

There's a smarter way to vote



Voting Day
is November 15, 2008

The single most important issue that affects our health, water quality, air quality, our commute and our wallets is

land use.

This is the way we plan for and develop our communities. Local governments make land use decisions.

Find out how to
vote for **SMART**
land use *(inside)* >>



Smart Growth BC

... is committed to providing you with information that will help you make the best choices for your community. Built around

10 principles of smart growth>>

this guide is meant to help voters understand the land use responsibilities of our elected officials and provide some meaningful questions for you to ask your candidates around issues of importance to our communities.

“Smart growth” is a collection of land use and development principles that aim to enhance quality of life, preserve the natural environment, and save money over time. Smart growth planning and development incorporates all of these *principles*:



1. Mix land uses.
2. Build well-designed compact neighbourhoods.
3. Provide a variety of transportation choices.
4. Create diverse housing opportunities.
5. Encourage growth in existing communities.
6. Preserve open spaces, natural beauty, and environmentally sensitive areas.
7. Protect and enhance agricultural lands.
8. Utilize smarter and cheaper infrastructure, and green buildings.
9. Foster a unique neighbourhood identity.
10. Nurture engaged citizens.

Creating healthy communities

Land use can be described as the selection and arrangement of homes, shops, offices, parks, streets and other uses across a geographical area. How we organize such land uses to create our built environment can have a profound effect on many aspects of our health. While land use cannot change our propensity to work behind a desk, the amount of time spent in front of the TV, or the amount of trans-fats in our foods, the built environment can influence the way we get around, and therefore our



photo credit: CheeYing Ho

HEALTHY WEIGHTS

A recent study showed that for every 5% improvement in the walkability of a neighbourhood, adults who live there tend to walk and cycle 32% more, have a lower Body Mass Index and enjoy reduced pollution from automobiles.

Frank L. et al. (2006). Many Pathways from Land Use to Health: Associations between Neighborhood Walkability and Active Transportation, Body Mass Index, and Air Quality. *Journal of the American Planning Association* 72:1 pages 75 – 87. Available at: <http://www.informaworld.com/smpp/content?content=a787384888>

levels of physical activity. Consequently, land use is one determinant in the prevalence of activity-related health problems such as obesity, diabetes, cancer and cardiovascular disease. Citizens in a healthy community can walk and cycle safely for daily transportation and recreation, enjoy the outdoors close to home, breathe cleaner air, and access healthy food choices.

3

Ask the candidates

Q: How will you make provisions for alternative modes of travel, such as bike lanes, wider sidewalks and transit shelters when making road improvement decisions?

Q: How will you ensure that all new development occurs in existing developed areas, thereby increasing walkability and proximity to shops and services?

Q: How will you encourage a mix of land uses, so that we can live, work, shop and play in the same neighbourhood?

Housing affordability



photo credit: Amanda Mitchell

Complete communities offer a range of affordable housing options that fit into the character of the neighbourhood and meet our needs throughout different stages of our lives. This includes townhomes, apartments, co-ops, secondary suites, laneway and single-detached homes. Housing affordability also means having a mixture of rental and ownership opportunities, as well as market, non-market and social housing. Non-market housing differs from social housing as it does not

require ongoing government support, and includes home ownership at a price that is affordable to low and middle income earners. Along with specific tools for non-market housing, smart growth strategies - such as mixing land uses, creating zoning that allows for a range of housing options in all neighbourhoods, and using existing land more efficiently - are key to promoting the affordability of housing in all communities.

4

Ask the candidates

Q: How will you support the densification of residential neighbourhoods for creating more affordable housing?

Q: What zoning bylaws and policies will you implement to encourage a mixture of market and non-market affordable housing?

Q: Will you champion the development of an affordable housing strategy for your community?

SMART HOUSING
Ucluelet has adopted inclusionary zoning regulations that require from 15 % to 20% of housing units be deemed affordable in multi-family developments.

Curran D., Wake T. (2008). Creating Market and Non-Market Affordable Housing: A Smart Growth Toolkit for BC Municipalities. Smart Growth BC. Available at: http://www.smartgrowth.bc.ca/Portals/0/Downloads/SGBC_Affordable_Housing_Toolkit.pdf

Complete communities

In complete communities, a mix of land uses enables people to live, work, shop, learn and play - all in close proximity. Mixed-use developments may locate different uses side by side, or vertically within a single building. As different land uses are placed closer together, shorter travel distances allow walking and cycling to become viable alternatives

to the automobile. Housing located near shops and services provides local clientele and a therefore a stable economic base for local business. A mix of land uses throughout the neighbourhood increases the number of people on the street at all times of the day, adding to the vitality and perceived sense of security in a neighbourhood. Streets become vibrant places to meet and opportunities for social interaction are created.



SAFER STREETS
A sense of community, a desire to be involved in a neighbourhood, and community spirit decrease violent crime by up to 40%.

Local Government Commission. (2002). Land Use Planning for Safe, Crime-free Neighborhoods. http://www.lgc.org/freepub/PDF/Land_Use/focus/plan_safe_neighborhoods.pdf

Ask the candidates

Q: Do you support zoning changes to increase mixed-use development (that includes housing, office and retail) in our neighbourhood centres to accommodate new residents and private enterprise?

Q: Where and how would you create more mixed-use centres in our community?

Compact communities

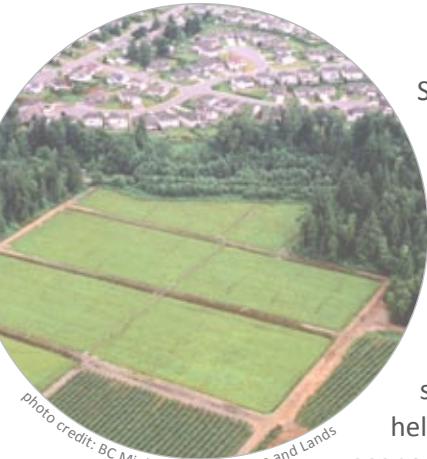


photo credit: BC Ministry of Agriculture and Lands

Sprawling development patterns, so common in our BC communities, is harming our economy, environment, farmland, and health. The establishment of urban and rural containment boundaries by local and regional governments can counteract sprawl. Containment boundaries assist in defining the limit of infrastructure servicing for future development, which helps preserve outlying areas for other economic activities such as agriculture, forestry, recreation and tourism. Compact communities place

destinations closer together and foster more vibrant, walkable centres. With local and regional governments working together to keep growth in existing urban and rural neighbourhood centres, we can move away from conventional inefficient development patterns and towards the creation of more compact communities.

6

Ask the candidates

Q: How will you ensure that farmland, forested land, and recreational areas that fall within your jurisdiction remain protected?

Q: Will you support the establishment of urban and rural containment boundaries at both the local and regional levels through OCPs and a Regional Growth Strategy?

Q: How will you use population density targets, development cost charges, density bonusing, and other incentives to direct growth into existing centres?

STOP SPRAWL
Since 1964, the District of Saanich has maintained an urban containment boundary policy that eliminates the District's obligation to pay for sewer servicing for rural developments and encourages building within existing neighbourhoods.

Communities and climate

Climate change is affecting communities around the world, including here in BC. From mountain pine beetle to increasing risk of floods and droughts, our communities are suffering the consequences of our high rates of fossil fuel consumption. The way we build our neighbourhoods and communities can dramatically reduce our dependence on fossil fuels and the green house gases (GHGs) they emit. In the province of BC, personal transportation accounts for 14% of total GHG emissions, and our homes and buildings account for 11%. In neighbourhoods that are mixed-use and walkable, people choose to make more trips using their feet, bikes and transit rather than their cars. One of the most effective ways to reduce GHG emissions is by creating communities that are more compact and walkable.



photo credit: Ione Smith

FEWER CARS

More compact neighbourhoods can reduce driving by 20% to 40% while at the same time making our communities more vibrant and livable.

Ewing, R. et al. (2008). Growing Cooler: The Evidence on Urban Development and Climate Change. Urban Land Institute.

Ask the candidates

Q: The Provincial Government is requiring that all Official Community Plans include GHG emission reduction targets. Can you describe how you would begin setting these GHG targets?

Q: What policies do you think will be most effective at reducing our community's impact on climate?

Q: What policies do you think our community needs to implement to effectively adapt to the changing climate?

Transportation choices



photo credit: Amanda Mitchell

Public transit, cycling and walking provide affordable, healthy options for many of our daily trips. Designing streets and buildings with wider sidewalks, raised medians, better bus stop placement, traffic-calming measures, storefronts close to the street, and treatments for people with disabilities are all measures that improve pedestrian safety and comfort. Convenient, frequent and affordable public transit can only become economically feasible if there is enough density near transit routes. Unfortunately, most

of our neighbourhoods have been designed to necessitate travel by driving. It will take leadership both from the public and elected officials to improve our neighbourhoods so that all residents feel comfortable and safe travelling without a car.

SMART SAVINGS

Additional average yearly cost of owning a small second car if you live far from a neighbourhood centre and services = \$9,544.

Average cost of a Cobalt LT driven 18,000 kilometres a year, with gas cost updated to \$1.47 per litre from \$1.10 per litre in Dec. 2007. All other operating and ownership costs Dec. 2007. Average cost for Grand Caravan minivan, \$12,568. Note that this is for an additional car and does not assume that the family goes carless.

<http://www.bcaa.com/downloads/DrivingCostsBrochure08.pdf>

Ask the candidates

Q: How will you ensure that land use decisions put homes, workplaces and shops closer together so that people can choose to walk, cycle and use public transit instead of driving for everyday needs?

Q: What specific transportation and land use policies will you advocate for?

Q: What opportunities exist for upgrading and increasing bike lanes and pedestrian access to various parts of the community?

Community infrastructure

Community infrastructure includes roads, bridges, sewer and stormwater systems. Deteriorating infrastructure affects drinking water, sewage treatment, traffic, and the efficiency of transit systems. While the costs of building this infrastructure are partly paid by developers, taxpayers bear the brunt of repairing and replacing infrastructure as it ages. Sprawling development requires the financing and building of extensive

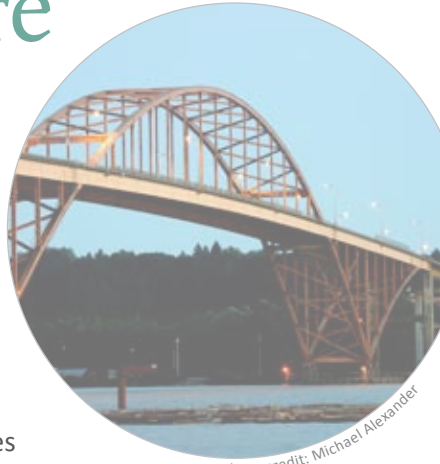


photo credit: Michael Alexander

infrastructure, leading to the duplication of infrastructure in remote locations. By building more compact communities and developing in existing neighbourhoods, we can use existing infrastructure more efficiently, and save money.

**OUR
WALLETS**
Communities
across BC are
facing large
infrastructure
deficits – it is
estimated that
the deficit faced
by Canadian
municipalities
has reached
\$123 billion.

Mirza, S. (2007). *Danger Ahead: The Coming Collapse of Canada's Municipal Infrastructure*. Prepared for the Federation of Canadian Municipalities.

Ask the candidates

Q: How will you support placing limits, such as an urban containment boundary, on where development occurs in order to reduce infrastructure costs?

Q: How will you encourage the use of more efficient standards and green technologies for new and retrofitted infrastructure?

Early + ongoing Community engagement



photo credit: Donna Passmore

Community engagement is about meaningful and effective participation in determining how our communities grow while maintaining community character and livability. An important part of effective community engagement is ensuring that leaders and the public understand the local and global consequences of different development options. Balancing larger community or regional interests with legitimate individual or group concerns can present difficult decisions for communities and

their decision-makers, requiring effective consultation and a creative approach to finding solutions. Understanding and acting in the best interest of not only current constituents, but also the broader regional, provincial, and global communities and future generations will require strong leadership.

10

Ask the candidates

Q: How will you improve on current consultation processes to involve our community on development and growth issues?

Q: How will you work with citizens to ensure that valuable community assets are protected?

Q: How will you address the concerns of citizens and neighbourhood associations that are resistant to change?

COMMUNITY DRIVEN

In addition to a public hearing, the *BC Local Government Act* requires that local governments engage in early and ongoing consultation on land use. All BC municipalities are governed by this legislation.

Enter to Win!

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chance to win a

Whistler vacation

at Nita Lake Lodge - the finest and
most exclusive Whistler Luxury
Boutique Hotel.



NITA LAKE
LODGE

Visit Smart Growth BC's website to complete a short survey on the 2008 *Pocket Guide to Election Issues*, and enter a draw for a free two-night stay at Nita Lake Lodge. It takes less than 10 minutes to complete the survey and enter the contest!

www.smartgrowth.bc.ca

Special thanks to Nita Lake Lodge for their generous donation of a free two-night stay in a Studio Suite in support of Smart Growth BC's mission to create more livable communities.

Smart Growth BC is the leading non-governmental organization working towards creating more livable communities in BC. Smart Growth BC is non-partisan.

On November 15th, 2008, you have an opportunity to elect municipal leaders whose policies align with your values. We encourage you to:

Get informed. Think smart growth in this election. Browse our website for more information.

Ask questions. Attend the all-candidate forums or phone-in shows in your community.

Vote. Your ballot is your say on the issues of greatest importance to you.

www.smartgrowth.bc.ca

