

November 2012

# *side stream environmental design*

Over the years, 'side stream' has involved more than a score of individuals in Canada, the United States, and overseas collaborating with innovative and community-based approaches to environmental planning, design, and community development. Today, the 1998 manifesto from the founding of the group remains current.

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side stream environmental design makes plans and designs for public spaces. Our design process is an exploration of interconnections between natural ecosystems, local history, and contemporary art. We integrate urban design, landscape ecology, landscape architecture and public art as “civic art.” As “side stream” we create public spaces that invite access by all social groups in surrounding communities. We transform isolated outdoor areas into “living” networks while connecting them with adjacent buildings and indoor sites. All of our efforts, no matter how urban, work to protect and restore of local ecosystems. Along with a commitment to innovative ecological design, we include public art in every project on which we work. We insert contemporary graphic material and related text for the celebration and reiteration of local history and culture.

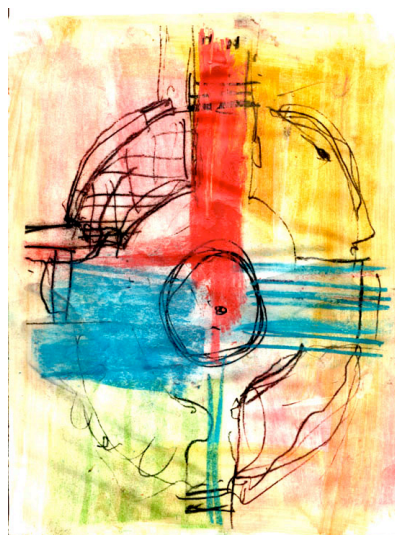
Every open space has a natural origin with more recent cultural layers. that warrant recognition and celebration. Recognition of natural processes is the best place to begin the design of public places. The design of public space therefore becomes a major form of

cultural expression. In turn, every site involves a multiplicity of cultures and social groups. Recognition of social tensions can be used creatively in the redesign of problematic public sites. By reasserting play, reflection and other forms of re-creation, there are renewed opportunities for making inclusive civic space. The design and transformation of unused sites into vibrant community gardens is one example of using participatory design to enhance neighbourhood life.

In using the metaphor of the side stream, we recognize the need for more contemplative outdoor spaces in nearly every community. As well as a “side stream” being a place of detour and in which to re-create, such sites are key for many minority groups and for celebrating the cultural diversity of regions. Being based in Vancouver, Canada, in a time of perilous rates of decline of salmon stocks, the little side streams are now recognized as the habitats that have been the most neglected in protecting the fishery. It is through integrating the site, the neighbourhood, the local and the regional scales and through seeing the organic links between natural habitat, culture, and history, that there is a hope for viable human environments and urban designs in the next century.

Gordon Brent Ingram \* Cameron Murray \* Melinda Wong  
November 1998 Vancouver Canada

Since forming, 'side stream' has involved the work of the following individuals and many others: Kathleen Morrissey, Fayyaz Rasool, Michael Habib, Lindsay Irving, Michael Howell, Arend de Haas, Lokesh Mathur, Rose Spahan, and Debra Sparrow. Projects have extended from various locales in North America to the Italy, the UK, the Netherlands, Pakistan, India, and China.



a concept for a traffic calmer from  
Vancouver 2002 with Cameron Murray,  
Kathleen Morrissey and Gordon Brent  
Ingram