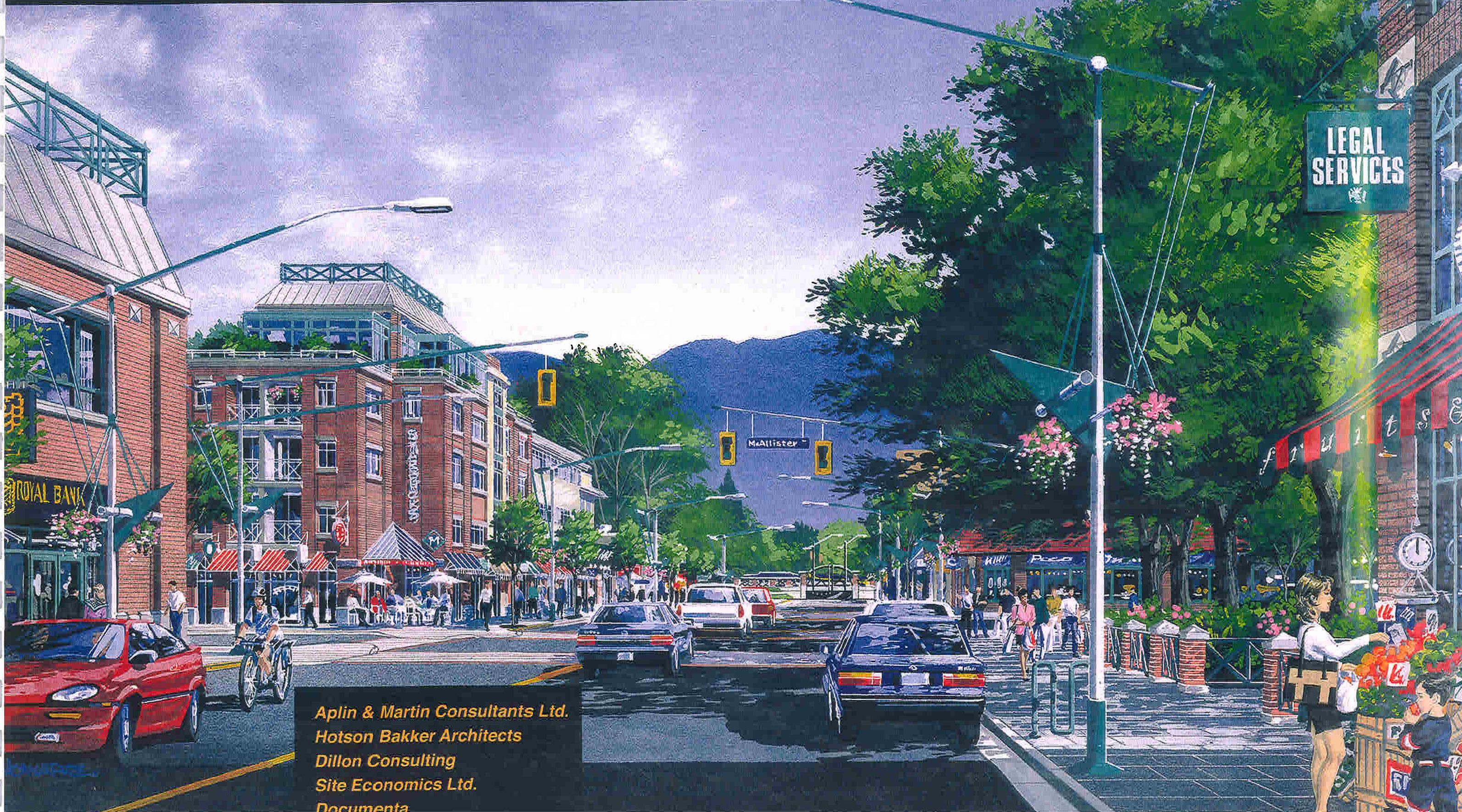


# City of Port Coquitlam

## Downtown Plan '98



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# CITY OF PORT COQUITLAM

## DOWNTOWN PLAN '98

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May 1998

96277

## WELCOME TO MY DOWNTOWN CIRCA 2016

Downtown Port Coquitlam is the dynamic centre of a small, livable city - the envy of the Greater Vancouver region. At its core is a lively "high street" retail district - with one-of-a-kind shops, restaurants, specialty food stores and personal services.

Shaughnessy Street is lined with adolescent maple trees and decorative street lamps; there are places to sit and chat with other shoppers. It is distinguished by seasonal banners, which showcase the work of local artists, and special street signs depicting the "high street" logo. At noon hour, café life spills onto the sidewalk as patrons enjoy their meals al fresco - amidst the colourful shop windows and outdoor produce displays.

During the evening, Shaughnessy Street is the favourite promenade of local residents - perfect for an after work stroll or a late night coffee. Within a block or two of the high street, one can take in a show at the Performing Arts Centre (on the old Elks' Hall site), or go for a jog along the Port Coquitlam Trail - perhaps to view spawning salmon in the Coquitlam River.

When taking the Red Bridge into town, I like to take the scenic drive along Maple Street - which really gives the city its park-like quality, and brings me closer to nature. On the way home, I stop off at the Europe Bakery to pick-up my favourite cookies and some Black Forest cake. When I really need to drive, to run errands or purchase larger items, there is convenient parking close to the high street, and at nearby Shaughnessy Station.

I grew up on Kelly Street, and raised my own family around the corner on Donald. Today, my wife and I live in a nice apartment on McAllister, above a bookstore and gallery. Everything we need is within walking distance. The many new trails and bikeways provide a safe and convenient alternative to driving downtown. When we want to venture a little further, we have public transit at our doorstep.

I love to sit in the gardens at City Hall, and walk through Elk's Park to see my grandchildren on Donald Street. Like many of her neighbours, my daughter redeveloped our old family property a few years ago, and built three townhomes on the 50-foot lot. She, her husband and younger children live in a half duplex; her married daughter in the other half. The coach house is rented out to a young

couple. They did such a nice job, they even saved my old apple tree in the back yard.

My daughter runs an interior design business in a strata unit on the old Port Coquitlam Building Supplies' site. Her business is thriving, and she attributes this to the synergy created by other similar businesses in the area.

Two of my grandchildren attend Riverside Secondary School; one works part-time at the Royal Bank on the high street, and the other at Canadian Tire at Shaughnessy Station. I am an avid reader, and volunteer my time at Terry Fox Public Library - reading stories to pre-school children.

We like to visit friends in Vancouver once a month - so we board the West Coast Express to catch a matinee or have lunch in Chinatown. Riding back with the commuters reminds me of the years I spent lined up on the Lougheed or Highway #1, trying to make it home on time for supper. I wouldn't trade this time of my life for anything.

In my retirement, I've really come to appreciate my community. No matter where I go, it's always nice to come home. This is a place where people know your name and care about you, and it is still a wonderful place in which to raise a family. In fact, it is home to people of all ages and backgrounds. Almost 12,000 more people live in the area than 20 years ago. While many changes have occurred over the years, new buildings and landscaping have enhanced our cherished small town character.

The people of Port Coquitlam have a strong sense of what is important. They have worked together to build a shared vision they had some 20 years ago. What they've built is a modern city, with a new civic centre, apartments rises by the river and a fancy Oxford Street overpass.

But, they knew what was valuable twenty years ago, and worked to preserve and enhance those elements as well. That is why we have human-scale development, a vibrant downtown core, beautiful tree-lined streets, varied housing types, an impressive park and trail system, a publicly-accessible and healthy riverfront, long-established shops and services, and superlative recreational facilities.

Yes, Port Coquitlam is a modern city, but its Downtown still has "small town" heart and soul.





Downtown Port Coquitlam  
2016 Vision



TABLE OF CONTENTS

1.0	INTRODUCTION.....	5	4.2.3	Arts-Enterprise Commercial.....	27
1.1	PURPOSE OF DOWNTOWN PLAN '98.....	5	4.2.4	Civic Centre .....	27
1.2	PLANNING APPROACH.....	5	4.2.5	Downtown Residential Mixed Use .....	27
2.0	THE VISION .....	6	4.2.6	Apartment (Mid-Rise) Residential .....	27
2.1	VISION STATEMENT.....	6	4.2.7	Apartment (Low-Rise)/Townhouse Residential .....	27
2.2	SHAUGHNESSY "HIGH-STREET" .....	6	4.2.8	Infill Residential.....	28
2.3	DOWNTOWN PLAN '98 OBJECTIVES.....	6	4.3	Downtown 2016 .....	28
3.0	TOWARDS A PLAN .....	8	5.0	DESIGN CONCEPT.....	29
3.1	DOWNTOWN OPPORTUNITIES.....	8	5.1	DOWNTOWN CHARACTER.....	29
3.2	THE BUILDING BLOCKS .....	8	5.2	OVERALL DESIGN GUIDELINES .....	30
3.2.1	City-owned Lands: Building Block #1.....	8	5.2.1	Commercial Areas .....	30
3.2.2	Residential Precincts: Building Block #2.....	10	5.2.2	Residential Areas .....	34
3.2.3	Downtown Gateways: Building Block #3 .....	12	5.3	Shaughnessy "High Street" Precinct .....	38
3.2.4	Shaughnessy High Street: Building Block #4.....	13	6.0	IMPLEMENTATION.....	41
3.2.5	Civic Centre Precinct: Building Block #5.....	16	6.1	REGULATORY FRAMEWORK .....	41
3.2.6	Arts - Enterprise Precinct: Building Block #6 .....	17	6.1.1	Official Community Plan Amendments.....	41
3.2.7	Downtown Residential Mixed Use District: Building Block #7 .....	18	6.1.2	Zoning Bylaw Amendments.....	41
3.2.8	Parks, Recreation And Public/Private Greenways: Building Block #8.....	20	6.1.3	Development Permit Guideline amendments .....	41
3.2.9	Roads, Parking, and Circulation: Building Block #9 .....	21	6.2	SHORT & LONG TERM ACTIONS .....	41
4.0	2016 LAND USE PLAN.....	26	6.2.1	City of Port Coquitlam.....	42
4.1	LAND USE CONCEPT.....	26	6.2.2	Downtown Port Coquitlam Business Improvement Association (BIA) .....	42
4.2	PROPOSED LAND USE DESIGNATIONS .....	26	6.2.3	Downtown Business and Property Owners .....	43
4.2.1	High Street Commercial.....	26			
4.2.2	Shopping Centre Commercial .....	27			

LIST OF PLATES, PLANS AND SKETCHES

		After Page No.			After Page No.
Frontispiece	PORT COQUITLAM DOWNTOWN: CIRCA 2016				
Plate No. 1	Apartment Mid-rise Precinct Reeve Street & Kelly Street (view east)	11	Plan No. 3.10	Building Block #9: Transportation System	22
Plate No. 2	Residential Precincts - Form & Character	11	Plan No. 4.1	Official Community Plan, Bylaw 2848, 1993	26
Plate No. 3	Landmark Major Gateway at Shaughnessy	13	Plan No. 4.2	Proposed Land Use Designations, 2016	26
Plate No. 4	Shaughnessy High Street, 2016 (View North)	15	Plate No. 4.3	Port Coquitlam Downtown Form, 2016	28
Plate No. 5	High Street - Form & Character	15			
Plate No. 6	Leigh Square - Civic Centre (View North)	17			Page No.
Plate No. 7	Residential Mixed-use Precinct McAllister Street (View West)	19	Sketch No. 1	Public Oriented Ground Floor	30
Plate No. 8	Mixed-use - Form & Character	19	Sketch No. 2	Continuous Character on Ground Floor	31
Plate No. 9	Lions Park Gateway/Greenway (View North-west)	21	Sketch No. 3	Continuous Weather Protection	32
Plate No. 10	Shaughnessy High Street Underpass/ Gateway (View North)	23	Sketch No. 4	Off-street Parking Lots	33
Plate No. 11	Shaughnessy High Street Character	37	Sketch No. 5	Street Animation	33
Plate No. 12	Shaughnessy Street Elevations	38	Sketch No. 6	Public Access/Open Spaces Within Private Developments	35
Plan No. 3.1	1997 Land Uses	8	Sketch No. 7	Units Addressing the Street	35
Plan No. 3.2	Building Block #1: City Owned Lands:	9	Sketch No. 8	Living on the Ground Floor	36
Plan No. 3.3	Building Block #2: Residential Precincts	11	Sketch No. 9	Building Entrance Identification	36
Plan No. 3.4	Building Block #3: Downtown Gateways	13	Sketch No. 10	Vertical Expression of Dwelling Unit	37
Plan No. 3.5	Building Block #4: Shaughnessy High Street	15			
Plan No. 3.6	Building Block #5: Civic Centre Precinct	17			
Plan No. 3.7	Building Block #6: Arts-Enterprise Precinct	18			
Plan No. 3.8	Building Block #7: Mixed-use Precinct	19			
Plan No. 3.9	Building Block #8: Parks, Recreation & Greenways	20			



# 1.0 INTRODUCTION





## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 PURPOSE OF DOWNTOWN PLAN '98

The purpose of Downtown Plan '98<sup>1</sup> is twofold:

- Firstly, the Plan will articulate a Vision of what the core area of the City of Port Coquitlam could ultimately look like in 20 years or so, as the community grows from the current population of about 46,000 to almost 67,000 persons by the year 2016.
- Secondly, the Plan will outline a Path or "road plan" which will assist in guiding the community towards realizing the Vision.

The Plan is intended to be a portrait of the "Shape of Things to Come" for the business and residential heart of Port Coquitlam. The portrait painted is one of a bright future. As with any planning forecast, there are subjective elements that reflect the optimism of the local community and its desires and hopes for the area. At the same time, technical forecasts also clearly indicate that most City growth will occur in the Downtown as the community expands. This growth is a significant opportunity to build on changes which have been occurring in recent years and which continue in the Downtown, to create a community "Place" which can offer a unique experience as a "Place to Live, Work, Do Business and enjoy Leisure Time."

Based upon the understanding gained and dialogue with the community, the 20 year time horizon represents a reasonable target to realize the Vision, recognizing that planning is somewhat of an inexact science and future unforeseen events could see the various Plan components being completed either earlier or later than anticipated.

Regardless, the Plan is intended to serve as the broad blueprint to guide future change in the downtown. Consequently, it is anticipated and expected that ongoing initiatives by the various downtown "Partners" will be necessary to effectively implement the strategies and policies presented.

<sup>1</sup> The Downtown Plan '98 will also be referred to as the Plan. The two terms will be used interchangeably throughout the document.

### 1.2 PLANNING APPROACH

Downtown Plan '98 builds upon the land use and urban design policies for Downtown Port Coquitlam, which are contained in the City's Official Community Plan (OCP), 1993. The essence of OCP policies for the downtown is to strengthen the City's traditional commercial and social focus by encouraging commercial redevelopment, densification of surrounding downtown residential neighbourhoods, and establishing a formal urban design theme, which draws from the architectural design and materials of the historic, restored City Hall.

The preparation of a Downtown Plan provides the opportunity to evaluate current OCP policies for Downtown Port Coquitlam, and to implement a set of detailed land use and design tools to guide the downtown's development over the next 20 years.

The strategies and policies contained in Downtown Plan '98 are based on an in-depth analysis of Downtown Port Coquitlam's opportunities and challenges - including its economic position within the city and region. The technical assessments were complemented with input and opinions from the community, including downtown residents, the downtown business community, elected officials and municipal staff. These analyses have guided the creation of new land use designations, and the definition of "activity precincts" and "character areas" within the downtown.

The technical assessments as well as a summary of the community consultation program and comments received will be contained in a separate Downtown Plan '98 Technical Report.<sup>2</sup>

Downtown Plan '98 further defines the OCP's land use and urban design policies and provides a set of implementation tools, as the basis for adjustments to the OCP, Zoning Bylaw (No. 2240), 1987, and other key components of Port Coquitlam's management framework for community planning and development.

<sup>2</sup> The Technical Report will be submitted as part of the final document package.



## 2.0 THE VISION





## 2.0 THE VISION

Downtown Plan '98 is founded on a guiding vision for the future - which is based on the wishes of the community and a realistic assessment of the downtown's role and function, its economic and land use opportunities, and its evolving urban design character.

### 2.1 VISION STATEMENT

Downtown Plan '98 is introduced with a narrative entitled "Welcome to My Downtown." It describes Downtown Port Coquitlam around the year 2016 - from the perspective of a fictional long-time resident. This personal account provides a realistic resident perspective on the Downtown Plan - i.e., what the community should truly look and feel like 20 years from now. It also gives meaning to the proposed land use designations, and how they translate into a living, working city.

"Downtown Port Coquitlam: Circa 2016 (Frontispiece) which accompanies the narrative, provides a physical illustration of the form and extent in the downtown, should Downtown Plan '98's strategies and policies be effectively implemented over the next two decades.

The importance of "Vision" cannot be overstated in the planning process. Downtown Plan '98, while comprehensive in its scope, is only a tool for achieving a shared community goal - i.e., a guiding vision for the future.

The following Mission Statement provides a framework for policy development and monitoring the success of Plan implementation:

*"Downtown Port Coquitlam will become the dynamic centre of a small, vibrant, livable city. At its core will be lively "High Street" retail district - with one-of-a-kind shops, restaurants, specialty food stores and personal services. It will also be characterized by attractive residential areas, with a variety of housing catering to many needs; a network of pedestrian and bicycle pathways; a wide array of public parks and amenities; and an impressive civic precinct."*

### 2.2 SHAUGHNESSY "HIGH-STREET"

While the term "High Street" is not commonly used it is very appropriate in the context of Downtown Plan '98.

A "High Street" describes a more traditional downtown thoroughfare (i.e. Main Street) which offers an array of specialized as well as daily commercial goods and services, and leisure and civic facilities in a pedestrian oriented physical environment. Buildings are street focussed and oriented to foster lively street activity. Presently, Shaughnessy Street embodies some of the "High Street" elements and has significant potential to blossom and provide a very attractive and lively "High Street" experience in the next few years.

### 2.3 DOWNTOWN PLAN '98 OBJECTIVES

Critical to articulating a twenty year Vision and planning strategy for the Downtown was the need to define key community objectives. These objectives essentially represent future desires, that is "what the Downtown should be" in the eyes of the users--the residents, businesses, shoppers and others interested in the area.

A Vision and planning strategy that successfully satisfies these desires must be able to weigh the community needs against the current realities. Consequently, it is necessary to gain an understanding of the Downtown's present situation, its assets and opportunities, physical and otherwise, as well as any challenges that must be addressed if the vision is to be realized.

Within this framework, the following objectives were established for the Downtown Plan '98 Study.

1. To gain a clear understanding of Downtown Today, specifically:
  - Present roles as a place to live, work, conduct business and pursue leisure;
  - The land use pattern and physical character which has evolved in



- 
- response to defined roles; and
  - The impacts resulting from satisfying these roles, particularly with respect to the Downtown circulation system.
2. To determine the scope and extent of Downtown Tomorrow, that is, future growth which must be accommodated in response to City and Regional demands;
  3. To identify other community needs for the downtown;
  4. Based upon growth forecasts and community needs, to define the downtown's future roles as a place to live, work, do business and pursue leisure;
  5. To determine the physical implications of forecast growth, particularly with respect to new housing, business and leisure needs;
  6. To identify current downtown opportunities and challenges to realization of the defined future roles, in particular, the overall impacts of forecast growth on the downtown circulation network;
  7. To examine the current planning strategy for Port Coquitlam's Downtown, as defined by the objectives, policies and strategies contained in the existing Official Plan, and determine the relevance in the face of this more focused assessment of the area;
  8. To prepare a comprehensive long term downtown planning strategy that provides the means to effectively exploit identified opportunities as well as overcome any noted challenges, including establishment of an effective planning and urban design "toolbox" to assist the municipality in guiding and managing future growth within the City core;
  9. To construct a downtown plan which clearly articulates what the community wants the character of the area to become, namely:
    - The vibrant "heart" of the City;
    - A place which has defined physical and functional identities;
    - A place which offers a built environment that is attractive as well as human in focus and scale;
    - A place that supports and focuses a range of residential, commerce, leisure, and cultural activities in a coherent organized manner that expresses Port Coquitlam's identity.
  10. To ensure that as the Downtown physically evolves, provision is made to ensure effective movement of persons and goods within and through the area in a manner which increases the priority given to pedestrians and non-motorized vehicles at the same time recognizes the need for efficient vehicle movement; and
  11. To present Downtown Plan '98 in a form which says to the wider community that Port Coquitlam's "heart" is and will increasingly become over the next two decades a unique place within the Greater Vancouver Region to live, work, shop and enjoy.