

Subject: Re: Agenda Item #3 Lynn Valley Library & Town Centre Project: Cost per household

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20 December 2004

Good Afternoon:

The information on 'cost per household' - both that so far received and yet to come - is very important with respect to analysis of the Lynn Valley projects. However, I believe it can be deceptively misleading to a taxpayer or voter, when it comes to overall affordability. This is particularly so, when many other 'costs per household' are as yet unknown, or not yet fully explained and/or disclosed.

An apt analogy would be that of a household shopping trip: One can set forth with a list in hand that is deemed 'affordable' but return at the end of the trip, extra bundles in hand, having purchased several more 'affordable' items than one had planned for. As we all know, each and every one of those bundles, in and of itself, can be reasonably priced and amply justified yet, if one is not careful, the aggregate total can be an unpleasant surprise; and so it is with municipal taxes for products and services rendered.

The all too few taxpayers who have been paying attention, will have noticed that the 'costs per household' for water, for wastewater, for TransLink and recreation services have all increased. Monthly costs for Shaw Cable and for gasoline have also increased. For many people, each of those costs in isolation could be deemed 'affordable' and, perhaps, reasonable. This, I suggest, is not the point - not the point at all.

As with our individual purchases, some of the questions that need to be asked and answered are as follows:

- Do we really need this/these project[s]?
- Is this/Are these the right project[s], in the right place, at the right time?
- Do we know - for sure - that the price[s] marked are the full price?
- Is each of the projects defensible at the price being asked? If not, is there any way the price can be lowered, or which parts can we do without?
- If I decide I would like to buy/pay for the product, do my neighbours who will have to share in the cost agree with me?
- What will be my total monthly/annual payment for all of my earlier commitments and 'must pays' and how much will this new "cost per household" add to my overall bill?

.....and more.

It is only when these answers are fully known that people can go home, tot up the costs of all of their new commitments and make a reasoned decision that is based on full disclosure.

Cheers,

Liz