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### Land Development

#### Compact and complete communities

There are many controls in place to ensure that development meets community standards and objectives.

Changing or easing these rules can be a major incentive for developers who are willing to meet other

**Space**  
Space-saving development standards and smaller lots could reduce house prices by **\$8,528** per unit

and provide a greater long term economic payback.

The cost of services and utilities for new development can be substantial, particularly in new developments that have sprawled outside the core urban areas and require significant expansion of infrastructure. There is a growing body of research and real-world examples of smart growth neighbourhoods that demonstrate the significantly lower infrastructure

community goals such as providing affordable housing and green space, or using alternative design and energy systems that lower the impact on our natural resources



Good decisions need to meet the demands of today, with an eye to tomorrow.

costs of these communities and show them to be compact, livable and more attractive places to live and work.

#### Ask the Candidate:

■ Do you support fast-tracking the permit and development process and considering other incentives to encourage recognized smart growth projects?

■ Do you believe that new development should pay for itself in term of services, utilities and other infrastructure, or should taxpayers subsidize this growth?

### Local Government

#### Citizen involvement results in better decisions

Governance determines the way your community grows. BC's new Community Charter proposes to shift a number of responsibilities for the development and maintenance of our neighbourhoods from the provincial to the municipal level. It is true now

more than ever that citizens need to be fully engaged in the decisions that affect their community.

Smart growth decisions require citizens to actively participate both in the planning and implementation of decisions about the future of their home. It also requires well-informed staff and elected officials who have the community's environmental, social and economic best interests at heart.

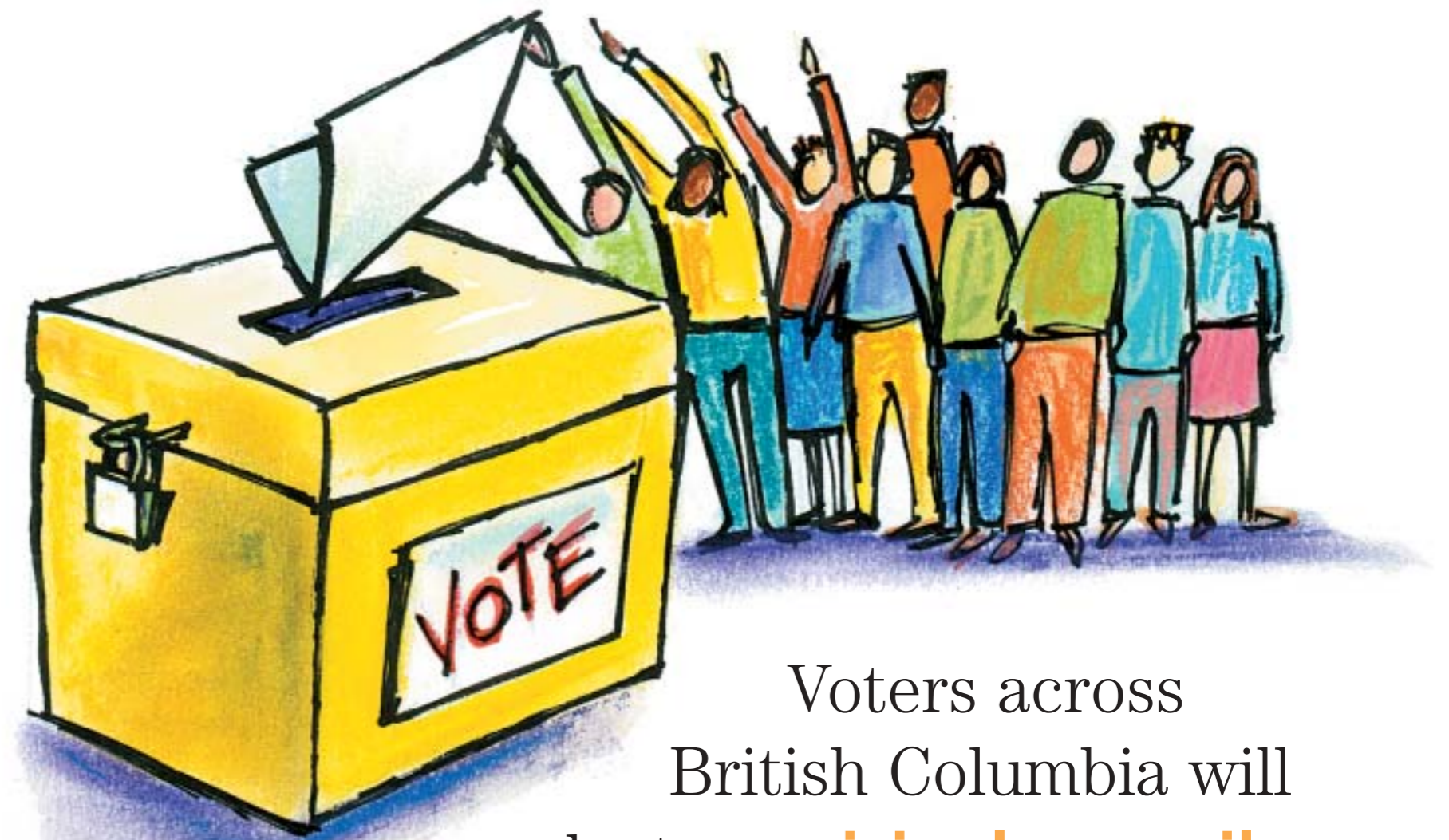
#### Ask the Candidate:

■ Do you support going beyond the level of input required by law to ensure significant input from the community on development and growth issues? If so, how can we improve on current consultation processes?

■ Do you support stronger mechanisms to separate land-use decisions from political influence? Why and How?

■ Would you actively support the educational upgrading of your city staff and fellow elected officials to incorporate progressive alternative land development standards that are environmentally, socially and economically responsible?

# Voting Day is November 16.



Voters across British Columbia will elect **municipal councils** and **local boards** to manage our community affairs for the next three years. Decisions on governance, growth, land use and development, transportation, housing, parks & recreation and agricultural land will be in the hands of people we elect. *Think **Smart Growth** in this election.*



## Smart Growth Myths + Facts

### MYTH #1

Smart growth is just another expression for no growth.

**Fact** Smart growth is about growing responsibly and using our land and resources more efficiently.

**Challenge** *Decide how we want to grow, and find creative ways to balance economic development with the desire to protect the natural amenities they value.*

### MYTH #2

Smart growth is anti-suburb.

**Fact** Smart growth encourages development that meets different objectives in various locations, including suburbs, downtown, and in between.

**Challenge** *Plan suburban developments that are more compact, promote social cohesion, integrate land uses, reduce car dependency, and protect rural and important green spaces.*

### MYTH #3

Smart growth increases red tape, slows the approval process, and increases cost.

**Fact** By streamlining their development regulations and permitting procedures, municipalities can reward smart growth developers with speedier approvals and increased predictability.

**Challenge** *Ensure the success of development that protects the environment, meets community goals, and is fiscally responsible.*

### MYTH #4

Smart growth does not satisfy market demand for low density, single family development.

**Fact** Recent demographic and lifestyle shifts mean that two-adult, 2.5-child, middle class families no longer dominate housing markets. In fact, the emergence of smaller families, empty nesters, childless marriages, singles and aging boomers has created a shortfall in the availability of alternative housing options.

**Challenge** *Amend the current municipal regulatory framework that subsidizes sprawl, single use zones, and limited transportation options.*

### MYTH #5

Urban growth boundaries mean higher housing prices.

**Fact** Concentrated growth and more compact communities mean more housing options, a greater supply of dwelling units, and thus lower housing prices. Portland Oregon has used urban containment boundaries since 1974 and housing prices still compare favourably with other U.S. cities where the availability of developable land is not regulated.

**Challenge** *Integrate urban growth boundaries with other smart growth policies that support more affordable housing options.*

### MYTH #6

Smart growth is bad for business.

**Fact** Compact communities increase the number of people within walking distance of shopping and transit, and are more cost-efficient.

**Challenge** *The business community in BC must take a leadership position in advancing smart growth policies in order to sustain productivity, competitiveness and quality of place.*

### MYTH #7

With so much undeveloped land, smart growth will lead to under-valued open space, with little incentive to preserve it.

**Fact** Open spaces are important components of a community's livability. They are valued for wildlife habitat, recreation, ecological functions and as people places. Open spaces also increase the value of surrounding properties.

**Challenge** *Integrate open spaces into community planning processes.*





## Smart Growth

is about designing and building livable and sustainable towns and cities: Communities are 'smart' when they work for people, give them the widest range of opportunities and ensure their health in social, economic and environmental terms.

**Smart Growth BC** has identified seven key issues that are at the heart of community concerns: sprawl, housing, transportation, green space, agricultural land, land development, and how communities are governed.

The Smart Growth BC voter's guide will help you to be an informed and effective voter: ► Attend all candidates meetings ► Call phone-in shows ► Ask politicians seeking re-election what they have done ► Ask new candidates what their plans are to improve your community.



Talk to your neighbours about the issues, and, most importantly, get out and vote!

### Sprawl

#### It takes up a lot of space

Sprawl is poorly planned development of low density, residential suburbs, commercial centres and business parks built on the fringes of our existing communities; the destinations are separated from one another, and rely heavily on cars for transportation.

### It's expensive

Excessive amounts of our municipal tax dollars are spent servicing sprawl. Roads, water, sewers and public services like health facilities, schools, ambulances, policing and fire protection all cost more for sprawling neighbourhoods. In addition, the impacts of sprawl on our communities and families are numerous and include: the destruction of green spaces, habitat and farmland; increased greenhouse gas production; and more energy and fuel consumption from increased car use.

### Cost

Low-density development  
**\$23,520**  
Compact development  
**\$4,408**  
Infrastructure cost per unit

### Ask the Candidate:

- Do you support an urban containment boundary to focus development primarily in areas already developed and serviced?
- Do you support zoning to encourage mixed-use development (housing, business and retail) in our core areas?
- As regional government is playing an increasingly important role in managing growth, land use and transportation planning, do you support regional districts working together to plan and implement land use and transportation planning?

### Affordable Housing

#### Variety of types needed

People need different kinds of housing at different times of their lives... and it needs to be affordable. To meet these demands, every community should have a range of single-family, non-profit, cooperatives, rental housing, apartments, townhouses and seniors' housing so that residents can remain close to their friends and family throughout their lives.

### Rent

In Greater Vancouver  
**45%+** of renters were paying  
**30%+** of their income on rent / 1996

A popular option for affordable rental accommodation is secondary suites. These suites provide both a "mortgage helper" for owners and an affordable rental option for others, yet they are prohibited in some communities.



A good example of a compact community.

In many growing communities, rental apartments are converted to condominiums or demolished. This results in lost homes for people who have no available alternatives.

### Ask the Candidate:

- Do you support policies to encourage a mixture of housing affordability and types in the same neighbourhood and street?
- Do you support making secondary suites legal as a way to create more affordable rental housing and to assist as a mortgage helper?
- Do you think it is important to protect affordable rental housing from conversion to condominiums or from demolition to build for other purposes? If so, what type of controls do you think would be effective and acceptable?

### Transportation

#### Drive, cycle, walk

Increased traffic creates congestion, air pollution, toxic run-off and growing costs for road construction, maintenance and movement of goods. How we deal with our car dependence continues to be one of our most important livability challenges. We need to balance the demands of the car with building a successful transit system and supporting other methods of travel.

### Time

A suburban mother spends more than  
**400** hours per year behind the wheel, more time than for feeding, dressing and bathing a child

While cars in general are cleaner and more fuel efficient than they were ten years ago, these improvements are negated by the increased numbers of cars; the real solution to more livable communities is to have fewer cars on the road.

Evidence from around the world shows that widening or building more roads simply increases traffic,



rather than reducing congestion. Reducing car dependence requires alternatives that are affordable, convenient and appealing: more buses and other transit, and better infrastructure that encourages us to cycle and walk more. We need to make land use decisions that put employment, services, shopping and housing in closer proximity so that people don't have to drive.

### Ask the Candidate:

- Do you support shifting transportation spending from highway and road expansion to transit development and expansion, and better and safer bicycling and pedestrian infrastructure?
- Do you support building more compact and complete communities so that people can walk or cycle instead of drive for their everyday needs? If so, what are some specific policies or mechanisms you would advocate?

### Green Space

#### Quality of life

Greenways, trails and natural open spaces have a profound impact on the quality of life by providing places to relax and play. They also increase property values and are one of the top four considerations for new homebuyers.



Parks and green spaces improve the quality of life and environment.

Green space also helps combat air pollution, control noise impacts and helps protect animal and plant habitat. Environmentally sensitive areas (ESAs) are natural areas that are sensitive, rare, in danger of disappearing, and usually provide natural habitat for a variety of plant and animal species. ESAs are difficult to restore or replace once they are destroyed.

### Value

Greenspace has shown to increase property values by  
**15%**

### Ask the Candidate:

- Do you support municipal governments identifying and prioritizing green spaces and environmentally sensitive areas to be protected?
- Do you support municipal governments collaborating on a regional level to create green space, and to protect environmentally sensitive areas and habitat corridors?



### Agricultural Land

#### Don't throw it away

The Agricultural Land Reserve was established in BC to protect the less than 5% of our land base that we use and are highly dependent upon for food production.

With more than 200,000 British Columbians working in agriculture this is also a key economic generator for our province. *The biggest threat to our agricultural land is rapid urban development and sprawl.*



There is constant pressure to build subdivisions and new communities on farmland close to our fastest growing municipalities.

Changes to the legislation that governs the Agricultural Land Commission will mean a significant role for local governments in these decisions. We need to reaffirm our commitment to our agricultural land for the livability of our communities, the production of local food, and the survival of an essential industry.

### Ask the Candidate:

- Do you support incorporating comprehensive agricultural policies (for example, "right to farm" legislation that protects farmers and require buffering from subdivisions) into the Official Community Plan to ensure the protection of ALR lands and their agricultural viability?
- Do you support the establishment of an Agricultural Land Advisory Committee that includes farmers and community members to review, advise and develop local agricultural policies that support the provincial legislative policies?
- Do you support that the examination of the status of any piece of agricultural land be done in consultation with a politically independent body of professional agrologists?

### MORE ON BACK

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