It has been said that the modern city is soulless; that it is heartless; that it is brutal. And, I think this is all too true for many people today – and maybe even for many people in this room today. The great irony of modern culture is that the more we choose city life – and well over half of all human beings have now made this choice – the less city life is satisfying us; and the more cities expand as our primary human habitat, the more damaging they are to the natural eco-systems that allow us to survive as a species.

We need to fix this and in many places creative people are slowly putting the pieces together for a new urban model. All over the world, there is a growing recognition that this brutality must stop; that we have to imagine a different kind of city which addresses human needs and that puts the soul back into the city. Put another way, there is a growing understanding that it is actually "love" that will be the prime force in the future evolution of successful 21st century cities– and that is really my main theme today.

Who would have thought in the last generation that "love" might become a meaningful topic in a discussion about civic economies, much less a prime force for environmental reconciliation? Yet,

over the last few decades, we've seen cities hit with fundamental challenges that they can only respond to if their citizens are solidly on their side, which is to say, if their citizens hold a strong enough personal affection for their city to be loyal and to do their part for it.

The first and most direct of the urban challenges that I want to highlight is the incredible struggle today among cities for hegemony. It's a dog-eat-dog competition among modern cities – all driven by the incredible mobility of people. The world has become footloose, with people and their ideas and capital moving at will: business can be done anywhere; other aspects of life are more important than one's livelihood; and where people choose to settle is not tied down the way it used to be. We can do and be almost anything anywhere. So what a city feels like can be a determining factor in its competitive edge.

But, let's hold that thought for a moment so we can weave it together with a second set of challenges that are even more fundamental. These challenges are now focussing around two profound urban themes: the sustainable city and the liveable city.

There has been endless talk at City Halls around the world about sustainability – of course, this audience knows as much about this as anyone anywhere. We know what needs to be done but the roadblock here is the human reaction to these new ideas and this brings us to the theme of liveability. You see, I worry that in all our scientists' creative thinking about sustainable technologies, and in all our retooling for sustainable products, there may be some strong denial going on about average people and their typical inclinations; denial that will block the way towards sustainability. And I think to respond to this situation is going to take a new way of planning – so I want to talk about that.

Now, to set the frame for my remarks, let me remind us of the simple formula for "smart growth" that we all know so well.

You know that, from a structural point of view,
-it's about the form of our cities – clustered density and mixed use and all kinds of diversity and protected open space; and,
-it's about the fabric of our cities – the green construction that you are leading here in Australia;
From an infrastructural point of view,
-its about the circulation within our communities – transportation choices that put the private car into a logical array of movement alternatives that include and favour transit and cycling and

walking;

-its about social and community and cultural facilities that offer support for people and stability for their communities; and,

-its about the utilities of our cities – managing water and waste and energy in a conserving way and locally accessing inputs, including food.

We all know this is a very useful formula – but now we come to the essential denial that I want to expose today. Is the public with us in all of this? Will they change their life patterns and habits to achieve the kind of ecological footprint that is necessary?

After all, we live in a free society – people will listen but they can do whatever they want. This is especially true when we talk about the things people make personal choices about – like density and mixed use and diversity and active transportation? Frankly, most consumers in modern cities, except in a very few special, gracious places, have shown very little interest in being a part of the kind of city that these factors create. In my country, over two-thirds of Canadians live in unsustainable situations that boast none of these qualities – and that proportion is even higher in America. I wonder what the numbers are for Australia.

Let's be blunt: most people hate density because most of it has been so bad; they think of mixed use as probably hitting them negatively and diversity as unsafe and transit is not even in most peoples' vocabulary. But I also have to say that, to some degree, I understand and sympathize with their predicament. Could you fall in love with this...or this....? I don't think so.

We have to change that – and I think we can change that by making one addition to that formula of smart growth. That addition, which fosters peoples' genuine affection for the city, is "placemaking".

And this is where urban competition , urban sustainability and urban liveability can be seen through the same city lens – because in each case the bottom line is that making progress on these issues requires us to conceptualize the city from a people perspective – bringing back the human touch; no longer casually trading away the things people care about for the urgencies of the moment.

I call this "Experiential Urbanism" – learning about and then carefully designing the community to deliver the direct tangible experiences that people tell us they want in their lives and for

their families every day. These become the fragments of DNA from which the urban pattern is built up, layer upon layer. This has two fundamental aspects. First, it takes a consumer focus to define what needs to be done in the formation of cities; and, second, it takes a physical urban design focus at a basic level to realize those consumer hopes and expectations.

For as long as anyone can remember, the shape of modern cities, with very few exceptions, has been the result of the city exploited as a commodity. But that doesn't have to be the case. We can define the quality city through careful design. Modern people are very savvy about the design of things – look at the Apple Computer. Yet, most of the contemporary city is not actually designed. It is just laid out. Many of our buildings and spaces are not even designed by architects or landscape architects. We use artists only occasionally. Whole districts have never enjoyed the touch of an urban designer. It is all so utilitarian and it turns most people off. They just want to escape it – if not physically then at least metaphorically. We must bring the great prowess of design back to the task of building the city so we can create something that people will actually get excited about – see as chic and hip – invest in and live in happily – for a life time.

Well, how do we engender an urban environment rich in genuine human interest?

Of course, I could go to the obvious. I could talk about the broad urban arrangements of the city: the overall regional structure that preserves the green lungs and offers the essential respite from the frenetic civic chaos that people long for. For example, I'm thinking of the regional growth boundary in Portland, Oregon and the Agricultural Land Reserve in Vancouver.

Or, I could talk about shifting attitudes about transportation – where there is an awfully lot to say. There is no question that we are an automobile world and the trend is for that to become even more so in the future. 2.6 billion vehicles predicted by 2030 is a lot of personal mobility – and I cannot see people, in mass, weaning themselves from the extraordinary benefits of the car, but that does not mean that there is no room for transportation diversity. We can enhance transportation choices and cut the negative impacts that cars now have on our cities. There are more and more inspirational examples out there. Few cities went the Vancouver route of avoiding freeways altogether but many cities are now editing out there excess freeway infrastructure in favour of parks and elegant boulevards – such as the remarkable freeway

demolition and daylighting of a river in Seoul, South Korea, and the Tom McCall Park replacement for a freeway in Portland, or the transformation of the Embarcadero Freeway to a regular street in San Francisco. There are also moves to submerge freeways under parks, such as the Madrid Rio project along the Manzanares River, the freeway cap of Klyde Warren Park in Dallas, and the "Big Dig" in Boston. By the way, these projects and more are detailed in my new book with Jonathan Barnett that will be out this June. But the important story is the worldwide diversification of transit, and new emphasis on bikeways and walkability. Think of the initiative for the webbed transit network in what is called "Toronto's Big Move" and the building of economic and flexible Bus Rapid Transit, started in Curitiba, Brazil, and now used in Istanbul, Bogotá, Seattle and many other cities. Everywhere in the world people are mimicking the success of Amsterdam and Rotterdam with networks of bikeways. And as we tighten up the scale of our cities, the walking culture is taking hold. Walking is cheap to accommodate and it is the most naturally attractive alternative to the car.

But, I'm not going to talk about any of that. These are all structural concerns that may miss my point. Instead, let me talk about the relatively untapped potential of basic urban design –

first in the core city and then in the suburbs, because these are the two fundamental formats of contemporary urbanism and they require absolutely different solutions even if the principles stay the same.

For core cities, I will use my home town of Vancouver as an example of a different way to handle density, and mixed use, and built form through a detailed attention to urban design, in a quest to improve the quality of everyday life.

The most powerful inner-city policy that Vancouver has pursued is an intensive, residentially-based growth strategy that balances the natural inclination for commercial growth. It is called "living first". It's based on the concept of coherent neighbourhood units because consumers make housing choices based on everything essential for their day-to-day living. This includes walkable distances, all the amenities and services at hand and a local shopping "high street" at the centre for basic needs and to provide the places where a neighbourhood creates its culture (the standard amenities we require are listed here and the targeted basic scale is noted here).

Also essential is that open space and the public realm be used to contribute to neighbourhood identity and amenity. 65 acres of new parks in Downtown Vancouver have been very carefully designed – avoiding useless private plazas and using buildings to give memorable form to public park spaces and squares – and managing sun and shading – and embellishing parks with public art. The park pattern is then tied together with a growing walkway/bikeway network. The street has also been identified as a centre of public life so sidewalks are detailed with grass boulevards and a double row of trees and lush landscaping to screen the density. Private open space is provided in delightful enclosed courtyards and roof gardens where residents can have their own small gardens.

Density is the goal – the idea is for the city to be as compact and dense as possible. But we found early on that the impacts of large-scaled buildings cannot be left to chance or else there are some pretty unpleasant results. So design expectations are carefully codified to insure quality materials and to manage security and noise and privacy, and interface conditions to insure what we call "neighbourliness". Almost all parking, except for visitors, is tucked away – and parking standards are pushed as

low as practical. Car shares are also being pushed hard to cut the number of cars.

There is a cool reciprocal formula for success when density and quality are tied together: the architectural solutions allow the density to work; the high density generates enough value to carry quality construction, great on-site amenities and a very nice contribution to the neighbourhood infrastructure; and the supportive neighbourhood draws all kinds of people back to a truly urban lifestyle.

Now let me turn to social mix.

First, this includes targets for a genuine economic mix of both non-market and market housing in every multiple-family neighbourhood (in these areas, 20% of all units have to be developed for low-income people). Everyone is mixed together, not necessarily within buildings because of problems that worried both the non-market managers as well as the condo sellers and consumers, but certainly mixed within the neighbourhood among buildings. But design attention keeps the buildings indistinguishable.

Second, it also includes a mix of household types; building at high

densities for special needs and seniors and families with children. For example, in addition to traditional apartments we have facilitated live-work units and lofts and artists' studios and even houseboats. But the biggest quest has been for households with children. This is where the urban design agenda has to switch into high gear because drawing families to higher density is a tough bet. In Vancouver, we have special design guidelines for family housing at high density and 25% of all new dense housing has to meet these guidelines.

So what do these guidelines talk about?
-For the unit, appropriate bedroom count and separation from active living areas; child-proof finishes; private open spaces for supervised "outside time"; minimum storage provisions; and in-unit laundry – among other needs.
-For the building, clustering of family units for mutual support; secure and visible semi-public outdoor spaces where children can meet one another; family gathering and gardening and party facilities; grade-level units and separate entrances for people who fear heights or want a dog or their own front door.
-For the neighbourhood, adequate numbers and quality of parks and schools and community facilities and childcare; safe areas without traffic cross-streets, and nearby transit.

But now to the real heart of urban design – let me turn specifically to built form. Of course in Vancouver, there is no debate that the high-rise has generally been our preferred form, especially where everyone wants a glimpse of the water or mountains, even though most of the smartest cities of the world seem to prefer mid-rises. For example, here's a typical low-rise form preferred in Rotterdam. But whatever the height, we've found that with complex buildings, you have to get the architecture right – success or failure for liveability rests in the details.

For high-rise Vancouver this has meant design codes for tall thin towers to get people up to the splendid views; and ample separation among towers so people can see around and through them. Of course this also means carefully brokering private views with every new proposal. And then, we modulate Vancouver's skyline to protect key public viewsheds and corridors. For mid-rise buildings, a careful sculpting of the architecture opens up vistas and protects natural light.

But equally important in either case is a coherent, dominant street wall at the traditional scale with the bases of tall buildings shielded from the sidewalk to cut their powerful impacts, allowing

them to float almost out of one's perception. This is how tall buildings can be humanized.

It's important to bring active residential use right down to the sidewalk level as often as possible – fostering the shop-house form where it makes sense but more often pushing for row houses to truly domesticate the street. This means no blank walls; and lots of doors and porches and stoops and windows and almost any engaging detail down at eye level. This includes weather protection along commercial routes. Essentially, within the first three floors, there needs to be the fascinating, intimate urbanism that engenders a strong sense of place, comfort, hominess, civility, safety and vivid memory. – and value, value, value.

The results in Vancouver are very encouraging. Our inner city has more than tripled its population to over 120,000 people in little over two decades and it continues to grow and thrive. Families are flooding back downtown in record numbers – we now have several thousand row houses downtown and over 9000 children. Almost 30% of downtown households built in this generation include children.

I'm not saying this is a perfect story. Vancouver still has its problems – homelessness remains a concern and not nearly enough has been done for middle-income housing so affordability is a top issue. But this attention to urban design has made a big difference. The point of this illustration is that new demand has been built for a sustainable city by also making it deliciously liveable.

Now, let's move to the suburbs – and here we are talking about a very different kettle of fish. I'm afraid we're back to that contradiction I talked about at the beginning.

If you look at the car-friendly suburban communities we have been building, around the world, since the War, from a sustainability lens, the picture is not very positive. They sprawl, they hit the environment hard, they are short on services and those services are expensive to deliver, they cannot support public transit without vast subsidy, they are socially exclusive, and they are often one-dimensional.

But most people live in these post-war communities not because they have to but because they want to, enjoying the benefits even though they also have to suffer the consequences. Most

consumers absolutely want the independence and self-sufficiency they offer, their spaciousness and human scale, the absence of towers, and the safety, especially for children, they are said to represent. We want that image of "neighbourhood" rootedness – who could blame any of us for that.

So, how can we re-invent suburbia to be both in the consumer image and in the image of a responsible urbanism? I think this will be the biggest issue for the next generation. And, this is where, frankly, there are few credible solutions anywhere in the world – we have our TOD's and our remake of redundant shopping malls, but we are not going to fundamentally reshape the suburbs with these moves. But there are some tantalizing inspirations out there that could take us a lot further.

There is one template that I think has great potential – both to retrofit existing suburbs and to build new ones – and it is also very popular with the public. It's a place filled with solutions that planners have overlooked for too long. I'm talking about the pre-war, "streetcar" neighbourhoods, built between the early 1900's and the 1930's, which exist in every modern western city. You have some of the best examples in the world right here in Melbourne. I'm using as my reference today a combination of

pictures from a Regina neighbourhood in Canada and a Dallas neighbourhood in the United States but you don't need to go that far to find similar examples everywhere.

Whether we look at these places from a liveability point of view or a sustainability perspective or as a visual statement or at a functional level, the pre-war neighbourhood has a lot going for it. It has a charm and beauty that comes from its age, no argument about that, but that attractiveness also comes from the way it all fits together into a coherent logical whole. These are places average citizens aspire to live in. These are places of real financial value and real emotional value.

The typical pre-war neighbourhood urban structure is usually a simple pattern of blocks of apparently single houses extending out from a commercial "high street" of shops (where the streetcar used to stop – or maybe a bus still stops), with offices or apartments over the shops. There are often back utility lanes so there is a nice sense of decorum at the front door. There is always the local park and often some useful smaller greens as well. Streets are lined with big trees. There are lots of private gardens and many people even include a vegetable garden in the back. There is almost always a local community centre and school and

other local services. Over the years, lots of additional housing has been tucked in along the lanes and as houses were converted into suites or a new infill development happened from time to time; but just as often, some people have chosen to keep their single family home and that is OK as well. Overall, though, without anyone really trying, the density and social diversity have increased while the predominately one and two storey scale has been maintained. We know, for example, that a sustainable, walkable neighbourhood starts to work at no more than 100 units per hectare – and many of these older neighbourhoods have that and more even if most people would not realize it. The streets are usually quite narrow with parking on one or both sides. These neighbourhoods are certainly accommodating to the car but they do not let auto standards dominate every other consideration. I hope you get the picture of what I am talking about – and I bet every person here has an example in your mind from here in Australia. And I bet that you feel quite good about those examples.   You instinctively relate to them.

Now, I do not want you to read me as just nostalgic – I'm not saying we can just replicate these old neighbourhoods. We have to acknowledge the limitations of these places as well. The houses are sturdy but surely don't have "green" construction features or

universal accessibility. The utilities are pretty conventional. Sometimes there are traffic problems and on-street parking can be difficult. And, if the neighbourhood has really kept its "polish and shine", it is often quite a consumer draw so housing prices can become disproportionately high for what you get.

But, you know, we are talking "inspiration" here not a ready-to-wear "model". The take-away features that we can explore for future suburban reform are simple but powerful. They have a great prevailing scale that people intuitively like. They show us that densification can be gentle and incremental. They offer an organic diversity that is set to the preferences of each community rather than following some theoretical model. They are full of pleasant and useful places. They are walkable, with good permeability and connectivity and they work for transit, cycling and the car – so they offer a natural balance of transportation. All the design standards are scaled down so space is not wasted and patterns are just tight enough for public services to be cost effective. And, lastly, they are lush with landscaping and diverse architecture so they are full of character and charm that touches consumers deeply. Of course, this all sounds a lot like the smart growth formula that I outlined at the beginning. Unfortunately there are very few places like this newly built on

green-field sites in the post-war era. However, there is one example that has many of the right features – and that is the Subiaco Community in Perth. This, to me, is one of the most brilliant new neighbourhood designs in the world. Make no mistake, the "Subiaco model" could redefine the suburbs. It would offer the gentle urbanism that people want while supplying the responsible urbanism that everybody needs.

Well, now we have to ask: are most cities positioned well to build an urban design ethos and culture? Generally, the answer is "no". This will take three key moves that I can tell you from experience will bring out the urban design and architectural and landscape architectural talents of any town. All of this can be done without touching the required profitability of development – in fact there is often a lot of money to be saved and new money to be made. Let me talk about each of these by asking a few questions.

First, let's talk about regulation and design. Does your zoning and other development regulations here in Australia require and facilitate excellence in design? Are you able to deny approval when you face a poor or mundane or insensitive or imported design – or to motivate a reshaping of that design with attractive bonuses? In the modern world of competitive and sustainable

cities, you have to be able to say "yes" to these questions. And the way to do that is to reform your zoning, adding a strong design imperative and making your zoning into a wealth creation device, not just a policing mechanism, which you can then apply to quality design through incentives that do not touch the civic budget. This takes a discretionary regulatory system that is flexible – light on rules and heavy on design guidelines and that allows people to build more if they sponsor great design and add public goods in and around their projects. This system sets things up for a natural collaboration among city builders based upon parallel and reconciled interests.

Second, let's talk about managing for great design. Who adjudicates the design questions in your community? This activity takes learning and experience and taste and design prowess. So a smart city will make sure it has that expertise in house. It will have civic architects who can speak the language of private architects as professional equals. And really smart cities will go beyond that to offer peer review of all major developments in the form of an advisory "Urban Design Panel" of local design professionals. This makes available your community's best home-grown advice on design to developers and decision-makers and it brings design questions to the fore for everyone to see and think

about. I can tell you from the experience of cities as divergent as Vancouver and Abu Dhabi or Dallas that peer review is an almost cost-free way to transform your city into a design savvy and a design demanding community resulting in better design of every single new project.

Third, let's look at the bankrupt formulas that tend to shape modern cities, especially the suburbs. Is your city created from an application of off-the-shelf standards or is it the result of tailored design? The most damaging roadblocks to progressive urban design are the outdated street and road standards, and obsolete subdivision standards, and insensitive corporate architectural formulas and the layering of all kinds of single-interest rules in building codes and parking bylaws and health requirements and security regulations. These things each had their logic when they were created but the people who invented them were not thinking of the whole picture and they were certainly not thinking about maximizing human experience. These kinds of fixed rules are most manifest in our suburbs around the world because that has been the big building boon since most of these rules came into effect, and wherever they apply our cities have become more mundane and harsher and less special. I think we need in every city a ritual burning of these outdated and single-minded rules.

And then we have to say to everyone "let's take those interests and meld them with other interests for liveability and sociability and sustainability in specific urban design work to create genuine, unique communities". We must go from this to this and from this to this. It is that simple.

Now in all three of these moves I want to be clear that I am not talking about de-regulation. For real excellence, we have to more carefully regulate the more we grow. But future regulations will tailor not homogenize, they will sharpen profits not diminish them, they will adjust to contemporary needs not drag along the obsolete.

I'm also not talking about a "top-down" agenda. This new way of doing business requires a strong and diverse engagement of the public at every step along the way to articulate the public perspective and to insure public buy-in and ownership. We have to speak to people as citizens, voting members of the body politic, and as consumers driving market trends that are way more powerful in shaping any city than all the civic laws and policies put together.

But I will tell you that if you do those three things in any modern city, you will create the conditions for collaboration between government, developers and citizens – because these civic forces have to work together to create the city that meets the high expectations of consumers and shapes consumer choices – one sector cannot do it alone. The success of one amplifies the others. This is the only way to meet the challenges that I talked about at the beginning – to build green performance comfortably into proformas and to build demand in new market segments that were just too risky in the past.

Tomorrow's city must meet the environmental test and the economic test but it must also meet the experiential test; and that is the test of love; that is the test of soul. It's simply got to have that "wow" factor. When we achieve that, then these little ones will do the right thing as they grows up and take their places within the community. They will understand what is at stake – they will appreciate what they have received – and that we are all in this together – and they will do whatever is necessary to hand on their city in a better condition to their children. And that, ladies and gentlemen, is the true power of rekindling the urban love affair.

Thank you.