Defining characteristics of a postmodern city:

1. ‘Despatialization’

Globalization of consumption. Fewer local stores, hotels, restaurants etc. Global institutions of capital and commerce. Banks, business services. Simulations - facades, contrived ‘heritage’.

2. ‘Fragmentation’

Enormous social diversity, class, ethnicity, language, religion. Spatial fragmentation too - cf large, comprehensively planned areas. Cultural, social division, diversification of life-styles.

3. ‘Privatization’

Public spaces - streets, squares, malls...privately owned. Privatization and social control - Business Improvement Associations/Districts. Parks, plazas, places of assembly.

Can you illustrate each of these processes using Vancouver?
2
How else do Post modern cities differ from the industrial and corporate cities?

THE EDGE CITY
What has caused this ‘hybrid’ suburb/city urban form?
Contrast with industrial or corporate city forms.
Vancouver’s inner and outer ‘suburbs’ - increasingly these are ‘cities’ - not just residential, ‘dormitory areas’. Decentralization of retail complexes, entertainment centres, offices, factories, distribution depots etc. Burnaby, Richmond, Coquitlam, Surrey, Langley etc.

Changing economy - service economy, transport, infotech,

Effects? Commuting between edge cities. From central city to ‘Edge cities’.

THE DUAL CITY
In the postmodern city - growing economic inequality. Very sharp contrasts. Downtown Eastside - Tinselltown/International Village, Yaletown, False Creek North.

Two urban economies - ‘formal’ and ‘informal’.

Formal - service economy - mix of ‘good jobs’/ ‘bad jobs’.
- information technology - youthful entrepreneurs.
- inner city locations - work and residence.

Informal economy - low pay, little security, ethnic enclaves and social networks. Shades into the ‘underground’ economy - employment practices, crime.
Manifestations of stark contrasts...areas of ‘gentrification’.

GENTRIFICATION
Meaning? The ‘up-grading’ of the population - higher classes/status groups. “ ” “ ” “ buildings, shops, amenities etc.

Ruth Glass  London School of Economics 1961.

1960s - small scale change. Individuals, local developers. Restoring property to single family homes. Displacement of poorer, older renters.

How was the process explained?

i. Demographic change - more young families, high rate of household formation.

ii. Social structural - new occupations, changing class structure. Expansion of middle class, professions.

iii. Cultural - the ‘new middle class’ - highly educated, social and cultural specialists. ‘Intelligentsia’ - valuing urban life, social diversity.


Who were displaced? Renters. Poor, elderly, young, ethnic minorities. Effect on community? Break up of working class communities, dispersal of supportive social networks.
Did similar process occur here?

Vancouver in 60s. ‘Urban Renewal’ planned for the east end (Strathcona). Freeway. Opposition of Chinese community - but also community activists, lawyers, architects etc. Harcourt, Ericksen, Davies, Green. A ‘nursery’ for political/community activism.


Opposition to ‘gentrification’ and displacement. Gastown - a heritage area. Gentrified. Chinatown - an ethnic enclave. Multiculturalism led to its refurbishing in the 70s. Also ‘gentrification’.

MOVEMENTS, IDEOLOGIES AND INTELLECTUALS
Urban social movements form in opposition to both ‘urban renewal’ and ‘gentrification’.
New middle class elements + local working class leadership.
Defend inner city communities - two main ideologies:
Marxian, ‘political economy’ analysis of gentrification. COPE.

Formation of The Electors Action Movement (TEAM) - Harcourt.

David Ley - analyst of gentrification - using ‘class’, culture and ideology.

By 1980s - inner city development reflects neo-conservative/neo-liberal ‘free market ‘ ideas.
Gentrification as “Revanchism” - revenge.

In USA - Neil Smith - Marxist Geographer - explaining gentrification role of capital.


Larger scale, corporate redevelopment. New, nastier phase of gentrification.

Revengeful violence of the middle class. Taking back ‘their’ city from the homeless, the drug addicts, the ‘bums’. Middle class fear of the inhabitants of the inner city. (Tom Wolfe, The Bonfire of the Vanities)

Identification of inner city with depravity, crime, squalor. (cf DES).

US - a racialized, class-based reaction against ethnic minorities, homeless, gays, immigrants etc.

Evictions (Tompkins Square in NY). Sanitizing the streets, the parks.