



Vancouver, British Columbia

Population Rank: Canada. . . . 3
Province. . . . 1

Proportions: 1:2

Adopted: Unveiled 17 May 1983



DESIGN: The flag of the City of Vancouver has a white field with five wavy stripes of medium blue, each just over half the width of the space between them. Against the hoist is a green non-equilateral pentagon, its upper and lower edges approximately one-sixth the length of the flag. The remaining two sides project to the horizontal centre of the flag, meeting at a near-right angle approximately three-sevenths the distance from the hoist. In the centre of the pentagon is a simple shield with a horizontal top and simply-curved sides forming a pointed “U” shape. It is golden yellow bearing an axe and oar, crossed with handles downward, surmounted by a three-towered mural crown; the tools, crown, and shield are outlined in black.

SYMBOLISM: The medium blue wavy stripes appear on the lower two-thirds of the shield of the city’s coat of arms and refer to Vancouver as a natural harbour on the Pacific Ocean. Vancouver’s is the busiest and largest port in Canada and the fourth largest, by tonnage, in North America. The green pentagon, taken from the green “pile” on the shield, represents the land on which Vancouver was built and its forests. Together, the references to sea and land reflect the city’s motto, which also appears on its coat of arms: “By Sea,

Land, and Air We Prosper”. The badge, which was part of the heraldic grant, continues this theme with an axe for the timber industry, long the city’s most important economic resource, and the oar for the maritime nature of Vancouver, including fishing. The mural crown is a traditional symbol of civic authority.

HOW SELECTED: Adopted by the city council. Vancouver revisited the idea of a city flag in anticipation of hosting Expo ’86. The design derives from the city’s coat of arms, granted by the English Kings of Arms in London, England, 31 March 1969.

DESIGNER: Robert D. Watt, director of the Vancouver Museum (in June 1988 he would become the first Chief Herald of Canada at the Canadian Heraldic Authority).



FORMER FLAG: In 1978 a contest was held for a Vancouver city flag. The winner was Rudolph Danglemaier, who won \$300. The flag, here reconstructed from a photograph, has vertical stripes

of green, white, and blue, a variant of a Canadian pale design. In the centre is a shield bearing a tall inverted isosceles triangle in black, bearing a totem pole. At the top of the shield is a yellow panel with two white flowers; below is a panel with eight wavy lines in blue and white. Above it is a three-towered mural crown with a ship’s fore royal mast with sail set and flying pennon. The committee judging the contest decided to add the helmet, mantling, and shield to give the design a “stronger sense of heraldry”. Although approved, the flag failed to garner public enthusiasm and was never manufactured or used.

OTHER FLAGS: The other two largest municipalities in Metro Vancouver (formerly the Greater Vancouver Regional District) have flags.