

**Subject: [Fwd: Limiting Big Box Stores]**

**Date:** Tue, 16 Oct 2001 16:35:16 -0700

**From:** Brian Platts <brian\_platts@telus.net>

**To:** Corrie Kost <kost@triumf.ca>

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**Subject: Re: Limiting Big Box Stores**

**Date:** Tue, 16 Oct 2001 19:05:50 +0100 (BST)

**From:** Elizabeth James <cagebc@yahoo.com>

**To:** brian\_platts@telus.net, Bill Denault <bill\_denault@dnv.org>, Don Bell <belld@district.north-van.bc.ca>, Doug Mackay-Dunn <doug\_mackay-dunn@dnv.org>, Ernie Crist <ernie\_crist@dnv.org>, Heather Dunsford <heather\_dunsford@dnv.org>, Janice Harris <janice\_harris@dnv.org>, Lisa Muri <lisa\_muri@dnv.org>, NVD Council <dnvcouncil@dnv.org>

**CC:** Annette Martin <annettem@digital-rain.com>, FONVCA <fonvca@fonvca.org>

Excellent points, Brian.

Essentially, when they are first built, malls and big box stores are hailed as 'the wave of the future'. Unfortunately, many such waves, due to the effects of each successive wave that follows, are prone to crash and dissipate on the beaches of financial difficulty.

When this happens, of course, other stores try to fill the mausoleums that are left behind, standing as cheap and deteriorating monuments to those who got greedy and too big for their boots.

The one enduring retail presence, to which everyone tries to return when the 'boxers' file Chapter 11 or its equivalent, is the small, personalized, service-oriented and, often, family-owned business. I don't know about others, but the latter is what I envisioned when Council OK'd a "pedestrian-oriented village redevelopment" for the Lynn Valley area...a village collection of purpose-built specialty stores with a few unique 'boutique' restaurants thrown in for good measure ..... something different than can be found in any cheap strip-mall in North America.

Instead, we are getting the same old, same old. *Winners* to complement *Zellers*, *A&W* to complement *Macdonald's*, *Quiznos* to complement *Subway*. Wow! Such imagination! I just can't wait for that delicious 'Food Court' aroma to tempt our kids into yet more junk food. But you see that's what happens to the "Malls" and "Big Box's" when they can no longer make the grade...the land is now too expensive for the little guys, the big guys can't keep the bottom line in the black and so the mausoleums get filled with the only types of fatty rubber food that passes for nutrition these days - those and stores selling picked over warehouse-type clothes.

Hurrah for today's village!

I just wish we could identify some potential politicians who actually have some vision for this area. Whatever happened to art and architecture and community? We see precious little of it in the District and, certainly, there is little attempt on the part of Council to require new developments to take advantage of the beautiful mountains, forsts and rivers that I believe are still out there somewhere, albeit obscured by the tunnel of developments 'maximizing' construction on the lots along Lynn Valley Road and Mountain Highway.

Our schools of architecture are good at turning out a lot of rubber stamps, but we could certainly do with a few Arthur Ericksens and Frank Lloyd Wrights in this local world of ours. Where are the lofts, the weird homes, the architectural gems that one can see each week on HGTV?

In my opinion, most of the fault lies with those who, lacking any vision themselves, require only that a developer meets zoning by-laws, setbacks and roof height parameters.....and even those are frequently 'varied' to suit current conveniences.

Most councils, certainly in the Lower Mainland, should be ashamed of their performance..... they are reducing our built environment to the lowest level of the least-cost mediocrity that will be accepted by the taxpayers. It's no wonder that voters are apathetic....what's to get excited about? All we get once every three years is more of the same.

Cheers, anyway Brian.....keep on trying.

Liz

*Brian Platts* <brian\_platts@telus.net> wrote:

Mayor & Council,

It seems quite clear that, at this stage anyway, Council supports the 40,000 square foot limitation on big box stores, and the amendment to exclude from the proposed Bylaw those stores which already exceed this limitation.

I found it rather odd, however, that while speaking in support of the Bylaw at least three Councillors (Mackay-Dunn, Harris, and Dunsford) spoke glowingly of the new Canadian Tire big box outlet on Main Street. The point that seems to have alluded these Councillors is that the Canadian Tire store was approved through a REZONING application. Rather than building the huge retail outlet as of right, the applicants had to come forward and demonstrate that the proposal was acceptable to staff, Council, and the community. I would therefore argue that the "success" of this big box store is a direct result of this process.

By excluding from the Bylaw all the existing retail outlets that are already over 40,000 square feet, you are permitting them in the future to redevelop BEYOND this limit AS OF RIGHT. You might like the current Zellers and Save On Foods, but you can bet if they were redeveloped today they would look quite different and probably be bigger.

If the recently developed Canadian Tire is a model for big box development as some Councillors believe it to be, then why not ensure that ALL future development over 40,000 square feet has to go through the same approval process?

Sincerely,  
Brian Platts

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