



## Productive Partnerships

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Mission Creek Greenway, phase II.

As a professional body that has its finger on the pulse of the community, the real estate board is in a unique position to identify and support worthwhile local initiatives. When those initiatives are eligible for Real Estate Foundation funding, there is potential for the real estate industry, through the Boards, to influence the way grant monies are distributed, enhancing Realtors' ability to "give back" to the communities where they earn their livelihoods.

The past few years have seen a handful of such projects. The following are examples of how a successful Board-Non-profit organization-Foundation partnership can work.

Since 1995, the Real Estate Foundation has been working with UBC's Landscape Architecture Program to design "sustainable urban landscapes" in Surrey. The Fraser Valley Real Estate Board (FVREB) participated in the charrettes and is involved with ongoing planning activities in the East Clayton neighbourhood. However, the most notable evidence of the Board's commitment to creating more livable communities was its initiative to host the Alternative Development Standards for Sustainable Communities symposium in April 1998. The Foundation contributed a \$16,500 to the event, which drew together professionals in a number of disciplines to explore planning, infrastructure and housing solutions for friendlier, "greener", more affordable development. Not only did the FVREB show leadership in identifying existing impediments to sustainable urban design, but it also provided a forum where practitioners could begin to work together to bring concepts to reality.

In 1997 the Okanagan Mainline Real Estate Board (OMREB) endorsed a successful grant application by the Friends of Mission Creek Society to build a greenway along Kelowna's Mission Creek. In approving a grant of \$50,000 for the construction of a viewing platform, interpretive shelter, and related interpretive information, the Real Estate Foundation asked OMREB to oversee the project on its behalf. OMREB's familiarity with the project and its position as a regional representative of the real estate industry influenced this decision. "The Real Estate Foundation will only get involved when local organizations also support the project," says Foundation Executive Director, Tim Pringle. "OMREB's involvement in the Mission Creek Greenway Project was one way for the real estate industry to show support for a project that will benefit the entire community."

Also in 1997, the Foundation made a grant of \$200,000 to establish the Kamloops Safe House for Youth. Kamloops & District Real Estate Association was instrumental in directing the applicant to the Foundation, and in helping to represent the community's needs throughout the Foundation's research and decision-making process. Since May 1998, the Kamloops Youth Resources Society has served over 450 youth, either by providing a place to stay or with non-residential services such as meals and counselling.

In the case of the Osoyoos Desert Society, the South Okanagan Real Estate Board (SOREB) was instrumental in the society receiving a \$50,000 grant to construct a boardwalk, fences and interpretive signage in 1998. SOREB assisted the society in applying to the Foundation. The result was the first major grant for the project, leading to additional large grants from other sources and the opening of the Osoyoos Desert Centre in July 1999.

In each of these projects the involvement and commitment of the local real estate boards encouraged the Foundation to become a significant partner in the community's initiative.