



CITY

SATURDAY, MAY 7, 2016 VANCOUVER SUN A15

# SCENIC SHORES

WATER'S EDGE FROM A15

Around the corner I pull up to a pocket beach where longtime residents of West Vancouver are playing with their dogs.

"There's been lots of development," begins Marina Alexander, raised at 29th Street and Palmerston Avenue. "We had chickens. It was very rural. Now the homes are huge."

Some are cashing in on the high prices and moving out, but not her. This is her community, where her friends live.

"Every once in a while ... you look at how spectacular it is and you think, 'why wouldn't the world want to live here?'"

Tom Foster, a resident of 40 years, agrees that the village feel of West Vancouver is gone. "It was very peaceful. That ambience has changed. People recognized that West Van was a very nice place to live, so they started to come and build, tear down and build."

One constant in Lighthouse Park, the sort of waterfront green space that only grows in value over time. "It hasn't changed," Foster says.

"It's still as great as ever, a wonderful place to come and relax and see nature."

Seals, sea lions, mink and driverotters can be spotted here. "It's pretty spectacular in the middle of a big city."

The park gives way to the residential Canfield area and a new look waterfront — homes no longer situated on imposing rock bluffs in the natural forest but on flatter ground and decorated with palms, trimmed hedges and ornamentals.

At low tide, mussels and other crustaceans are fair game. Gulls paddle up to the exposed rocks to peck away while crows stand on top and work their way down. One gull catches a small purple starfish but is frustrated by the fact it hardens out of the water.

As part of his master's thesis at Simon Fraser University, Justin Suraci found it can take 45 minutes to choke one down, including a "pre-digesting" period to soften it up. "I often saw gulls hold two legs in their mouth/throat for several minutes, then ... switch it around

to hold two different legs in their mouth."

**THE FIRST PEOPLE**

As I continue eastward, one man waves as he powerwashes his backyard, as does the operator of a backhoe. A worker shouts "ahoy" from the third-floor window of a home under construction.

Up on Radcliffe Avenue is the lavish home of business magnate Frank Giustra: eight bedrooms, six full and four partial bathrooms on three lots with a total assessed value of \$67 million.

We both attended Aldergrove Secondary School and at reunions, our late principal Norm Sherritt liked to tell the story of having to call Giustra's Italian mother due to his rebellious nature.

"Go ahead, she doesn't speak English," Giustra taunted. Sherritt reported back that "she speaks better English than you do."

Just ahead, Dundarave Park is the perfect place to come ashore for a hot lunch near a colourful drugstore mural that depicts the first European sailing ships and whips of smoke from native villages on a forested shoreline.

Single-family residences yield to high-rises on the oceanfront east of Dundarave, the maximum allowable height set at 20 storeys.

At popular Ambleside Park, a welcome figure — a large cedar carving by artist Stan Joseph, with the assistance of Wes Nahane — looks to the sea with open arms just before the Capilano River and the historic Squamish community of Swemelchista.

Captain Vancouver wrote fondly of his experience at First Narrows, where Lions Gate Bridge was later



Ethan Kennedy, left, and Tyler Salt of North Vancouver explore Tye Point at Horseshoe Bay.

built in 1938. "Here we were met by about fifty Indians, in their canoes, who conducted themselves with the greatest decorum and civility, presenting us with several fish cooked ... These good people, finding we were included to make some return for their hospitality, shewed much understanding in preferring iron to copper."

Today, the Squamish remain sharp business people with vast landholdings that include the Park Royal Shopping Centre, Lynnwood and Mosquito Creek marinas, and the Capilano River RV Park — visible to motorists as they merge onto the north side of the Lions Gate Bridge.

I recall actor Matthew McConaughey on a late-night talk show relating how he stayed in the RV park while shooting a movie in Vancouver. Salmon were running upstream, he said, and natives would place metal shopping carts on their side in the water, let them fill with fish, then cart away the bounty.

Unable to find a good takeout point on the Capilano River, I put the kayak on my pickup truck and checked in as the park's only tenter. My address tonight is 295 Tomahawk Avenue. Clean washrooms, hot showers, laundry, Wi-Fi, but no wood campfires and, sorry, the hot tub isn't working.

You'd think that sleeping like a troll beneath a major bridge would be oppressively loud, but the slow-emerging traffic is surprisingly quiet.

Across from me, Derek Garner is couch surfing in a relative's RV after a couple of weeks on the streets. The father of two misses his family and struggles to get ahead without a job and a recent hospitalization.

"Twenty-five cents for water at McDonald's is a fair price — if you've got it," he says. "I've been 14 months sober. I don't do any drugs. Smoke a little bit."

He would like a job that involves keeping kids safe. "Social work, teaching life skills, taking care of the kids and making sure they don't hurt themselves with the sh— that's out there, needles and who knows what."

Later, Bob Brown, a retired B.C. Tel worker from Gibsons, and his dog, George, drop by my tent for a visit. Some people are full-time residents of the RV park; Brown's been here seven weeks taking physiotherapy after knee-replacement surgery.

"It's not the greatest spot," he allows. "The sites are a little tight, but it's just so damned handy. Everything's here. You don't have to travel back and forth on the ferry."

He also appreciates the security. "It's quite secure, too; as far as rift-rat coming through, nothing happens," he continues, allowing for the odd reporter to slip under the radar.

"I forgot about that, Larry. They do let some in," Lynnwood postmedia.com

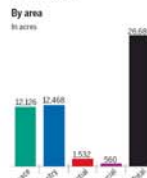


The constant beauty of Whytecliff Park stands out among the residential upheaval along the oceanfront of West Vancouver.

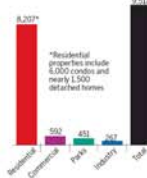
## Oceanfront by the numbers

Curious to see how much Metro Vancouver's oceanfront homes are worth? And how the waterfront is broken down by land use? Visit [vancouver Sun.com](http://vancouver Sun.com) for interactive maps and graphics that allow you to click on locations for assessment values, lot sizes and other fun facts.

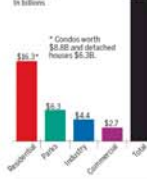
A primer on what occupies the oceanfront, stretching from Lions Bay to White Rock



By number of properties



By property value



Of the 128 waterfront homes valued at over \$10 million ...



West Vancouver by the numbers



10 most expensive waterfront homes in Metro Vancouver (Based on most recent assessed value)

Location	Value
3085 Point Grey Rd., Vancouver	\$63.9 million
2825 Point Grey Rd., Vancouver	\$34.7 million
2999 Point Grey Rd., Vancouver	\$29.8 million
3330 Radcliffe Ave., West Vancouver	\$29.7 million
2588 Belcote Ave., West Vancouver	\$26.5 million
2781 Point Grey Rd., Vancouver	\$25.5 million
2531 Point Grey Rd., Vancouver	\$23.5 million
4351 Erwin Dr., West Vancouver	\$23 million
2715 Point Grey Rd., Vancouver	\$23 million
3003 Point Grey Rd., Vancouver	\$22.7 million

Of the 700 seaside acres ...

\$5 per cent is parkland  
\$5 per cent is residential  
Combined value is \$4.7 billion

Of the 943 oceanfront residences ...

Half are detached homes  
Average price of a detached waterfront home is \$6.3 million  
300 residences are assessed at over \$5 million  
One in three of the \$5-million-plus homes are on Belcote Avenue or Marine Drive

SOURCE: LANDCOR DATA CORP. ANALYSIS: LOBI CULBERT, VANCOUVER SUN

MAGGIE WONG / POSTMEDIA NEWS

In an effort to define our oceanfront, The Sun asked for help from Landcor Data Corp., a New Westminster-based firm that specializes in analyzing real estate data. Landcor matched B.C. Assessment data with other shoreline datasets to create a spreadsheet of 9,518 oceanfront properties between Lions Bay and South Surrey. Landcor excluded all addresses that were separated from the coast by another property, a road or railway (with the exception of the BNSF Railway in White Rock.) The Sun analyzed this data to produce the maps and graphics for this series.