Blog 5

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As our project finishes, you may be asking some questions about our project. We have taken the time to answer a few of them below:

**How did we implement our project?**

After we received the original flow chart from the City of Vancouver, we set out to find ways to improve upon their existing system. After much brainstorming, we came to the conclusion that the flowchart would be more effective if it were to be separated into different criteria. We decided that land zoning was a good way to make a more efficient system for litter receptacle placement. By separating the flowcharts into land zonings, we were able to consider the specific needs of different areas throughout Vancouver. From there, it was a matter of looking needs such as pedestrian counts, food distributors and bus routes. We found these categories to be practical in systematically placing litter receptacles. The system we put in place does not place redundant cans, and takes into account the different flow charts to provide a cohesive system without redundancies. This was most difficult to achieve in the downtown core, where we see overlaps in zones. This is why we made a separate flow chart for Downtown Vancouver, which takes into account the specific needs that come with high density areas.

**What went well? What did not go well?**

As with any group project, there are unanticipated ups and downs. Despite having a successful project, we can look back our experience and see that there are things that could have gone better. The first area of improvement would have come from a more realistic understanding of our workload for this project. With the amount of variables that need to be considered, and the sheer amount of litter receptacles that need to be placed or mapped, this project was deceptively work intensive. The mapping itself took many more hours than we thought it would. This came from underestimating the number of receptacles that are needed in a large city such as Vancouver. It is one thing to be given a number for the quantity available and needed, but it is quite another to plan out their placement one by one. Another aspect that we could have handled more effectively is the retrieval of information from other sources, such as the Parks Board of Vancouver or Translink. This information would have provided us with a better informed final product.

Despite the above, there many aspects of the project that went very well. We worked well as a team, and provided constructive criticism of our work. Our brainstorming sessions always were productive, and we managed to avoid any conflict within the group. We met at least once a week, Wednesdays from 10 am to 12 pm. When needed, we would frequently make time available on the weekends or during the week to meet. Everyone was very flexible. The flowchart design itself went very well. We made around two or three rough drafts of each flowchart before presenting them to the client. We would peer-review our work and make the changes that we deemed best. Overall, we ended up with a consistent, quality project that aligned on our design goals.

**Where did our end product deviate from our original vision?**

After we received feedback from the City of Vancouver, we came to realize that our original flowcharts were a little too intricate for practical use. We took their feedback and slimmed down some aspects of our flowcharts. A major change came from the fact that the downtown area was deemed to be too complicated with the inclusion of parks, schools and beaches. We kept the Seawall as a part of Downtown, but we realized that there wasn’t much difference between the parks, schools and beaches that are Downtown as opposed to the ones that are located in the rest of Vancouver.

Another piece of input that we gained from our review was the realization that the Parks Board and the City of Vancouver Engineering Department do not have a very open dialogue between them. They are separate entities, and this makes it difficult to gain information from one side while doing a project with the other. We were informed that the City does not know the quantity nor the placement of the litter receptacles in the parks, beaches and schools of Vancouver. This spurred the reworking of the respective flowcharts to reflect the perimeter of these areas, and not the areas themselves. Inside these areas are managed by the Parks Board and the School District, so the placement and quantity is up to the respective organization.

**How did our project turn out?**

After all of our brainstorming, planning, draft flowcharts and reviews, we finally came away with a finished product. We managed to have working, effective flowcharts. To prove that our work is usable, we proceeded to provide a sample distribution of litter receptacles for the downtown area. We mapped the area with the criteria we set for Downtown, and the result is pleasing. We used less large cans than we anticipated, and we still maintain an effective, user-friendly distribution for the pedestrians of Vancouver. Since we used roughly half of the available “Large” garbage cans (240 L in volume), there is the option to place more in the problem areas of Vancouver, perhaps around Rogers Arena, BC Place, and skytrain stations. Alternatively, we could place them in busier areas such as Granville, Burrard, Cambie and Broadway. In the end, we have some room to add to the distribution if needed, but we believe that our distribution covers the city well.

