

Subject: Re: SVCA Financial Plan Input - on "Better, Not Bigger"

Date: Tue, 9 Dec 2003 00:55:48 +0000 (GMT)

From: Elizabeth James <cagebc@yahoo.com>

To: systek@engineer.com, Corrie Kost <corrie@kost.ca>

CC: Ernie Crist <ernie_crist@dnv.org>, Bill Maurer <billm@millsoft.ca>, "FONVCA \ (E-mail)" <fonvca@fonvca.org>, Cathy Adams <cathyadams@canada.com>, Eric Andersen <eric_g_andersen@hotmail.com>, Maureen Bragg <m.bragg@shaw.ca>, Allan Orr <allandorr@shaw.ca>, Pat Higgs <patroberta@telus.net>, Brian Platts <bplatts@shaw.ca>

8 December 2003

View from the Village-minded [Hah! thought I was going to say something else, didn't you?]

Human beings do not function well in rabbit-warrens - translation, concrete jungles - and I pose the question, is it not today's buildings which are reaping architectural awards that become tomorrow's jungles? Look at all the 3-storey wood-frame apartments that looked so spiffy in the 60's and 70's.

The treatises of John Sewell and others on the subject of "Smart Growth" already show that Growth is often a victim of unintended consequences and isn't necessarily Smart.

Would the Lower Mainland have been better able to handle growth if the federal government had implemented a more controlled rate of immigration? Probably. Are immigrants responsible for all of the region's problems to day? Certainly not. But their need for housing, health-care, ESL, transportation, and policing services to support a federal family-reunification policy sure make up a fair contribution to government costs.

Today, we are seeing a huge rate of growth in communities like Maple Ridge, the two Langleys and, now, in Abbotsford as people instinctively move away from high-density and higher growth-rate areas. How far are people willing to go in their effort to leave GVRD and its associated density and high taxes? How many roads will need to be built to connect those people to the jobs they left behind?

Only time will tell....but, by that time, the damage will already have been done.

If politicians and bureaucrats have any hope of finding solutions to our modern-day problems, they must engage their citizens in meaningful dialogue before the decisions are made....not after.

As for which developers are "good" ones and which are not, first we have to decide upon the definition of "good." Perhaps the input from Leaky Condo owners would be useful?

Cheers,
Liz

Bill Tracey <wrtracey@telus.net> wrote:

Corrie,

The key is to make the distinction between simple "growth" and "higher density". We cannot stop growth itself (unless we lower the birth rate or severely restrict immigration), but we can manage it. My point is the densification is better than urban sprawl, and replacement of older single family homes with newer, denser construction is better than opening up more forest and park land for development. Land on the north shore is a great asset, and becoming more costly all the time. We need to make good use of the land, and that, to me, means well-designed vertical growth rather than horizontal growth.

Bill

Corrie Kost wrote:

Much of what follows is from the book "Better Not Bigger".

As Edward Abbey said..."Growth for the sake of growth is the ideology of the cancer cell"

If you have read Eben Fodor's book "Better Not Bigger" or attended

his talk when he was last on the North Shore you know all about the big myths connected with growth. Let's first have a test of your knowledge about growth (answers provided below - no cheating now!)

1. The bigger cities get, the lower local taxes are. T or F?
2. The faster cities grow, the lower local taxes are. T or F?
3. Police protection costs (per capita) are less in bigger cities. T or F?
4. Crime rates are higher in bigger cities. T or F?
5. The more cities grow, the lower the unemployment rate. T or F?
6. Bigger cities tend to have lower cost of living and housing. T or F?
7. Growth creates costs, but the new tax revenues more than offset the added expenses. T or F?
8. More business subsidies mean greater prosperity for local residents. T or F?
9. Environmental regulation is bad for the economy. T or F?
10. Developed land usually produces more net revenue for the city (tax revenues minus cost of public services) than undeveloped land. T or F?

It is increasingly acknowledged that keeping urban areas compact is better than allowing low-density urban sprawl. It is better to channel new growth to the existing urban area. However, given a choice it is even better to reduce growth! Growth has and can be effectively managed so that the quality of life is maintained and even improved over time.

Now for the 10 answers:

- 1 F
- 2 F
- 3 F
- 4 T
- 5 T
- 6 F
- 7 F
- 8 F
- 9 F
- 10 F

Yes urban sprawl is a killer BUT growth by higher density does not mean affordable housing and lower taxes (see #1 and #6). Studies, comparing housing prices in cities with and without growth controls concluded that "home prices need not be systematically higher or increase faster in growth control cities than in pro-growth cities" (page 45). It was the enactment of more affordable housing incentives in the growth controlled cities that likely accounted for this.

There is little doubt that the natural environment - the views, the beauty of our mountains and forests, contribute immensely to the desirability of living here. Densification often does irreparable damage to the very thing that we came here for. Small is beautiful. I for one want to keep it that way.

Corrie Kost

Bill Tracey wrote:

Hey Everybody,

Hold on a minute! Who said higher density is not desirable? If you have read "Better, Not Bigger" you will realize that urban sprawl (i.e. low density) is a killer. It's only with higher density that we can get affordable housing and lower taxes. Higher density means less cost for services -- sewer, water, gas, electricity, telephone, fire fighting, ambulance -- you name it. We need some higher density in the District if we're ever going to be able to afford good seniors' housing, homes for young families, and efficient public services.

Let's not knock developers as a knee-jerk reaction. Bosa knows what they are doing, and they do it well. I wish more of the other developers were as community-conscious and capable as Bosa!

Bill

Ernie Crist wrote:

Hello All: And that is just the start. Unless this community gets organized you can kiss low density good by. Bosa is here and intends to stay. Bosa has big plans, Bosa is smart and Bosa has powerful philosophical support on District Council and don't be taken in by the hypocritical bafflebag of the so called environmentalist. When I said that FONVCA has to move, I was not kidding - beware. Ernie

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

From: Elizabeth James [<mailto:cagebc@yahoo.com>]

Sent: December 4, 2003 11:34 AM

To: Ernie Crist; Bill Maurer

Cc: FONVCA (E-mail); Cathy Adams; Eric Andersen; Maureen Bragg; Corrie Kost; Allan Orr; Pat Higgs; Brian Platts; Bill Tracey

Subject: RE: SVCA Financial Plan Input

Dear Clr. Crist, Bill Maurer and Brian Platts: This is good stuff! To add to your comments.....I was told the other day that BOSA is looking at some multi-family re-development in the Delbrook area. That would be in addition to what is going on at Edgemont Terrace. What happened to the slow/no growth concept? Brian...could you tell me when the Edgemont OCP was (a) completed; and (b) last reviewed? Thx to all Liz

Ernie Crist <ernie_crist@dnv.org> wrote:

Hello Bill: Good work and congratulations. SVCA has come a long way. Your ideas should be incorporated into the strategic planning process conducted by our new CAO. I too am working on the major issues. Also, it should be raised with FONVCA when we meet. On the whole the role of community associations has to be enhanced and elevated. FONVCA itself should press for it. If this does not happen the pro development forces will take over. They are waiting to make their move. At stake is the whole concept of neighborhood and community driven development. It is either moving forward or stand to lose all the gains that make us unique. You were supposed to give me some drawings re advertising boards or am I mistaken? That too is important because they want to open the door to street signs unlimited. Ernie

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