



Voting Day is November 19.



Voters across British Columbia will elect **municipal councils** to manage our community affairs for the next three years. Growth and development decisions around issues like compact communities, health, transportation, affordable housing, green buildings, parks & wildlife habitat, air quality, protecting agricultural land and community engagement will be in the hands of the people we elect.

*Think **Smart Growth** in this election.*



Smart Growth BC is committed to providing you with useful and timely information that will help you make the best choices for your community. We urge you to attend all-candidates meetings or call phone-in shows, using this guide as a framework to create meaningful questions around specific issues of importance in your community. Pass this guide along to your neighbours and friends, and, most importantly, get out and vote!

For more information on Smart Growth BC or these issues visit our website at:

www.smartgrowth.bc.ca

Compact, Complete Communities

Compact, complete communities are well-planned developments where you can live, work, shop and play close by. They reduce our dependence on cars, tax dollars spent on infrastructure, and development of natural or agricultural land. Evidence shows that children who live in mixed-use neighborhoods have fewer weight-related health problems.¹

These communities increase the viability of public transit, bike lanes, and other transportation options. Municipal tax dollars spent on infrastructure (roads, water, sewers and public services like health facilities, schools, ambulances, policing and fire protection) are used

Less cars more efficiently. It means shorter distances between home and work or shopping: we spend less money on fuel, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and get more exercise.

Planning so our communities grow smartly is a key responsibility for local councils and regional districts.

Ask the Candidate:

- Do you support zoning changes to increase mixed-use (that includes housing, business and retail) development in our core areas to accommodate new residents and private enterprise?
- Do you support the need for our municipality to work with the Regional District to adopt and implement a Regional Growth Strategy?

Affordable Housing

Complete communities provide opportunities to live close to where we work and shop. This means a range of affordable housing that fits the character of the neighbourhood: single-family, non-profit, cooperatives, rental

Smart housing

In 2004, Vancouver City Council approved changes that make it possible to have a secondary suite in every detached single family home.³

housing, low-income, apartments, condominiums, townhouses and seniors' housing.

Secondary suites (extra units rented out from a homeowner's house) are a popular rental option because they provide a "mortgage helper" for owners and affordable suites for renters. Other solutions include the construction of replacement units when older buildings are demolished or converted in order to maintain affordable rental options.

Ask the Candidate:

- Do you support the legalization and encouragement of secondary suites as a strategy to create affordable rental housing and to assist as a mortgage helper?
- Do you support zoning and policies that encourage a mixture of housing prices and types in the same neighbourhood and on the same street?

Agricultural Land

The Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR) represents 5% of our land base and is a key source of food production for all British Columbians.

Stop sprawl

Since 2001, 2,556 hectares of ALR land have been lost in the Lower Mainland, Vancouver Island, and Okanagan.⁴

With over 200,000 BC residents employed in the agricultural sector, it is also a key economic generator. *The ALR is an important tool for restraining urban sprawl.*

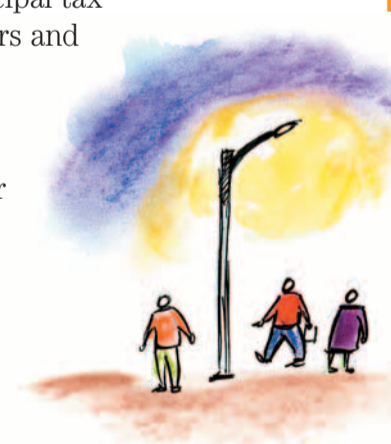
One of the biggest threats to our ALR is poor urban planning – the pressures to build subdivisions, industrial parks and big-box retail stores are increasing. We need to reaffirm our commitment to the ALR. It needs to be recognized as an important urban containment tool in our official community plans.

Ask the Candidate:

- Do you support incorporating agricultural policies into the Official Community Plan (OCP) to ensure the protection of the ALR? If so, would you establish an Agricultural Advisory Committee to review, advise and develop local policies?
- Would you ensure that comments and feedback from citizens are included when local council forwards ALR land exclusion applications to the Agricultural Land Commission?

Infrastructure

Development requires infrastructure (roads, water, electrical lines) and services (transit, garbage, policing, fire protection). The costs are paid in part by developers, but taxpayers bear the brunt of repairing and replacing aging infrastructure. The *New Deal for Cities and Communities* has provided





- Do you support school and/or work programs that encourage children to walk or bike to school and/or subsidize the purchase of bus passes?

municipalities with a 100% GST rebate from the Government of Canada, and in February 2005 allocated \$5 billion in gas tax funding across the country by 2010.

If there is a sustainable community plan in place, the funds will be directed at sustainable municipal infrastructure, such as transit, wastewater and energy systems, and capacity building. However, we as citizens will still be paying for much of the growing infrastructure costs unless we use what we already have more efficiently.

Funding for sustainability

From now until 2010, B.C. will receive over \$630 million from the Government of Canada's *New Deal for Cities* for transit and infrastructure improvement projects.⁵

Ask the Candidate:

- How would you encourage the use of more efficient standards and green technology for new and retrofitted infrastructure?
- Do you support building in existing, developed areas, in order to maximize the use of infrastructure? Do you support placing a limit upon where infrastructure is built in order to contain growth within existing urbanized areas?

Transportation Choices

Alternatives to driving help to reduce traffic congestion, improve air quality, and decrease costs for road construction and maintenance (which are substantial).

Evidence shows that widening or building more roads to relieve congestion doesn't work – it actually increases traffic. Reducing car dependence requires alternatives that are affordable, convenient and appealing: more buses and other transit, and better infrastructure to encourage us to bike and walk. We need to make sure that our municipal councils make

Invest wisely

\$2.70 billion was used to subsidize private motor vehicle use in the Lower Mainland in 1991. By contrast, only \$0.36 billion was used to subsidize public transport.⁶

land use decisions that put jobs, services, and shopping closer to housing so that public transit works.

Ask the Candidate:

- Do you support planning so people can walk or cycle instead of drive for their everyday needs? If so, what are specific policies or mechanisms you would advocate?

Green Space and Wildlife Habitat

These green areas can have a profound impact on our quality of life by providing places to relax and play, as well as

Value = green increasing property values. They are also our community's green infrastructure that helps to improve our air and water quality.

Properties located adjacent to green spaces on Vancouver Island and the Lower Mainland have an average of 15% higher property values.⁷

Unfortunately, green spaces and wildlife habitat in high-growth areas are constantly threatened. Once gone, these areas are almost impossible to restore or replace. To protect these areas, we need to create parks and greenways, protect waterways, and allow more natural stormwater infiltration.

Ask the Candidate:

- Do you support identifying and prioritizing green spaces and wildlife habitat to be protected? If so, how will you go about ensuring their protection?
- Do you support collaborating on a regional level to create and maintain green space, and to protect habitat corridors?

Green, Efficient Buildings

"Green" buildings are constructed to manage stormwater and use less energy and water. They tend to require less

Smart savings conventional infrastructure and can result in significant tax savings (which can translate to more affordable housing). Green building design and construction practices can significantly reduce many of the negative impacts of development. Energy and water

A building's energy costs can be reduced by at least 20% using efficient energy technology.⁸

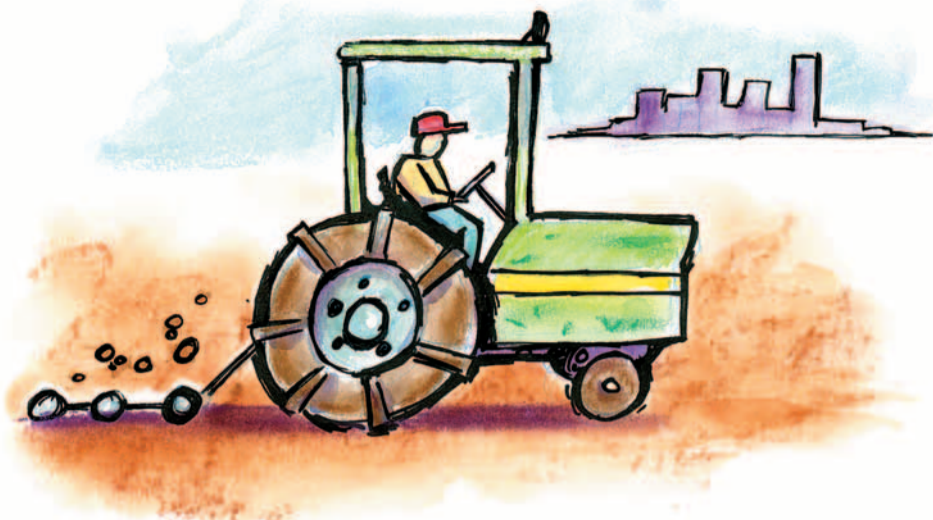
efficiency, material and resource conservation, and indoor environmental quality are all components of green buildings.

Local governments can encourage the construction of green buildings by showing leadership when designing their own facilities, and providing incentives for the private sector. Tools such as legislation, revised building codes, tax incentives, and project proposals for green buildings can all be used.

Ask the Candidate:

- Do you support the inclusion of policies and incentives in OCPs as a means of encouraging developers to come forward with energy-efficient/green development proposals?
- Do you support the inclusion of community energy planning within your OCP?





Community Engagement

Community engagement in smart growth is about democratic participation in determining how our communities grow while preserving our quality of life and our community's livability.

Planning and development

The planning and development process of the energy-efficient Southeast False Creek neighbourhood has included three rounds of public consultation, a newsletter, and a website where citizens can communicate their views.⁹

An ongoing challenge is balancing larger community or regional interests with legitimate individual or group concerns. A smart growth approach may require that the desires of individual municipalities be deferred to include broader regional interests for long-term growth and development decisions that benefit everyone for many generations.

Ask the Candidate:

- How would you improve on current consultation processes to involve the community on development and growth issues?
- Would you actively support the educational upgrading of city staff and elected officials to incorporate alternative land development standards that are environmentally, socially and economically responsible?

Smart Growth Principles

"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. The following smart growth principles ensure that growth is fiscally, environmentally and socially responsible and recognize the connections between development and quality of life. "Smart growth" planning and development incorporates all of these principles:

1. **Mix land uses.** Each neighbourhood has a mixture of homes, retail, business, and recreational opportunities.
2. **Build well-designed compact neighbourhoods.** Residents can choose to live, work, shop and play in close proximity. People can easily access daily activities, transit is viable, and local businesses are supported.
3. **Provide a variety of transportation choices.** Neighbourhoods are attractive and have safe infrastructure for walking, cycling and transit, in addition to driving.
4. **Create diverse housing opportunities.** People in different family types, life stages and income levels can afford a home in the neighbourhood of their choice.
5. **Encourage growth in existing communities.** Investments in infrastructure (such as roads and schools) are used efficiently, and developments do not take up new land.
6. **Preserve open spaces, natural beauty, and environmentally sensitive areas.** Development respects natural landscape features and has higher aesthetic, environmental, and financial value.
7. **Protect and enhance agricultural lands.** A secure and productive land base, such as BC's Agricultural Land Reserve, provides food security, employment, and habitat, and is maintained as an urban containment boundary.
8. **Utilize smarter, and cheaper infrastructure and green buildings.** Green buildings and other systems can save both money and the environment in the long run.
9. **Foster a unique neighbourhood identity.** Each community is unique, vibrant, diverse, and inclusive.
10. **Nurture engaged citizens.** Places belong to those who live, work, and play there. Engaged citizens participate in community life and decision-making.

Smart Growth case studies here in BC

All kinds of communities across BC – small and large – are effective illustrations of smart growth principles. For example:

- Saanich adopted an Action Plan for an alternative transportation solution for the Gorge Tillicum neighbourhood that was based on citizen decision-making and smart growth principles.
- Kelowna adopted development-cost charges that recognize savings for roads, sewer lines and other infrastructure by developing in central locations and in compact patterns.
- The City of Nanaimo identified and mapped environmentally sensitive areas (ESAs), floodplains, agricultural land, forested land, and areas with archeological potential.
- Nelson leveraged a high quality of life and unique local identity to spur economic growth.
- The City of Vancouver incorporated smart growth principles in several projects ranging from the redevelopment of "Koo's Corner" in Vancouver's Strathcona neighbourhood, to the "Kensington-Cedar Cottage" streetscape improvement project.
- The Squamish-Lillooet Regional District endorsed the principles of smart growth to guide their creation of a Regional Growth Strategy.
- The Dockside Green project in Victoria will incorporate mixed residential, commercial, and industrial land on a former "brownfield" site.
- Delta's draft OCP includes a proposed list of revisions that aim to encourage farming and protect the ALR.

See our website for more election news

Smart Growth BC is a province-wide non-profit organisation that works with communities, local governments and businesses to create more livable communities.

www.smartgrowth.bc.ca

Creating more livable communities

SmartGrowthBC



- 1 Bray, R., Vakil, C., Elliott, D. 2005. Sprawl and Health in Ontario: a review of the pertinent literature. Ontario College of Family Physicians.
- 2 Holtzclaw, J. 1994. Using residential patterns and transit to decrease auto dependence and costs. Natural Resource Defense Council, San Francisco
- 3 City of Vancouver, 2005. Secondary Suites Program. <http://www.city.vancouver.bc.ca/commsvcs/licandinsp/licences/ssp/>
- 4 Agricultural Land Commission, 2005. ALR Statistics: 2001-2005. http://www.alc.gov.bc.ca/alr/stats/2001-05Summary_main.htm
- 5 Infrastructure Canada, 2005. The New Deal for Cities. http://www.infrastructure.gc.ca/ndcc/funding_e.shtml
- 6 GVRD, 1993. The cost of transporting people in the B.C. Lower Mainland.
- 7 Deborah Curran, Economic Benefits of Natural Greenspace Protection, Smart Growth BC & The Polis Project on Ecological Governance, 2001.
- 8 Greener Buildings. <http://www.greenbiz.com/sites/greenerbuildings/index.cfm>
- 9 City of Vancouver. Building Sustainable Communities: Southeast False Creek. <http://www.city.vancouver.bc.ca/commsvcs/southeast/index.htm>