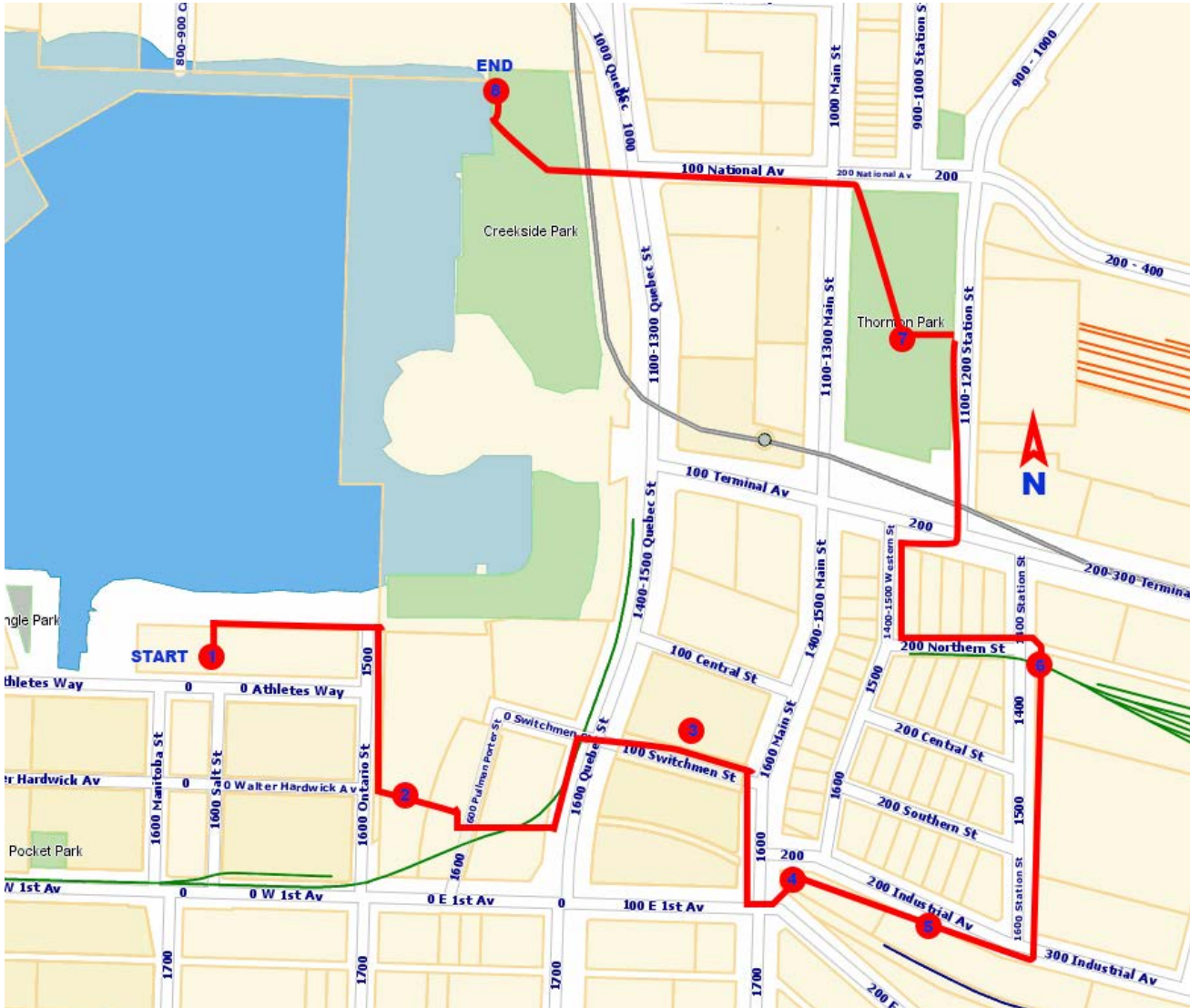


Gushing at the Wrong Evergreen – a self-guided soundwalk

Created by Jorma Kujala



Listening Stations:

1. Start: outdoor seating area
2. pollinator meadow
3. courtyard
4. billboard
5. old and new
6. planes, trains, and automobiles
7. missing and not forgotten (CW; see notes below)
8. reflection

Introductory Thoughts

- This excursion takes place on the unceded homelands of the x^wməθk^wəyəm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish), and Səlílwlitlh (Tsleil-Waututh) Nations. As guests on these lands, please enjoy exploring this area, while being mindful and respectful towards all human and non-human residents who make this area their home. The Vancouver Soundwalk Collective is grateful for the opportunity to live, listen, work and play on these lands, and to Vancouver New Music for their ongoing support of soundwalking. Thank you!
- This soundwalk takes place primarily on paved, flat sidewalks, walkways and roadways, though on occasion the walker will encounter gravel or uneven terrain. Please be aware of your footing at all times, wait cross safely at intersections and road crossings, and apologies in advance should you encounter any unforeseen hindrances along the route!
- Although this self-guided walk is not a timed excursion, in total it is a few kilometres in length, so expect on average to spend about 60-90 minutes following this route. Take time to breathe, relax, and maintain "open ears" deep listening during this soundwalk. It is preferred to soundwalk without talking, headphones or other distractions. Moseying is welcomed, however, so no need to be in a rush! While the route has been choreographed to include specific listening locations, please feel free to venture off this "well beaten" path should you find enticing sounds nearby – there are almost infinite sounds to listen to in between and at each listening stations. This walk can be explored at any time of the day, and the sounds encountered will vary accordingly. Remember, the soundscape is never static, and enjoying the variety of sounds is part of the inherent pleasure of soundwalking!
- Should you wish, it is acceptable and even enjoyable to engage with the environment, after all, we humans are also sound-makers! From time to time, feel free to vary your footfalls, tap on surfaces, splash water, rustle branches and so on. Enjoy the many sounds and experiences that await!



Station 1 - Start: outdoor seating area

Begin your soundwalk by relaxing on the wooden seating area to the north of Athletes Way, just outside the Tap & Barrel restaurant's outdoor seating area. Take a few slow, melodic breaths, feel free to close your eyes and absorb the immersion of sounds. The metal bridge to the west of this seating area occasionally "clangs" and "pings," adding variety to the orchestra of bicycles, e-bikes and e-scooters that pass by. Conversation is ripe in the air. To the south of Athletes Way, the paving of the rest of Olympic Village Plaza includes stamped recollections of various trades, workers, and lives once lived in this area. What voices are omitted from these historical markers? Ever wonder what are those giant birds in the plaza are really guarding?

When you are ready, head east along the waterfront walkway, then turn right (south) and continue along Ontario Street, and stop along the gravel path midway in the East Park Pollinator Meadow.



Station 2 - pollinator meadow

Take time to linger here. Kick around the gravel, if you like, and enjoy the sounds made while traversing a different type of terrain. During the many weeks of preliminary research for this walk, poppies and other flowers began to bloom along the northern boundaries of the park, and the grasses in the meadow continue to reach to the sky. Is the fenced off construction site to the north of the park humming with activity? Is anything else humming in this meadow? There is a delicious, dense thud when the wooden fencing along the edges of this park is played - go ahead, enjoy!

Continue eastward along the walkway to the east of meadow, along the public thoroughfare through the “Navio by the Creek” development... concrete blocks housing the area's recent arrivals. Be lured forward by the gleaming metal public art in the courtyard ahead, pause a while and try listening for the sounds of water missing around the statue, wondering when the water feature will be returned to use. Continue eastward along the pathway, pausing to engage with the metal railway relics now used as decorative features. Turn left at Quebec Street, then right onto Switchmen Street, and proceed to the courtyard diagonally across the intersection.



Station 3 – courtyard (Central by Onni)

There is sweet spot in this public courtyard where it is possible to hear both the hum coming from the three large exhaust vents along the south edge of the courtyard (along Switchmen Street) and the splashing from the water fountains that dot the pond-like water feature. Feel free to dawdle, then move over to the water feature, and listen to the changing sounds as you move over and around the water feature. What sounds reverberate from the roof many stories overhead? This portion of False Creek was under water at the arrival of colonial settlers, isn't it ironic that water is being re-introduced to the aesthetic benefit of condo owners and passersby?

Move east along Switchmen Street, and turn right at Main Street, heading to the nearby crosswalk where it intersects with East 1st Avenue. Cross Main Street, and head to the very visible billboard signage in the Midas Muffler parking lot.



Station 4 - billboard

The Pattison Group website refers to this type of billboard as a “poster vertical trio,” I refer to this as a style of advertising that could be threatened with extinction. Back in the day, the urban landscape was once overflowing with movable beacons of capitalism like this, though they are becoming more difficult to locate nowadays. Take your time to stand underneath, close your eyes, and listen. Can you discern the whir of the rotating triangular columns over the overpowering waves of traffic?

Fill your lungs with a slow, deep breath, exhale, and move east along Industrial Avenue, pausing before the intersection with Station Street.



Station 5 - old and new

This section of Industrial Avenue is a microcosm of this area's layered, evolving and complicated history. Along the south side of the street, just past the light industry of automotive shops, sits a well-worn wooden building, a 1905 character home transported a few years ago from the West End to this interim location. It's been sitting idle in this "stop gap" yard for several years, keeping watch over the parked vehicles, waiting for a new location, a new home and a new life. Feel free to tap out a ditty on the chain link fence, though be cautious of debris that might be hidden in the grasses. The murals decorating the walls of the Arts Factory on the north side of the street herald new life in this 'hood, competing with the pricey residences along False Creek and the remnants of industry here at the fringes. While researching this walk, the street became a growing home to motor homes, vans and campers - new residents competing with the rough living that accompanies the tents, tarps and cardboard encampments of the unhoused that have also materialized here. Other lives have been seemingly forgotten as well – those of this land's original inhabitants. Which of these evergreen developments do you prefer? What do your ears and your body tell you?

Turn left onto Station Street, and mosey along the sidewalk on east side, past more murals, northward over to the railway crossing just ahead.



Station 6 - planes, trains, and automobiles

Stop at the spot where the sidewalk is bisected by the rail line, face the CN rail works yard, and listen a while. Trains come and go day and night, are you lucky to feel and hear the power of a locomotive waiting to leave? The soundscape in this neck of the woods is also punctuated with a different type of train whining and grinding along the Skytrain tracks to the north, paralleling vehicular traffic speeding along Terminal Avenue. On occasion, planes and helicopters pass overhead. If you feel inclined, move along Northern Street as it parallels the works yard and explore the car dealerships further to the east, before returning to this spot.

When ready, continue west on Northern, north on Western (I know, sounds odd, doesn't it!), and then use the crosswalk at Station Street to cross Terminal Avenue to the middle of Thornton Park.



Station 7 - missing and not forgotten

(CW: violence against women; if you prefer to skip this station, walk through or around the park to the northwest corner, to the intersection at Main and National and proceed to Station 8)

The circle of granite benches was originally placed as a testament to the lives of the 14 women murdered by a gunman at the University of Montreal's École Polytechnique, on December 6th, 1989. Simply put, it's a monument to brutalities faced by women at the hands of men, before, during, and after that atrocity. Sit here for a long while, remembering the murdered students, remembering our country's missing and murdered indigenous women and girls, remembering your own loved ones. Run your hands along the stone, dip your fingers into any water in the tear-shaped depressions in the benches, remembering how these horrific actions affect each and every one of

us. Listen to the wind in the trees, the sounds of conversation from passersby... who knows, someone may even approach you with a word or two. Feel the grass in the centre of this circle of tears.

Continue to the northwest corner of the park, head west on National Avenue, and cross Quebec Street. Once you are on the west side of the street, move northward a short distance, then find your own path across the parking lot, following your ears onto the grass of Creekside Park.



Station 8 - End: reflection

At the northwest corner of this park, before the nearby pedestrian and bike paths veer to the west along the north shore of False Creek, there is a small access point to water. Find a stone or log to sit on at this shoreline, take a few slow, deep breaths, each time gently exhaling. Listen to the life of this park, the life of our city. The sounds from the

skateboard park in the distance adds energy to this soundscape, punctuating the plethora of other sounds. Reflect on the sounds and experiences of your recent listening journey, and the thoughts evoked along the way. Breathe. Listen. Enjoy.

All photos by Jorma Kujala.