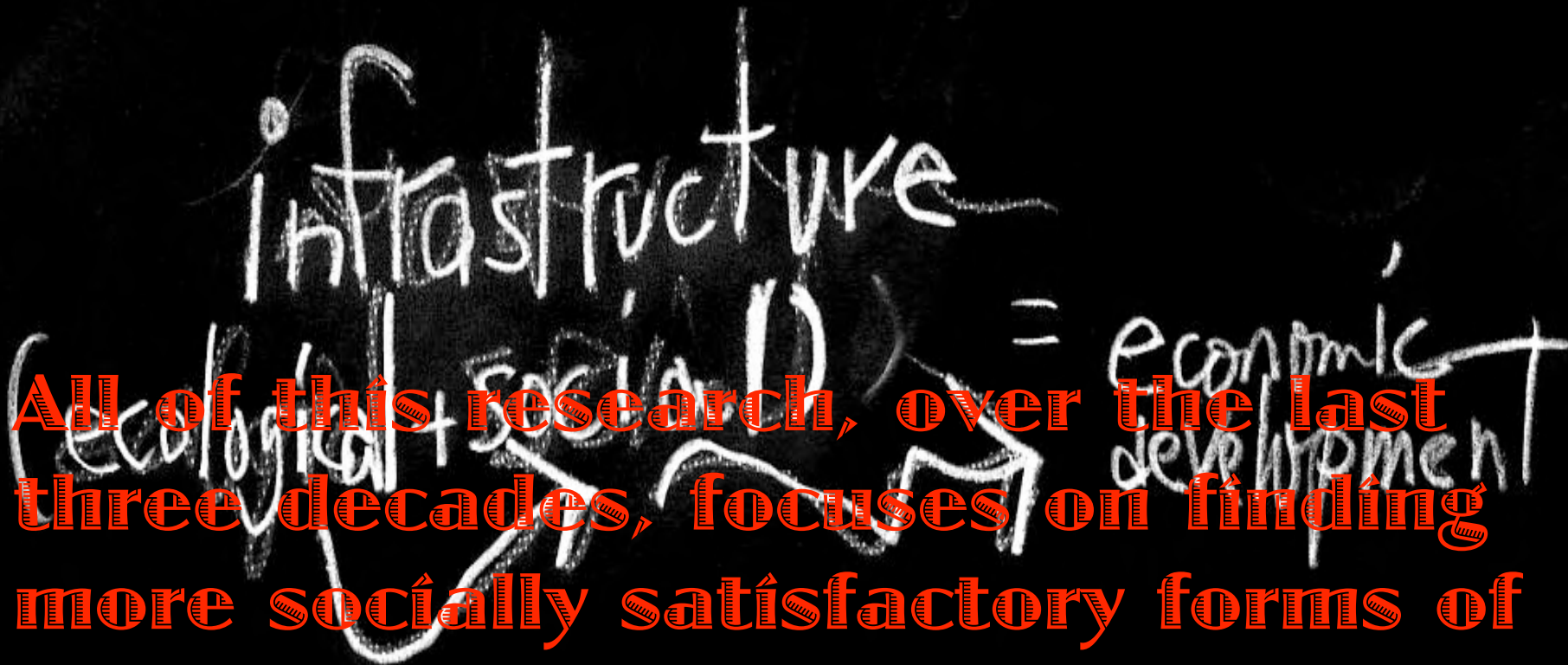
The expanding roles of critical engagement in urban environmental planning for community development

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.



## Sustainability For Uncertain Times:

The expanding roles of critical engagement in urban environmental planning for community development

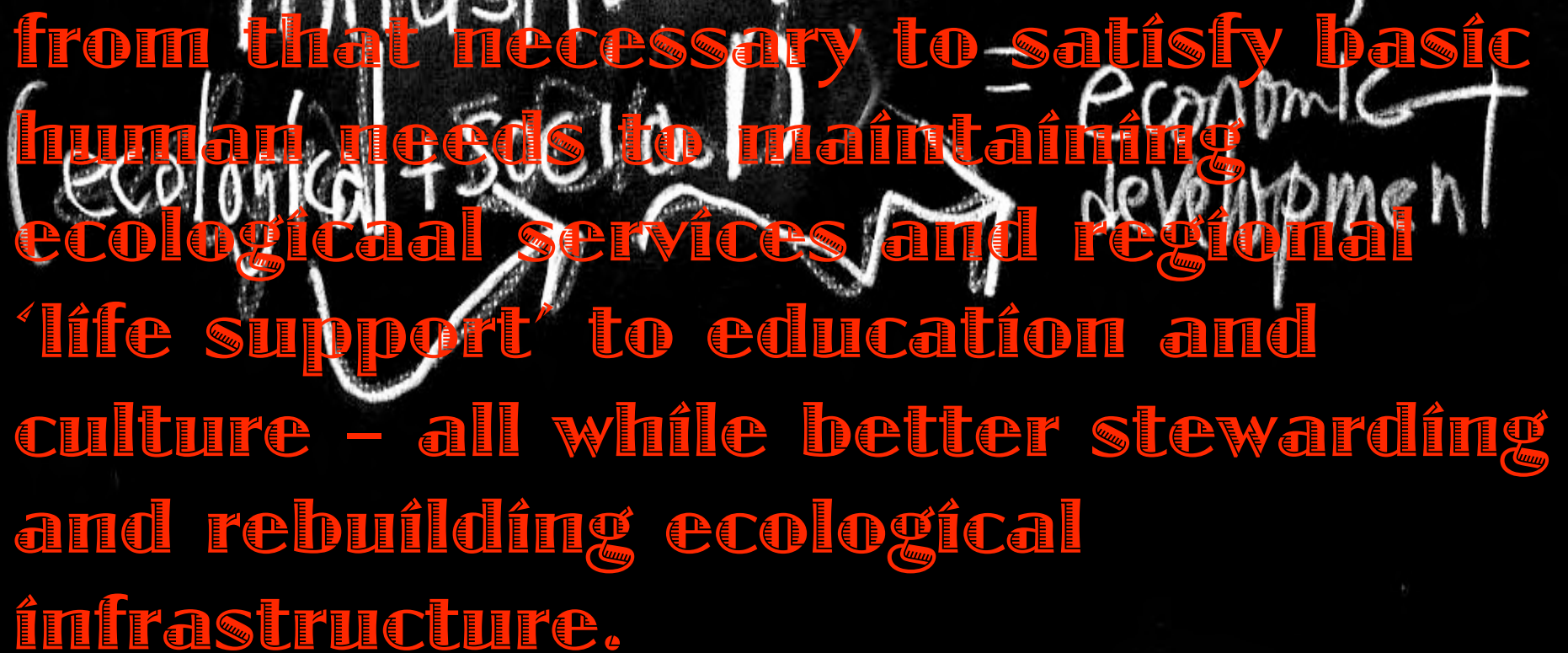


The background features a chalkboard with handwritten text and a diagram. At the top, the word 'infrastructure' is written in large, white chalk. Below it, the phrase '(ecological + social)' is written in white chalk, with a large, stylized arrow pointing from this phrase towards the right. To the right of the arrow, the words '= economic development' are written in white chalk. Overlaid on this chalkboard background is a block of red text.

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:

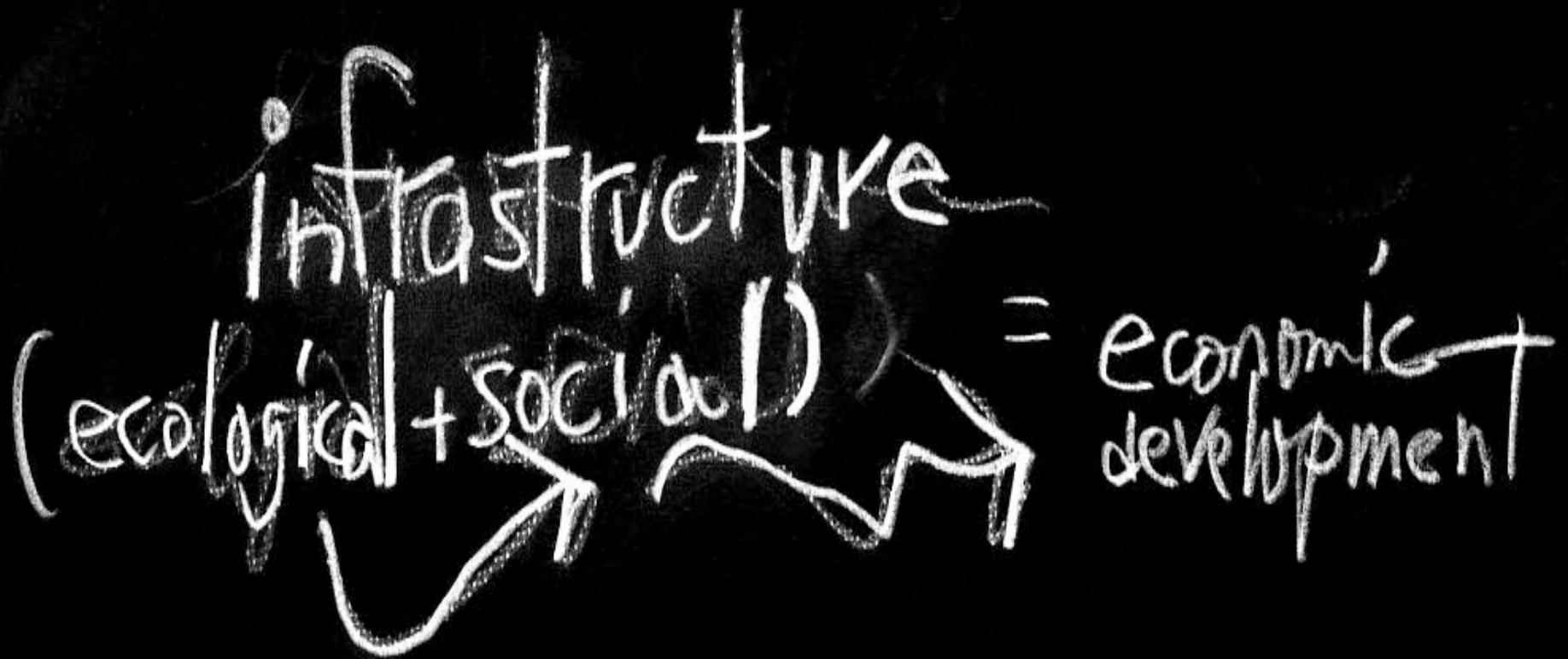
The expanding roles of critical engagement in urban environmental planning for community development



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.

## Sustainability For Uncertain Times:

The expanding roles of critical engagement in urban environmental planning for community development





Sustainability For Uncertain Times:

The expanding roles of critical engagement in urban environmental planning for community development

This expanded focus on “site planning” includes concerns for built and ‘unbuilt’ space and a wide range of design, planning and policy-related interventions.

## Sustainability For Uncertain Times:

The expanding roles of critical engagement in urban environmental planning for community development

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.

broader set of scale

for urban planning for sustainability  
> 1:50,000

1:500

conventional,  
urban planning

site



site

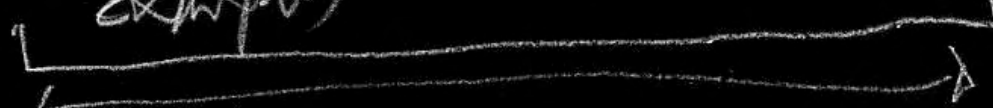
technologies

urban design  
(bike lane example)

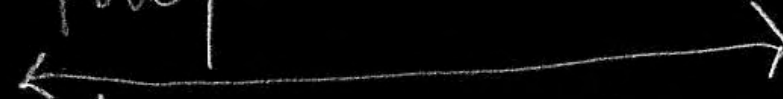
state  
region

national

international



policy



planning



design

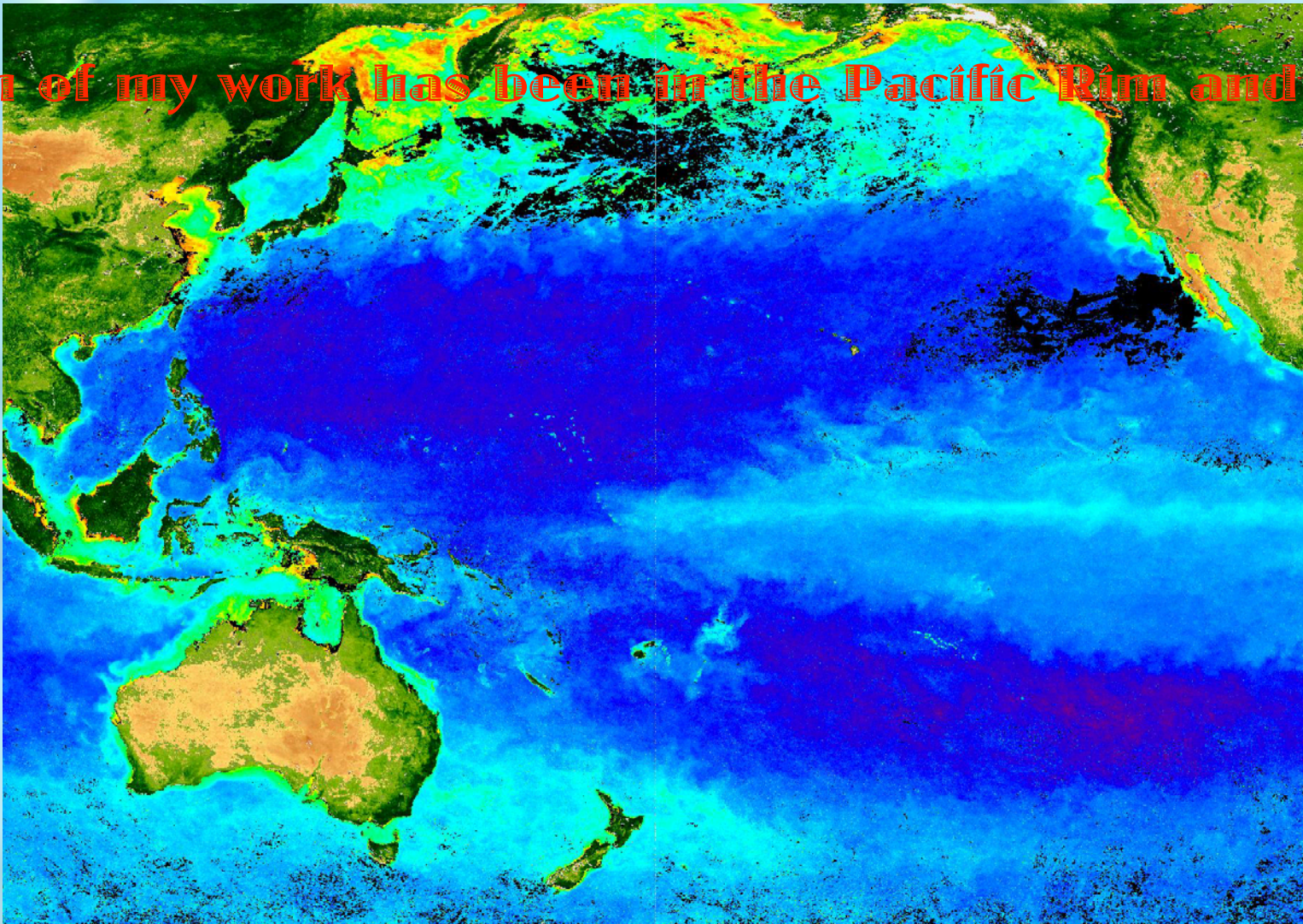


## Sustainability For Uncertain Times:

The expanding roles of critical engagement in urban environmental planning for community development

Much of my work has been in the Pacific Rim and

☪

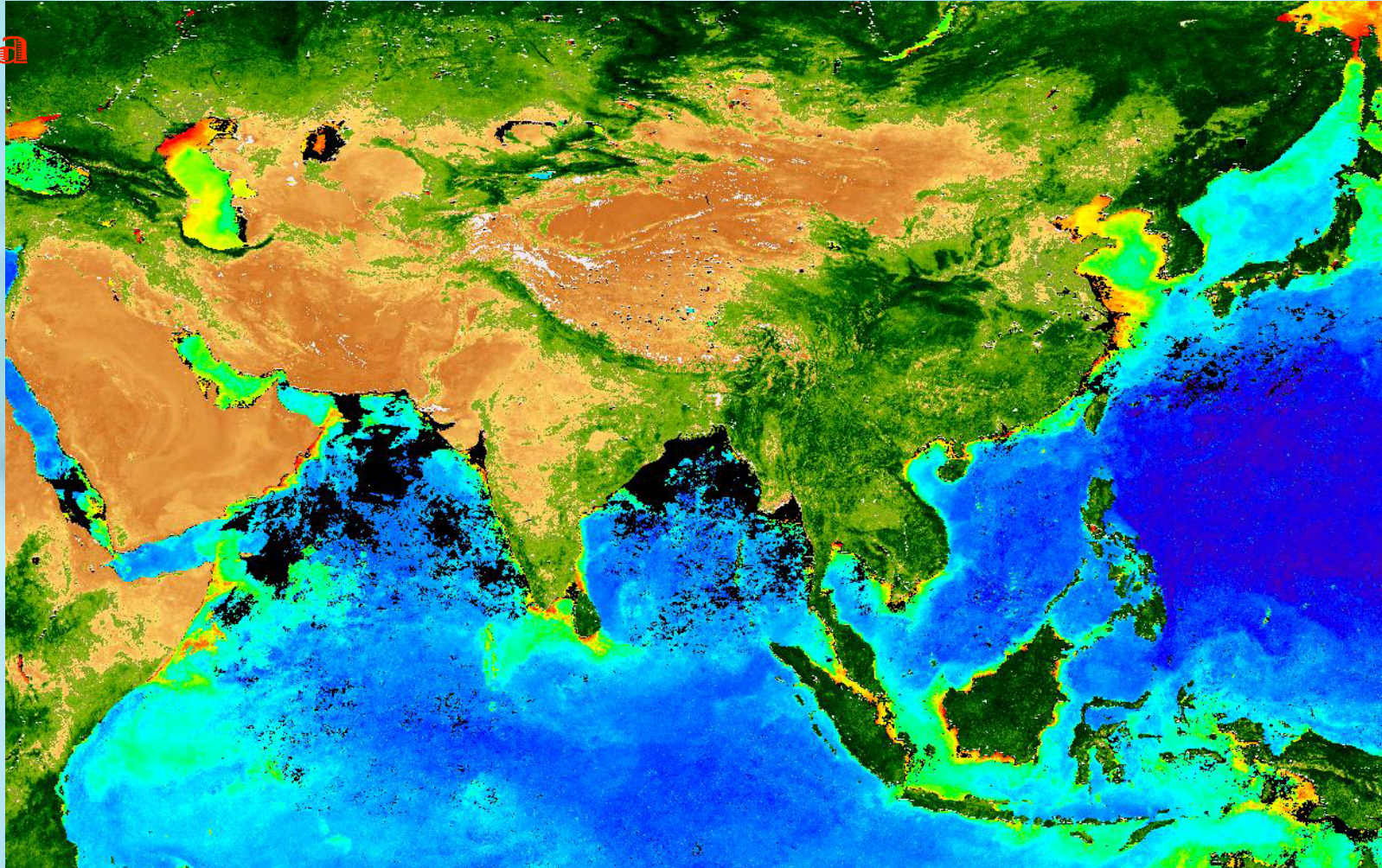




## Sustainability For Uncertain Times:

The expanding roles of critical engagement in urban environmental planning for community development

Asia





Sustainability For Uncertain Times:

The expanding roles of critical engagement in urban environmental planning for community development

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:



## Sustainability For Uncertain Times:

The expanding roles of critical engagement in urban environmental planning for community development

1. planning protected areas for both better protection of ecosystems and biological resources and sustainable development for human communities

**Sustainability For Uncertain Times:**

**The expanding roles of critical engagement in urban environmental planning for community development**

**with a focus on forested coastal areas and islands and;**

## Sustainability For Uncertain Times:

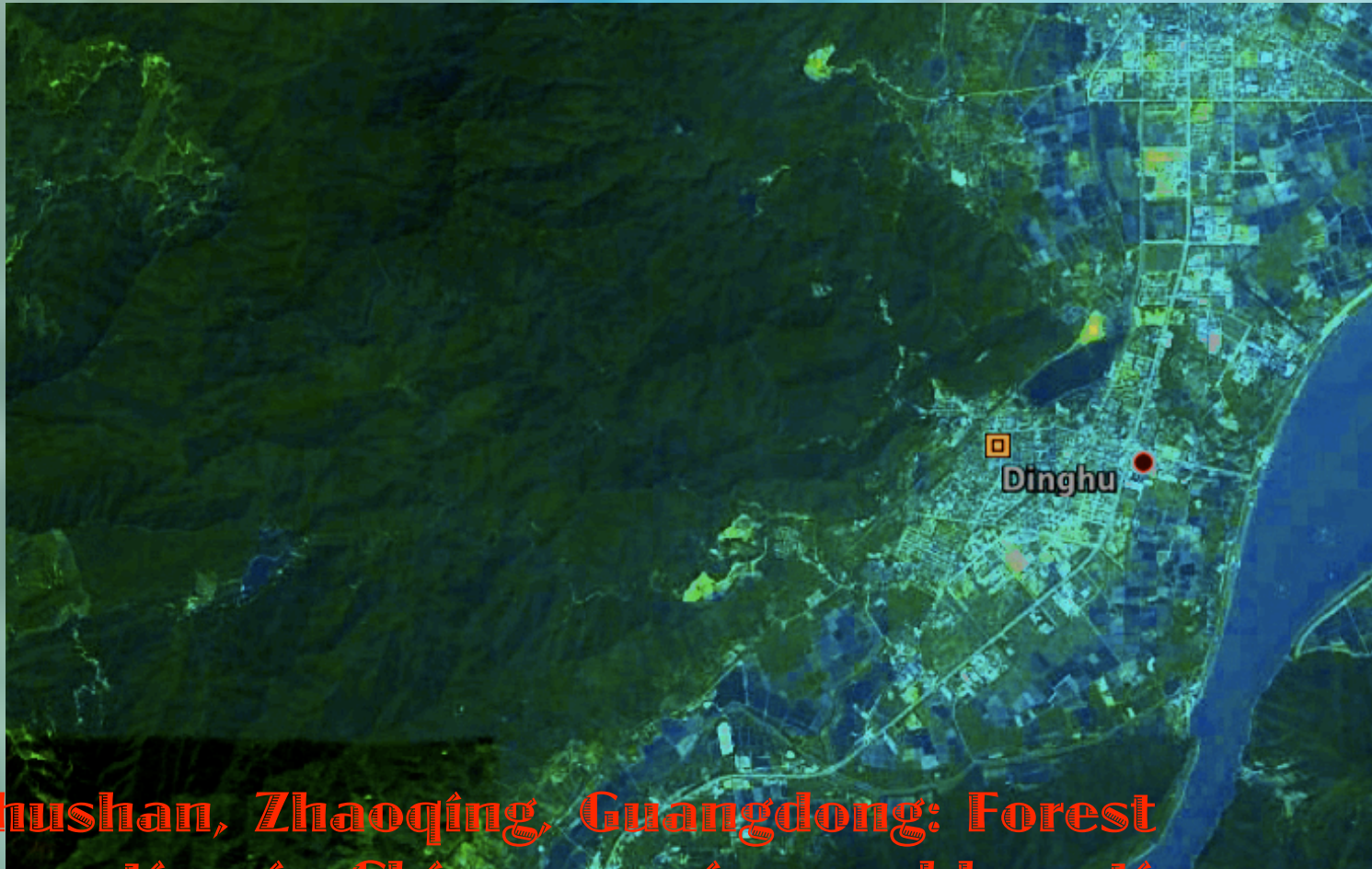
The expanding roles of critical engagement in urban environmental planning for community development

2. heavily contested urban open space where there are pressures from a range of social groups for greater sustainability (and enjoyment of related amenities).



## Sustainability For Uncertain Times:

The expanding roles of critical engagement in urban environmental planning for community development



Dinghushan, Zhaoqing, Guangdong: Forest conservation in China remains problematic



## Sustainability For Uncertain Times:

The expanding roles of critical engagement in urban environmental planning for community development



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.



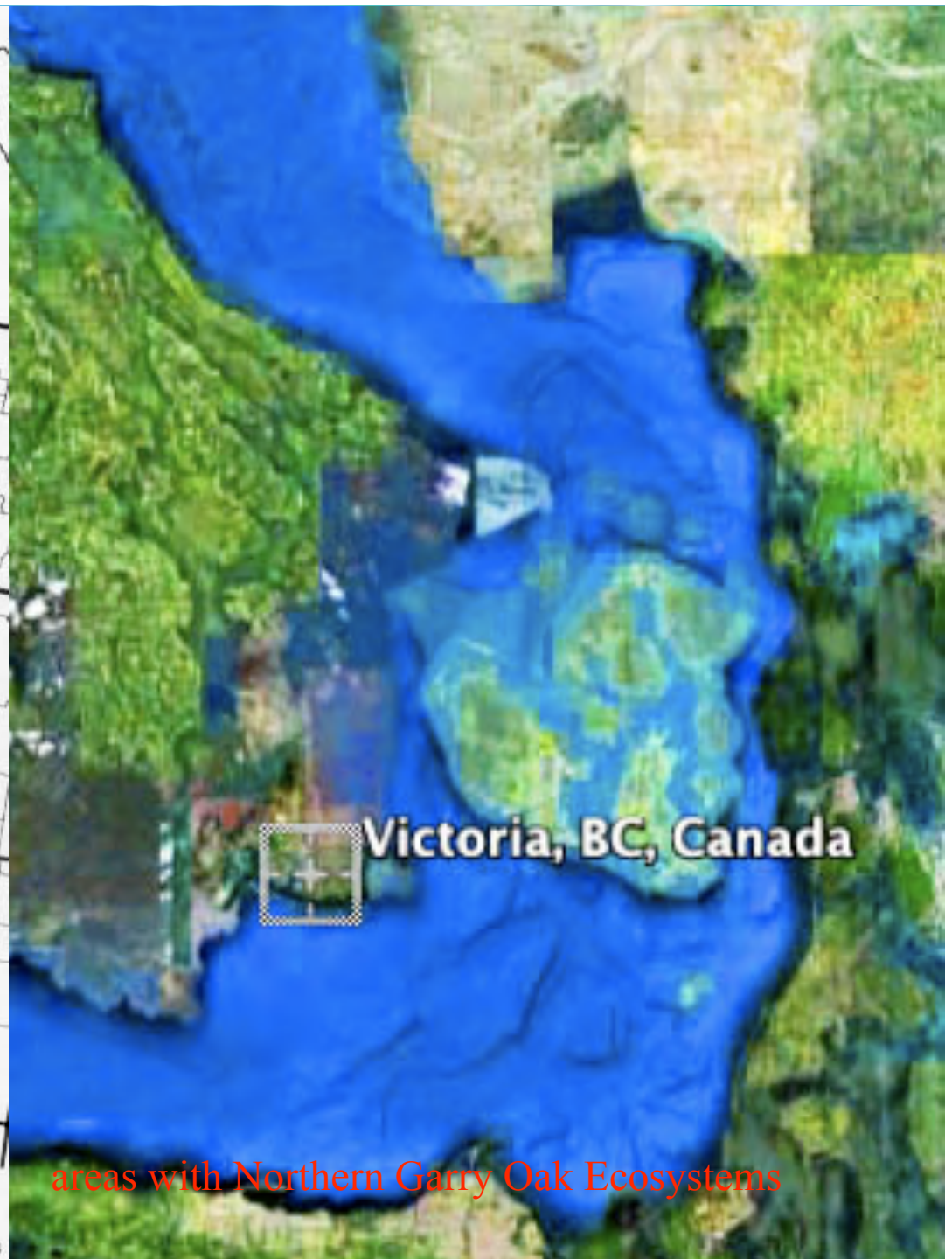
## Sustainability For Uncertain Times:

The expanding roles of critical engagement in urban environmental planning for community development

Ecosystem recovery  
strategies &  
fostering  
sustainability on  
developing coasts











# Regional Ecosystem Recovery Strategies & Site Planning Spanning Rural and Urban Areas



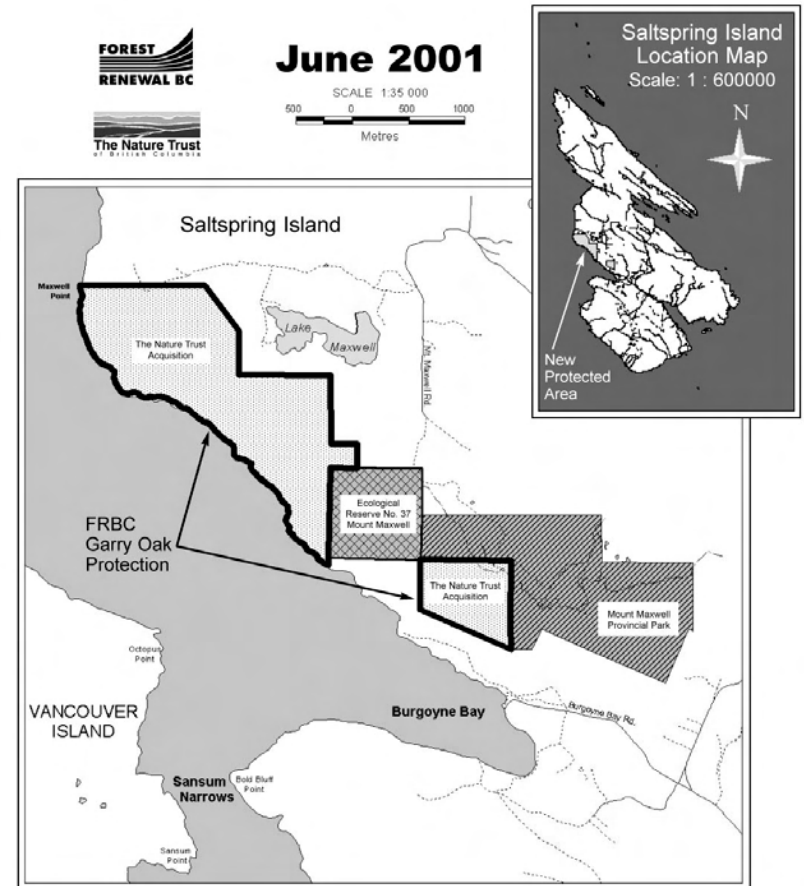
Urban and landscape design and land use planning, as part of ecosystem recovery strategies, requires in-depth stakeholder analysis. Few designers and planners, and even fewer biologists, are prepared in their educations for the necessary levels of social science and critical theory.







Conservation planning circa 1980, Mount Maxwell,  
Salt Spring Island, British Columbia



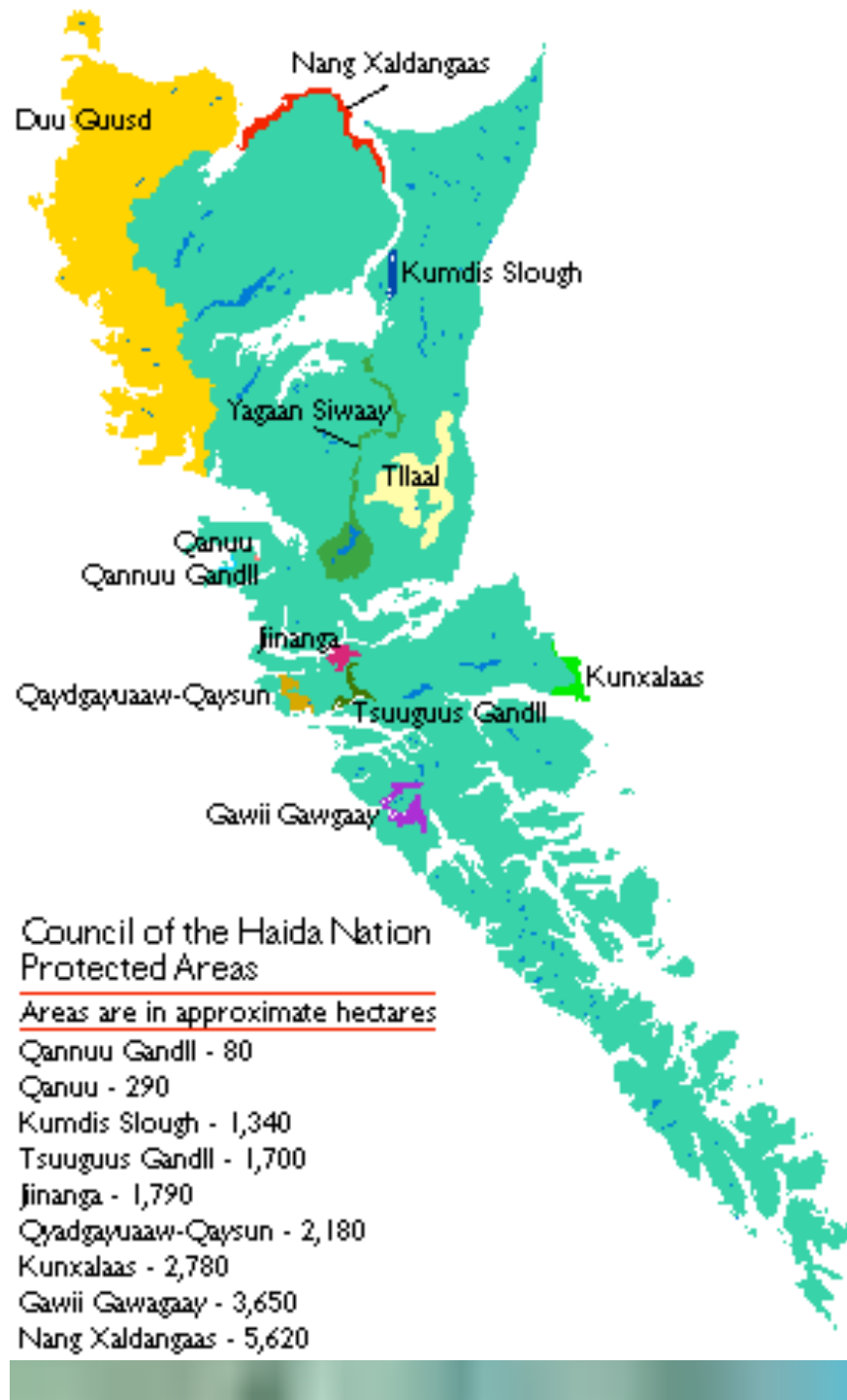
**Sustainability For Uncertain Times:**

**The expanding roles of critical engagement in urban environmental planning for community development**

**Environmental planning  
for Island Communities:  
Community-based  
development &  
conservation  
initiatives**















Protecting a vulnerable site of a former long-house,  
Burnaby Island, Gwaii Haanas, Haida Gwaii, Canada



## Sustainability For Uncertain Times:

The expanding roles of critical engagement in urban environmental planning for community development

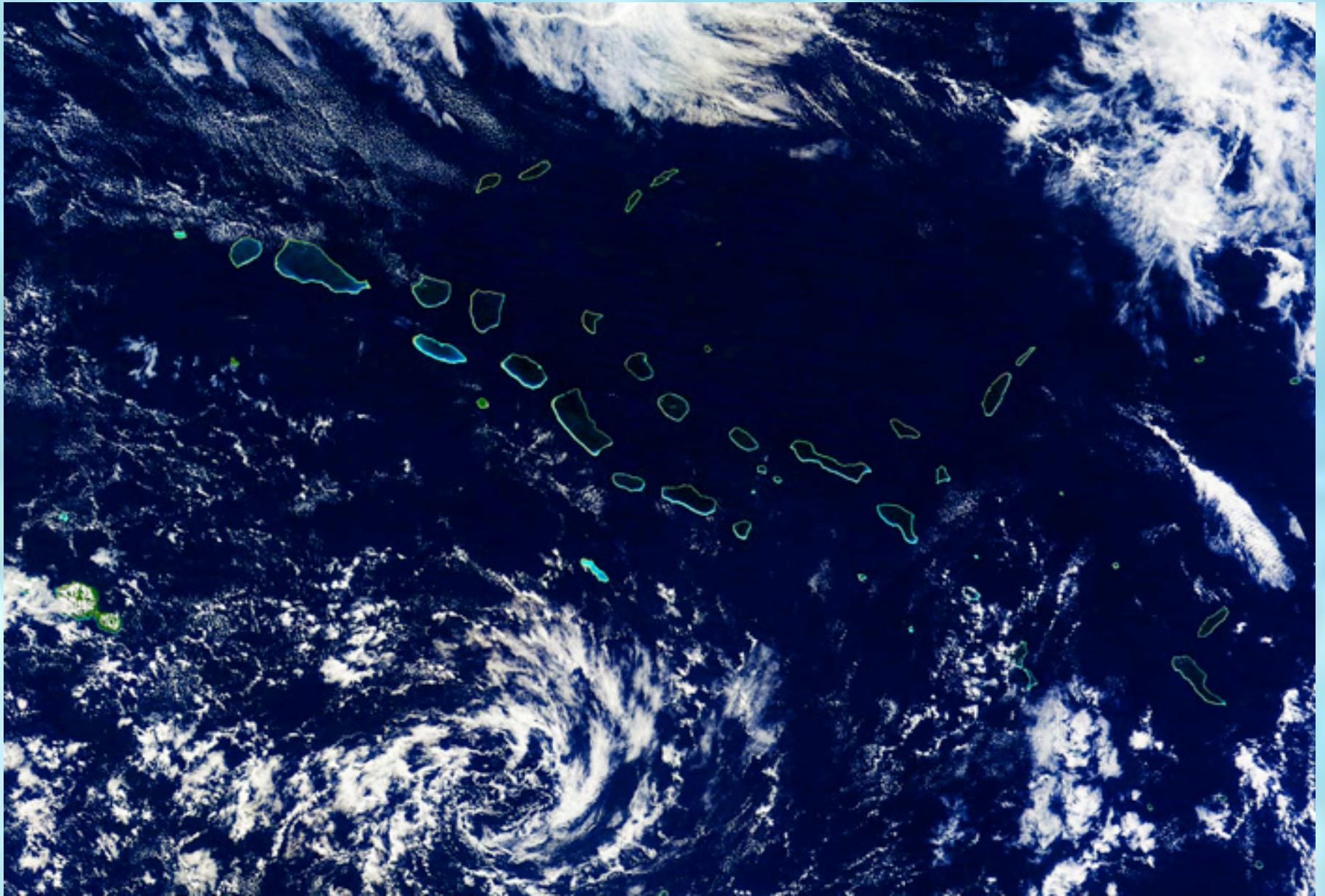


Coastal Communities:  
Responses to global  
change & hazard risk

## Malé, Maldives







Archipel des Tuamotu, French Polynesia, 19 May, 2010

## Sustainability For Uncertain Times:

The expanding roles of critical engagement in urban environmental planning for community development

### 1. ongoing research

questions around

conservation planning

especially for coastal

regions

a. strategies to minimize

fragmentation of strategic areas of  
forest, shore, shallow marine



## **Sustainability For Uncertain Times:**

**The expanding roles of critical engagement in urban environmental planning for community development**

**a. cont'd - habitats on islands and peninsulas;**

**b. frameworks for indigenous and other traditional communities asserting conservation and development priorities**

## Sustainability For Uncertain Times:

The expanding roles of critical engagement in urban environmental planning for community development

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



## Sustainability For Uncertain Times:

The expanding roles of critical engagement in urban environmental planning for community development

d. the expanding set of digital-spatial tools for environmental analysis and decision-support for planning and design

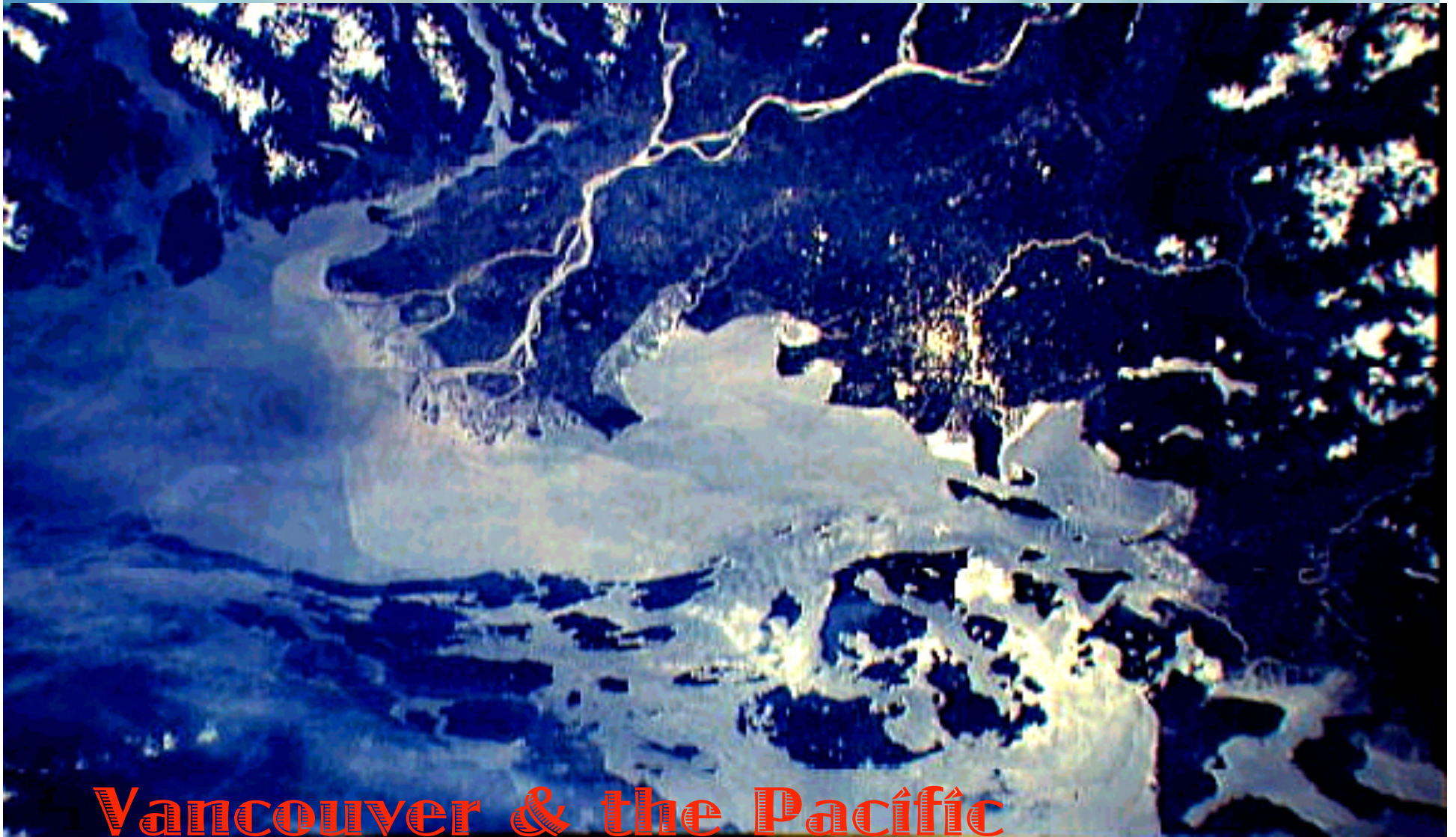
e. photographic documentation as part of the research and communication phases of urban environmental planning  
neighbourhood development

**Sustainability For Uncertain Times:**

**The expanding roles of critical engagement in urban environmental planning for community development**

## **2. urban open space and pressures for sustainability**





# Vancouver & the Pacific Northwest Urban Corridor





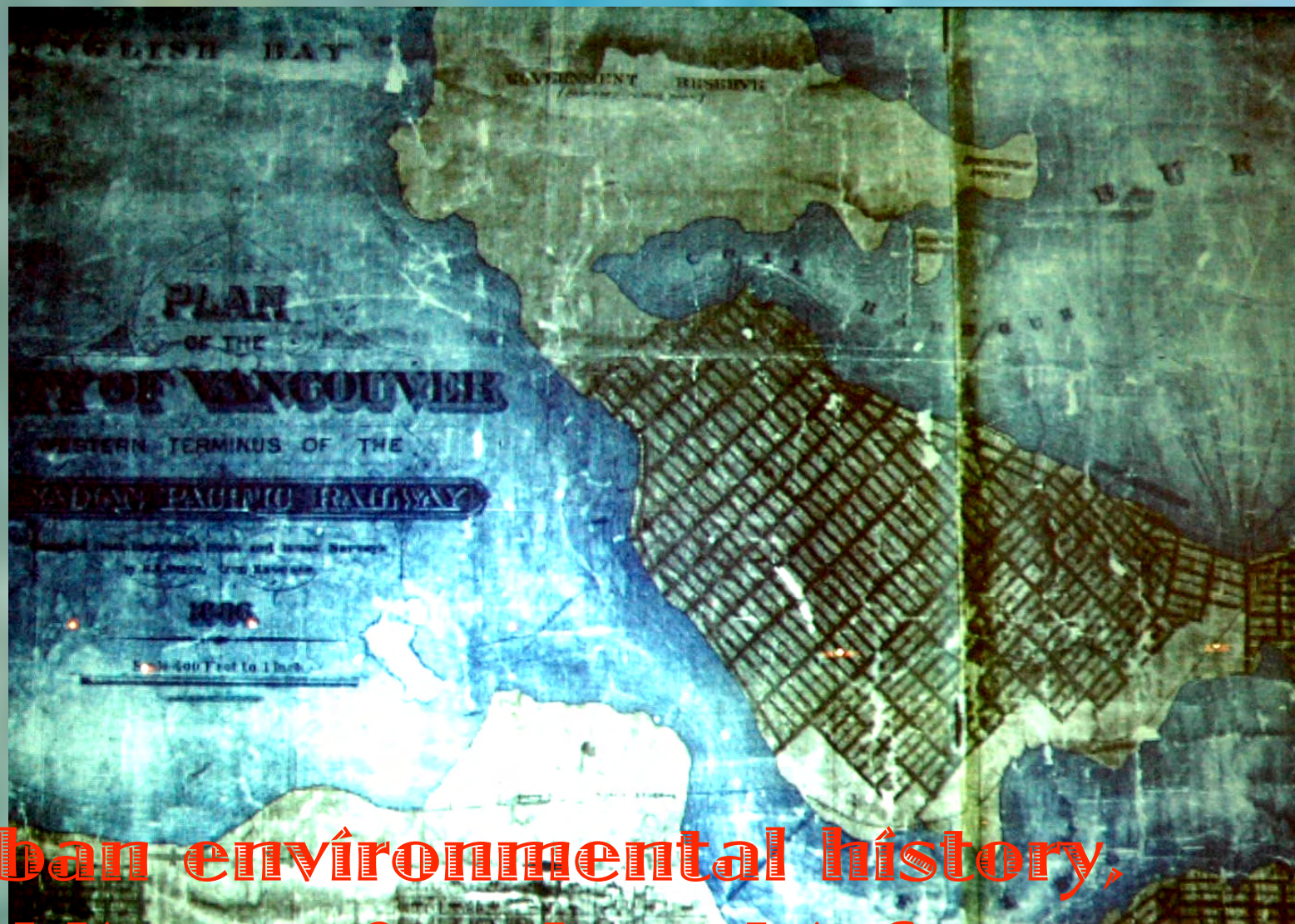
The Vancouver Peninsula has some of the highest populations densities and greatest disparities of wealth, consumption, health, and security per square km in Canada.





**False Creek, Vancouver**





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?



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

HENRIQUEZ PARTNERS ARCHITECTS

STUDIO

WORK

IDEAS



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.



## Sustainability For Uncertain Times:

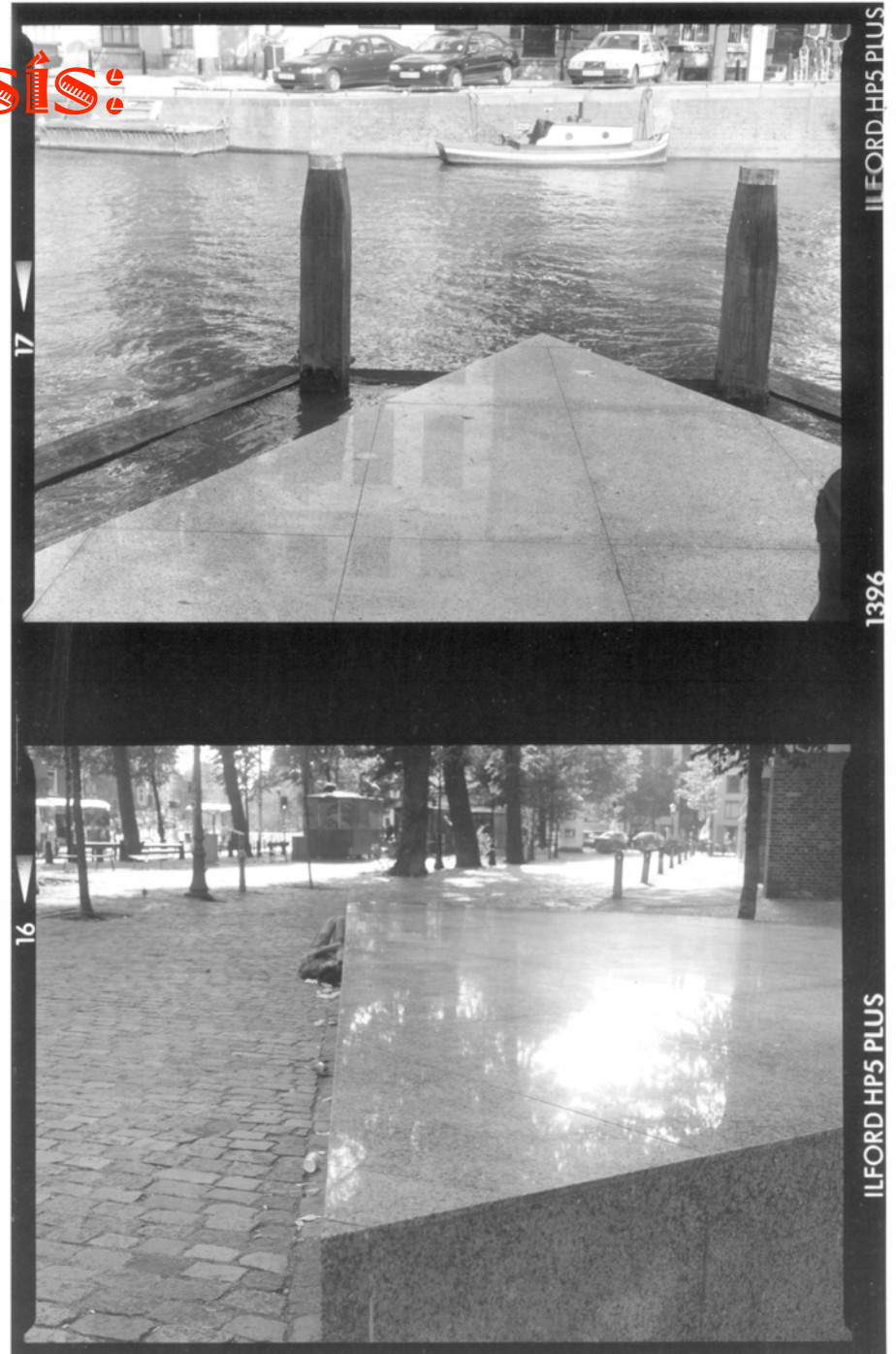
The expanding roles of critical engagement in urban environmental planning for community development



*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

ANTHROPOLOGY DEPARTMENT →

LAVENDER LANGS & LINGUISTICS  
CONFERENCE →

### › Questions?

Please contact:

Gordon Brent Ingram  
[studio@gordonbrentingram.ca](mailto:studio@gordonbrentingram.ca)

William L. Leap  
[wlm@american.edu](mailto:wlm@american.edu)

AU Anthropology  
202-885-1830

### REINSTATING TRANSGRESSION: EMERGING POLITICAL ECONOMIES OF QUEER SPACE



#### 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 overly 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](#)

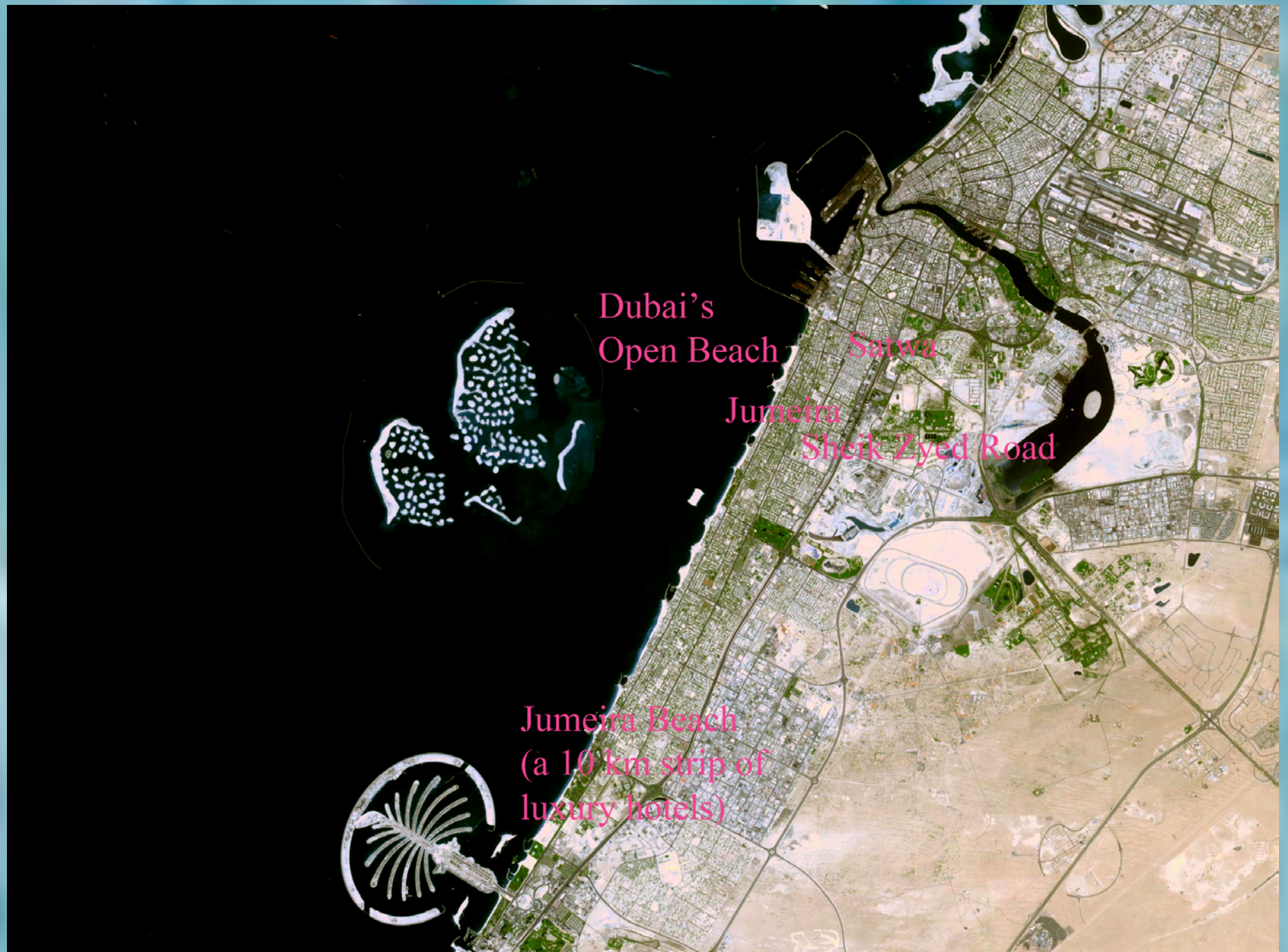
#### SUBMIT ABSTRACTS

Please submit abstracts for conference presentations to Gordon Brent Ingram by **March 15:**  
[studio@gordonbrentingram.ca](mailto: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.

#### DIRECTIONS/REGISTRATION











BEACH INSTRUCTION		تعليمات الشاطئ
• Please Do Not Swim After Sunset.		• لا تسبحوا بعد غروب الشمس.
• Please Do Not Swim If Red Flag Is Raised.		• يرجى عدم السباحة في حالة رفع العلم الأحمر.
• Please Do Not Swim At Current Areas Or Close To The Rocks.		• يرجى عدم السباحة عند الصخور وفي مناطق التيارات البحرية.
• Children Are The Responsibility Of Their Accompanying Adult.		• مسؤولية الأطفال تقع على المرافقين الكبار.
• Please Conserve Marine & Terrestrial Environment & Do Not Damage It.		• يرجى المحافظة على البيئة البحرية والبرية وعدم المساس بها أو إتلافها.
• Please Keep The Beach Clean & Do Not Leave Garbage.		• يرجى المحافظة على نظافة وعدم ترك المهملات على الشاطئ.
• No Pets Allowed On The Beach.		• لا يسمح بامتلاك الحيوانات إلى الشاطئ.
• No Barbecue Or Using Fire Or Camping On The Beach.		• لا يسمح بالنشواء أو إشعال النار على الشاطئ.
• The Administration Will Not Be Responsible For Any Personal Accident Or Theft Negligence.		• الإدارة غير مسؤولة عن أية حوادث شخصية أو سرقات أو إهمال.
• Legal Action Will Be Taken For Not Complying With The Above Instruction.		• مخالفة التعليمات أعلاه تعرضكم للمساءلة والإجراءات القانونية.
THANK YOU		شكراً لكم
<a href="http://www.publicparks.aed.gov.ae">www.publicparks.aed.gov.ae</a>		



**السباحة بحذر في حالة رفع العلم الأصفر.**  
**Swim with caution when yellow 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















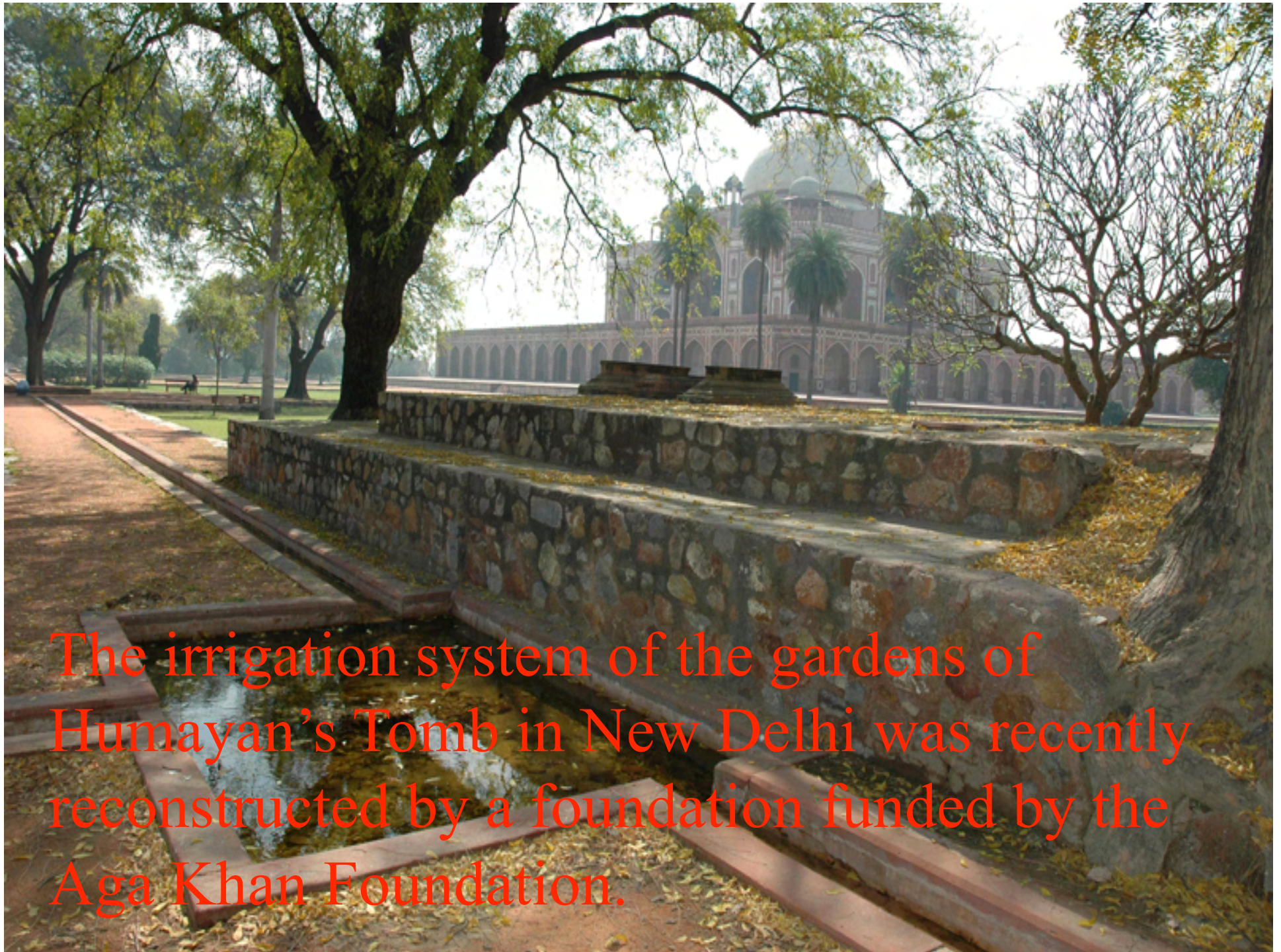
Misfat Al A'briyeen, Hajar Mountains, Oman – A high-density community that has proudly maintained traditional sustainability infrastructure and related knowledge.



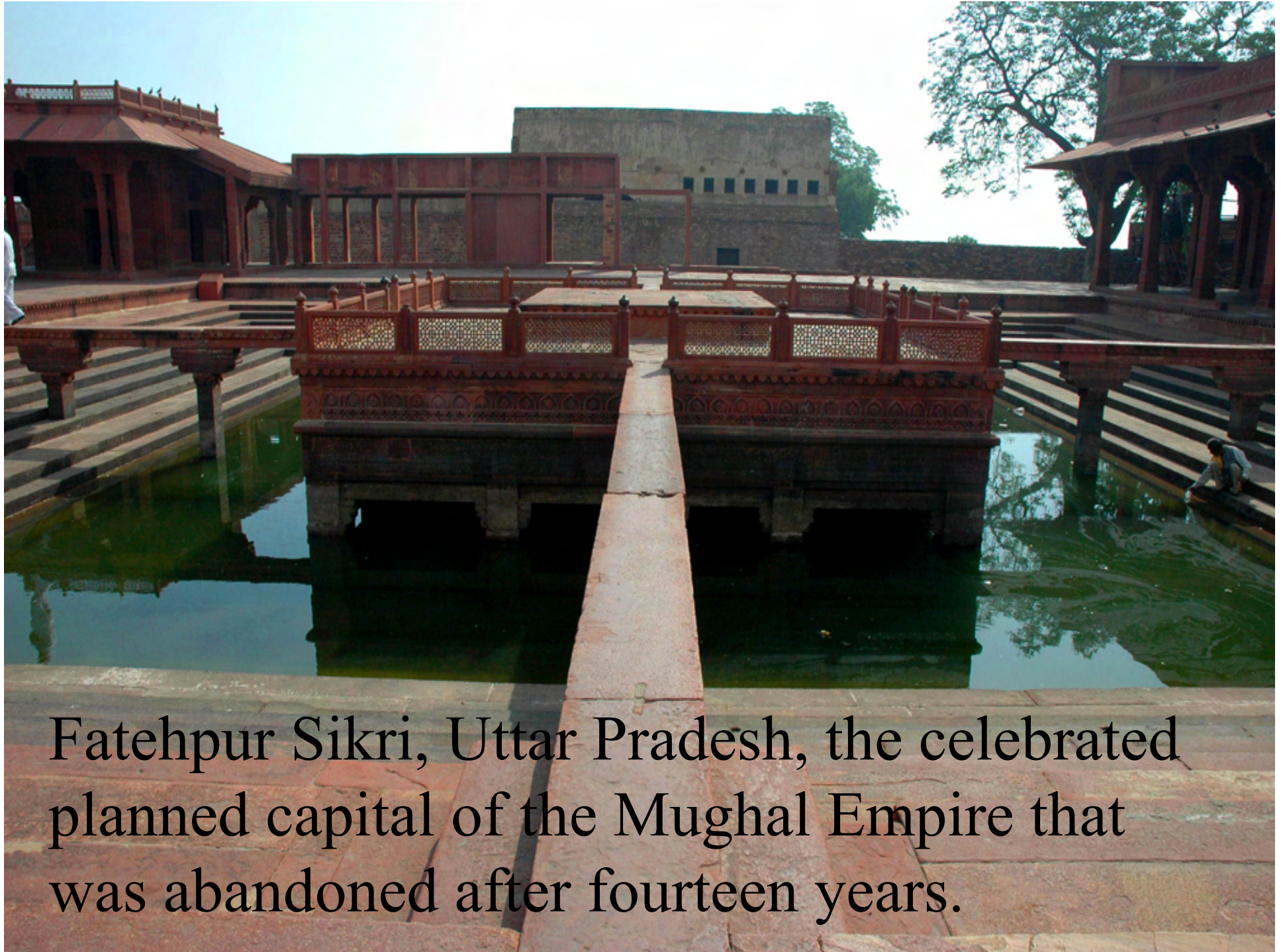


# Learning from and Restoring Mughal Gardens and Sustainability Practices









Fatehpur Sikri, Uttar Pradesh, the celebrated planned capital of the Mughal Empire that was abandoned after fourteen years.



## Sustainability For Uncertain Times:

The expanding roles of critical engagement in urban environmental planning for community development

## 2. ongoing research

questions on urban open  
space and sustainability  
transitions

a. strategies to better recognize and  
involve historically marginalised  
stakeholders

## Sustainability For Uncertain Times:

The expanding roles of critical engagement in urban environmental planning for community development

- 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



## Sustainability For Uncertain Times:

The expanding roles of critical engagement in urban environmental planning for community development

e. conservation of heritage

neighbourhoods and landscapes

f. the reconstruction of urban

environmental histories and the

implications for contemporary

environmental planning

Sustainability For Uncertain Times:

The expanding roles of critical engagement in urban environmental planning for community development

g. photographic documentation as  
part of the research and  
communication phases of urban  
environmental planning  
neighbourhood development



## **Sustainability For Uncertain Times:**

**The expanding roles of critical engagement in urban environmental planning for community development**

# **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**

## **Sustainability For Uncertain Times:**

**The expanding roles of critical engagement in urban environmental planning for community development**

## **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.



## **Sustainability For Uncertain Times:**

**The expanding roles of critical engagement in urban environmental planning for community development**

**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.

## **Sustainability For Uncertain Times:**

**The expanding roles of critical engagement in urban environmental planning for community development**

**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.



## **Sustainability For Uncertain Times:**

**The expanding roles of critical engagement in urban environmental planning for community development**

**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.

## **Sustainability For Uncertain Times:**

**The expanding roles of critical engagement in urban environmental planning for community development**

**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.



## **Sustainability For Uncertain Times:**

**The expanding roles of critical engagement in urban environmental planning for community development**

**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.

**Sustainability For Uncertain Times:**

**The expanding roles of critical engagement in urban environmental planning for community development**

**Conclusions:**

**Fostering innovative  
research & design on  
environmental planning  
for sustainable  
community development  
in China**



## **Sustainability For Uncertain Times:**

**The expanding roles of critical engagement in urban environmental planning for community development**

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

## Sustainability For Uncertain Times:

The expanding roles of critical engagement in urban environmental planning for community development 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





## Sustainability For Uncertain Times:

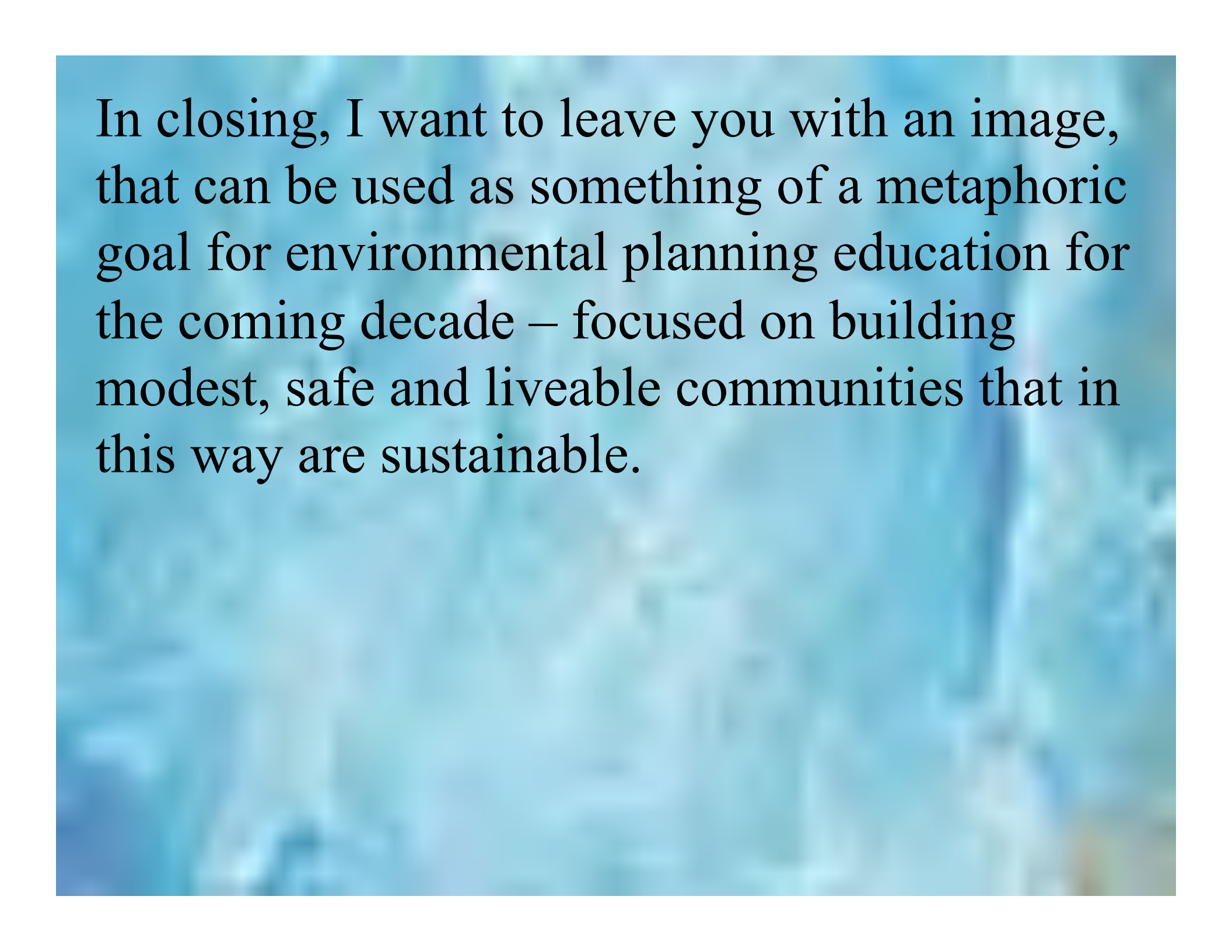
The expanding roles of critical engagement in urban environmental planning for community development

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’.

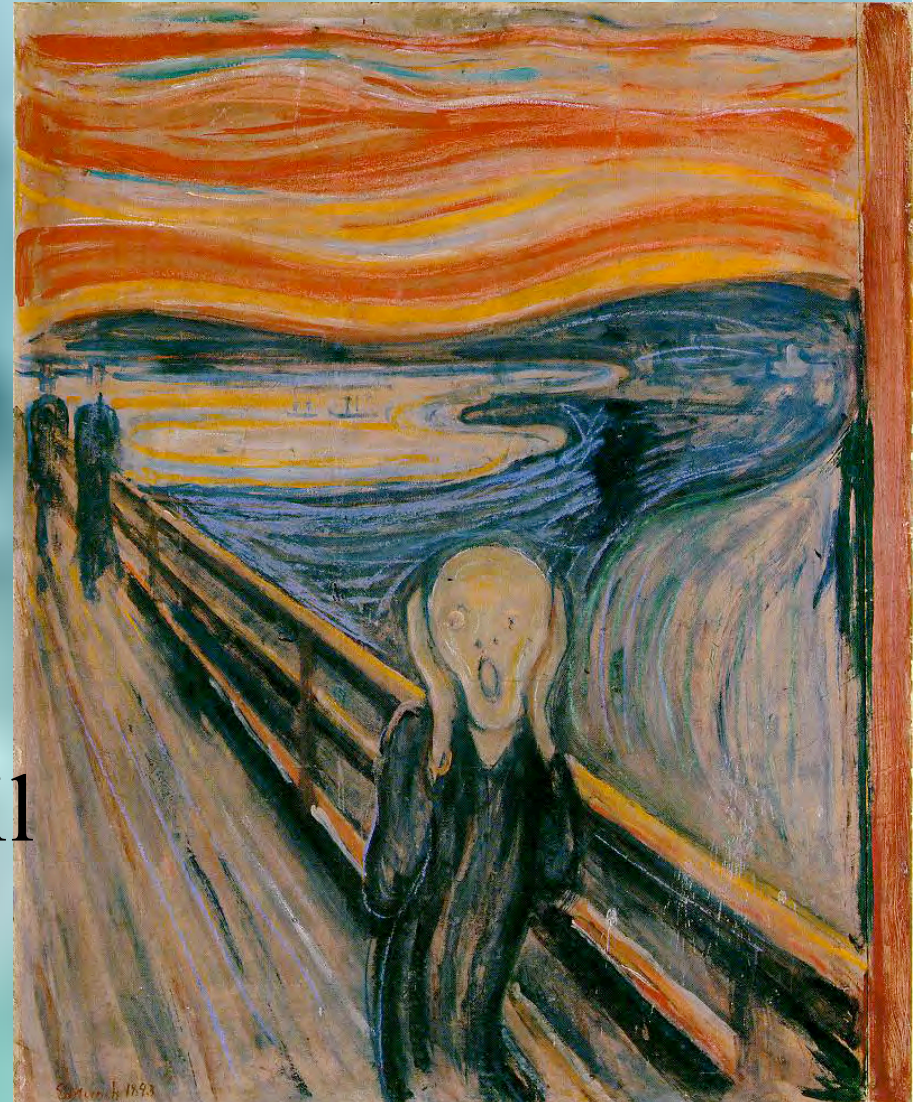






In closing, I want to leave you with an image, that can be used as something of a metaphoric goal for environmental planning education for the coming decade – focused on building modest, safe and liveable communities that in this way are sustainable.

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



## **Sustainability For Uncertain Times:**

### **The expanding roles of critical engagement in urban environmental planning for community development**

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.

## Sustainability For Uncertain Times:

The expanding roles of critical engagement in urban environmental planning for community development

## Sites related to this work.

[www.gordonbrentingram.ca/](http://www.gordonbrentingram.ca/)

[www.gordonbrentingram.ca/scholarship](http://www.gordonbrentingram.ca/scholarship)

[www.gordonbrentingram.ca/studiesdesigns](http://www.gordonbrentingram.ca/studiesdesigns)

[www.gordonbrentingram.ca/theterminalcity](http://www.gordonbrentingram.ca/theterminalcity)

[www.gordonbrentingram.ca/roof](http://www.gordonbrentingram.ca/roof)

[www.gordonbrentingram.ca/oscurita](http://www.gordonbrentingram.ca/oscurita)

[www.gordonbrentingram.ca/stikine](http://www.gordonbrentingram.ca/stikine)



Sustainability For Uncertain Times:

The expanding roles of critical engagement in urban environmental planning for community development

This presentation is

posted at

[www.gordonbrentingram.ca](http://www.gordonbrentingram.ca) .

email:

[studio@gordonbrentingram.ca](mailto:studio@gordonbrentingram.ca)