

Subject: [Fwd: Billboards and District Performance]

Date: Sat, 27 Apr 2002 18:06:38 -0700

From: Brian Platts <brian_platts@telus.net>

To: Corrie Kost <kost@triumf.ca>

Subject: RE: Billboards and District Performance

Date: Mon, 22 Apr 2002 08:51:46 -0700

From: "John Hunter" <johnhunter@idmail.com>

To: "Ernie Crist" <CristE@dnv.org>

CC: "FONVCA" <fonvca@fonvca.org>

Getting lease returns on the category 3 DNV commercial lease lands up from the current approx. 4% to a commercial level would add another million and pay for the bridge in 9 years. Where is the mayor's promised workshop on this? I note my report on the proper comparator to use disappeared. Heck, now we are at returns on commercial district land that are even below Staff's comparator - you can get long Canada bonds over 5%.

Why is the largest chunk of that commercial land - \$5 MM worth - leased out at 1.72%? Something rotten in Denmark?

I see from Denault's letter to the NSN our group put out "alarming rhetoric". I do not recall that it was our group who said the tax increase if we did the bridge ourselves was 18% -- WHO was alarmist? Bill's billboard friends. They did the calculation assuming DNV amortize the debt for the bridge over one year, not the 20 years we actually do, or the 20 plus years for their option, billboards.

Odd how the guy most resistant of anybody on council to public input (with our many suggestions of improved budget process and cost cutting or revenue opportunities) says we should do billboards because taxes are going up 30 or 35 % over the next few years. That is a clear admission that we need a new administration.

J

-----Original Message-----

From: Ernie Crist

Sent: Sunday, April 21, 2002 6:42 PM

To: 'editor@nsnews.com'

Subject: Billboards

The Editor;

Let's call Billboards what they are - daily reminders of the "anti culture City" - signposts of rampant commercialism - the "clear cutting" of our urban environment and the visual face of barbarism. In the District of North Vancouver, however, Billboards are more. They will stand as testimonials to institutionalized incompetence which has seen not only the virtual elimination of the District Heritage Fund with little to show for it but also the virtual elimination of the infrastructure reserve funds, including those set aside to replace the aging water mains.

District taxpayers have been told that a new twin bridge across the Seymour River is needed to resolve the existing bottlenecks at the north east access points of the Ironworker Memorial (Second Narrows) Bridge and the way to pay for it is by erecting 35 billboards throughout the District.

The problem is however, that twinning Dollarton bridge will not solve anything. To begin with there is no problem accessing the Upper Levels Highway coming from Seymour going North-West. Only one out of 13 automobiles are going that route. The congestion is caused by the physical limitations of accessing Second Narrows, and the traffic corridor leading west to Keith and Marine Drive. To solve that problem requires solutions on a totally different scale.

On the day when the Dollarton bridge twinning project is completed there will be a lot of disappointed people, primarily those living in Seymour. The traffic congestion will still be with us and so too will the billboards - 20 year eyesores and structures of visual degradation - not to speak of the negative impact they will have on tourism. Let's face it, people visit the North Shore to see the mountains and the trees not Billboards. Billboards are what they had hoped to leave behind.

And what will the District do when the next infrastructure project needs to be upgraded? The next road, the next bridge or the next water main? How many Billboards will we tolerate before we recognize the utter folly of this venture? Not to mention the devaluation of residential properties - another victim of "in your face" and ever persistent advertising.

"Billboards" will not solve the District's fiscal problems. Only real leadership and a return to fiscal acumen can do that. There are plenty of opportunities to meet the challenges we face in the District and it can be done without erecting billboards or cutting services. Reorganizing the Rec Commission along the Parkgate model and ending the District's subsidy to the City of North Vancouver alone would save millions of dollars. Implementing the recommendations of the KPMG and the VAT Report is another way.

District residents, including members of the business community, have to ask themselves two questions. One, why has it come to this in a municipality so rich in assets and where taxes are as high as they are and two, why do we love to live on the North Shore in the first place?

Ernie Crist, Councillor,
District of North Vancouver