

Summary Report

Creating More Livable Communities

Summary of the Smart Growth Conference Proceedings

June 6 & 7

Simon Fraser University at Harbour Centre

June 8 & 9

The University of Victoria - Faculty of Law building

CONFERENCE SPONSORS

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Background

Smart Growth BC held its first annual Smart Growth conference, called **Creating More Livable Communities**, in Vancouver on June 6-7, and in Victoria on June 8-9. Smart Growth BC's mission is "to create more livable communities" and works with community groups, local government and professional organizations to promote compact communities, sustainable transportation options, open space and farmland preservation and affordable housing. One of Smart Growth BC's main programs is the Community Assistance Program – assisting communities with information, knowledge and strategies to be more effective in the land use and development processes. This conference was designed to meet some of these goals.

The two-part conference provided a forum for community groups, local government, and professionals to gather information and knowledge about smart growth principles and strategies. The conference provided tangible tools and resources, and gave participants an opportunity for networking.

In Vancouver, 250 people attended the evening's sold-out forum at Simon Fraser University's Harbour Centre campus. In Victoria, over 100 people came out on a Friday night to listen to the opening program at the University of Victoria. The next day's attendance also exceeded expectations, with 170 people participating in the Vancouver workshops, and approximately 110 attending the Victoria session! In addition to a large contingent from the Lower Mainland and Capital Region, people came from as far away as Prince George, Nelson, the Okanagan Valley, the Comox Valley, and Toronto.

The mix of registered participants was diverse, including active community / neighbourhood groups and non-governmental organizations working on smart growth issues, local government -- both elected officials and staff -- as well as other planning, design, and development professionals. As a result of this diverse mix, participants were able to share ideas and stories, increase their understanding of smart growth issues, and become more informed about Smart Growth BC and its work. In addition, every participant received a comprehensive Smart Growth Toolkit, a valuable resource that highlights tools, strategies and examples for promoting smart growth practices in communities throughout B.C.

Evening Public Forum - June 6 & 8

Balancing Development With Livability

British Columbia's beauty, climate and economic opportunities provide an exceptional and attractive quality of life. However, urban and suburban development patterns are impacting our communities and regions and making them less livable and more expensive. This public forum examined the impact of growth on our communities, green spaces, and quality of life, and provided some insights and strategies for smart, sustainable growth.



Over 250 people attended the free Vancouver public forum, called *Balancing Development with Livability*, which was co-

hosted by Simon Fraser University's City Program. In Victoria, 100 people came out on a Friday night to start off the conference, co-hosted by the Eco-Research Chair of Environmental Law & Policy, at the University of Victoria.

The aim of the evening was to set the stage for the next days' working sessions. The panel consisted of three speakers, each presenting a different aspect of the subject. After all presentations were completed, the audience had an opportunity to ask questions of each speaker.

Vancouver Speakers

Cheeying Ho is Executive Director of Smart Growth BC. She led off the forum and conference with an introduction of the new organization and an overview of smart growth concepts and principles. She highlighted the five key strategies promoted by Smart Growth BC, namely:

1. Integrating urban development into ecosystems (working with nature, not against it)
2. Creating complete communities (compact, walkable, friendly, with protected green spaces)
3. Changing how we use infrastructure (e.g. demand management)
4. Managing growth (concentrating it in already developed areas)
5. Encouraging active, informed, and timely public participation (in the land development process)

After her presentation, Cheeying noted that the BC Sprawl Report 2001 had just been produced and was available to registrants. Written by Don Alexander and Ray Tomalty, this quantitative analysis of urban sprawl in BC provides an introduction to growth related issues in some of the provinces major urban centres, while highlighting the fastest growing regional districts. She explained that the report defines 'smart growth', provides simple measures of the most obvious

costs of sprawl, identifies some indicators of smart growth benefits, as well as provides a snapshot comparison of 'liveability's in select BC municipalities.

Moura Quayle is Dean of Agricultural Sciences at the University of British Columbia. She followed the introduction with an insightful commentary called *Our Livable Landscape: Ideas for Getting There*. As a professional, her work is in urban design as part of landscape architecture. As a public policy consultant, Moura works on public interest matters of rural and agricultural land. Her focus is on the interconnected concepts of land, food and community, and in developing a better understanding of the complex and dynamic web that is created by these interactions.

Moura set the stage for the conference by asking the audience to think about what a standard of 'livability' would entail. "What is it, what is a livable community, a livable landscape?" she asked. Her definition included concepts such as "fiscally, socially and environmentally healthy - a system that is dynamic but in balance." She went on to describe it as "both rough and refined, messy and tidy, and full of people respecting each other and their environment. The livable community is restorative on a daily basis to people - this means options. The livable landscape is the physical environment which reflects the values of the livable community."

While acknowledging that for the most part many of us already know what we want and how to create it, she went on to identify a number of barriers that get in the way of achieving livable communities. She listed these as:

- People resistant to change
- People frustrated by lack of access to new learning
- Time or particularly a perceived lack of time
- Lack of clear vision of where we are going
- Conflicts of "values"
- Out-of-date legislation
- Lack of information for decision-making, and
- Fear of actually making decisions.

Moura then offered a number of ideas about skills & approaches; processes; information; governance, design and leadership that could help us get going with, rather than just talking about, smart growth. These ideas were:

- Being open to building a common understanding
- Developing processes that work
- Knowing the terrain and its relationship to livable communities
- Developing and using audit standards and regulations
- Diversifying landscape types to emphasize the local, the particular and the beautiful, and
- Developing leadership in adaptation to change

Her closing remarks emphasized her belief in the importance of personal responsibility and initiative. "In my view, we won't 'get there' - smart growth, livable communities etc. by alienating our fellow-citizens. We all try our best. We will only get there by listening to each other, respecting each other and then responding with sensible and well-grounded rationale for why smart growth makes sense. The issue now in 2001 is not "how" or "where" to get involved – its having the courage and setting the priority TO get involved – the opportunities are out there. From school groups to stream-keepers, and from boy scouts to seniors and from business groups to church groups – ask around – facilitating this type of volunteer involvement is a increasing priority of business groups and local governments.

Harold Kalke is President of Kalico Developments. His presentation, called *It's a Question of Fit*, offered examples of smart growth practices from his own personal development experience, and addressed both pragmatic and philosophical issues concerning sustainability, design, and the local context of particular developments.

Victoria Speakers

Cheeying Ho again gave her introductory presentation.

Doug Backhouse is with Lanarc Consulting Ltd. He presented some thoughts on achieving green spaces as a smart growth strategy. He followed this with a visual description of the Stewardship Centre's website (www.stewardshipcentre.org) as a useful smart growth planning tool.

Frank D'Ambrosio is an architect with Williams & D'Ambrosio Architects. He gave an inspiring presentation of his firm's experiences in designing, promoting and building a major mixed-use development on the Selkirk waterfront. He listed many of the design principles of sustainability that were intended to be incorporated into the final development. He also spoke of the lengthy negotiation process with the local government, as well as the comprehensive, inclusive, and rewarding public consultation process that was implemented to move the project forward with the community on-side.

Day Long Conference - June 7 & 9

Welcome

Deborah Curran is the President of Smart Growth BC. She welcomed conference participants with a brief overview of the organization's formation in 1999. Smart Growth BC is a registered, non-profit society that was created as a joint project of the Eco-research Chair of Environmental Law and Policy at the University of Victoria, and the West Coast Environmental Law Association in Vancouver. Deborah noted that Smart Growth BC is the first provincial non-profit organization in Canada working on a broad range of smart growth issues affecting our urban areas. As a new organization dedicated to creating more livable communities, Smart Growth BC works with community groups and local governments to promote compact urban centres and efficient land use, reduce unplanned sprawl, promote sustainable transportation, preserve our agricultural land and green spaces, and ensure affordable housing.

Keynote Presentation

Robert Liberty is Executive Director of 1000 Friends of Oregon. He delivered a thoughtful and often humorous keynote address entitled: *How to Win Friends and Influence Smart Growth Strategies*. Robert began his address with a brief comparison of fundamental political, planning, and other cultural differences on each side of the international border. He went on to describe the challenges and achievements of 1000 Friends of Oregon, which has been in existence for over twenty-five years. Acting as a state mandated watchdog group, 1000 Friends was created by legislation to oversee the proper implementation of Senate Bill 100, Oregon's statewide land-use planning, conservation and development program.

His talk also emphasized the importance of seeking allies from a diverse range of local or regional constituencies, many of which are not always readily apparent, but who still share key interests as smart growth advocates. He stressed the need for effective coalition building, and for appropriate organizing to make good use of these volunteer friends', whether as campaigners, advocates, monitors, legislators, researchers, or financial supporters.

Before closing with an excellent fundraising pitch, Robert delivered five key points for ensuring the most effective use of friends' influence. These points are:

- Focus
- Persistence
- Expertise
- Adaptability
- Strong, stable organizations

Panel Presentation and Discussion

Erik Karlsen is Director of Special Projects, Ministry for Community, Aboriginal and Women's Services (formerly Ministry of Municipal Affairs). He described the larger context within which land-use and development decision-making takes place. He went on to discuss the importance of several award-granting organizations that promote concepts such as 'sustainability', 'liveability', etc. Erik challenged Smart Growth BC to work in partnership with these organizations to develop criteria for recognizing successful smart growth practices, and to publicize and promote these.

Kathleen Johnnie is the Land and Resources Coordinator for the Snuneymuxw First Nation. She presented a First Nation's perspective on land-use planning, using poignant examples of development issues facing the Snuneymuxw First Nation in Nanaimo. Kathleen started with a brief historical overview, and proceeded with a graphic presentation of current development pressures bordering the six Snuneymuxw Reserves situated on or near the Nanaimo River estuary.

Her talk repeatedly emphasized the importance of continual dialogue and cooperation, or 'harmonizing' with surrounding government jurisdictions whose various land-use planning decisions may impact on Snuneymuxw territory.

Concurrent Workshop Sessions

Workshop # 1 – Living With the Land

Herb Barbolet, Founder and Executive Director of FarmFolk/CityFolk; Kirk Miller, CEO of BC Land Reserve Commission; and Mara Jernigan, professional chef and Board member of FarmFolk/CityFolk.

Workshop Overview

How do we protect our important agricultural and forestlands from urban sprawl? This workshop looked at the Agricultural Land Reserve and other strategies for using urban growth boundaries.

Key Presentation Points

Kirk Miller spoke about the operations and evolution of the Land Reserve Commission (LRC) which oversees the Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR) and Forest Land Reserve (FLR) in BC. He made some general points about how the ALR works as a de facto growth boundary by limiting non-farming land-uses within the reserve.

- What works in one community does not necessarily work for other localities
- LRC: amalgamation of Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries & Food (MAFF) and sustainable resource management. Governed by two separate pieces of legislation
- 2000 applications were made for relief from the ALR in past years

- In 2000, there were only 500 applications for relief because ALR/LRC is re-strategizing
- The ALR and FLR are for working farms and working forests, and that is where LRC is concentrating its energies
- There is land in the ALR that is more suitable for other non-farming uses
- Commission has contributed to urban sprawl in the past as development has leap-frogged past it.

Currently, ALR/LRC's is re-evaluating the way it conducts business with communities. They are reviewing their entire planning process. Four initiatives are being undertaken:

1. Organized panels in urban, rural, and peripheral-urban regions to talk more with people in their communities
 2. Reviewing entire panel structure
 3. Review ALR legislation and develop a regulatory reform package to streamline regulations
 4. Allow diversification of uses for complimentary uses (e.g. Agro-tourism)
- The LRC is also looking at delegating some of its decision-making authority for non-farm use and subdivision to local governments. They are developing a process to achieve this.
 - Need a strong provincial presence and the LRC cannot 'sweat the small stuff' too much and end up not participating in the larger issues
 - We need to re-evaluate the use of "urban containment boundaries"
 - Need to be more enabling of more uses to supplement people's income (this is very controversial)
 - LRC/ALR relationships are going to change with local communities but the definition of that relationship is unknown at present
 - Will publish paper on website for involvement from the public

Herb Barbolet spoke in Vancouver about the importance of food security.

- Farming is the only growing resource industry in the Province
- There are currently 200 land-based and 80 sea-based commodities in production
- There is high quality and intensively diverse food production. 90% are family farms. But we can produce more: could be 85% and add to the present commodities.
- LRC is important and necessary to keep the farmers economically viable, but the viability component has been abandoned in recent time
- 50% of land area is not used for farming and half of the other 50% not used well for farming
- Most resources now going toward conventional activities
- More agriculture needs to be based on community economic models
- Must think of the health of the planet, social justice, community and land
- Need to look at all the land and using or not using it appropriately
- Develop knowledge use of permaculture; we ought to do this and we can
- Harmonize community and ALR plans which local governments and residents accept as their own.
- Suburban growth does not necessarily mean an increased tax base but usually a more costly one.

Mara Jernigan spoke in Victoria only. Mara has been a chef for years. She brought her passion for food, which brought her closer to farming and led to her working on related community development issues on Vancouver Island. She's been working for Farm Folk/City Folk for 7 years, and opened their first Vancouver Island branch office. She now lives on a 5.5 acre vineyard in Cowichan Valley. She spoke about areas on Vancouver Island under threat of losing its agricultural heritage through development. Mara showed slides of particular tracts of land that had or were being removed from ALR, and the resultant loss of productive land. She also noted that highways (often built along river bottoms) bring development and loss of agricultural land to once fertile areas.

She emphasized the need for public education programs. "Without educating people about food, society forgets where food comes from as fewer people live on farms anymore". At Mara's farm, they grow all their own food and will soon have kitchen to bring in 'culinary tourists', as a demonstration of the economic viability of food production in this province.



Questions & Answers

Q. What about an agricultural land trust and agricultural conservation covenants?

A. It's more effective to put it into the ALR. Not much has been done on this in BC. Comox Valley Land Trust is just beginning to work on this.

Q. Are there any bonuses for growing organically on ALR land?

A. The bonus is selling it for more. BC has great opportunity here. ALR keeps land somewhat affordable - need to pay real value of food, need to work with local groups.

Q. Are the Forest Land Reserve and ALR excluded from streamside protection regulations?

A. FLR provides for stream protection through Forest Practices Code. This is being worked on for ALR land.

Q. What percentage of land is being removed from or being added to the ALR?

A. Loss of ALR land is a bit of a myth - yes, some bits are being excluded but overall not a lot. Land in the north is being put in - but not as good quality. The good thing is, we take out land that shouldn't be in the ALR anyway. Commission has been very successful at preserving agricultural land over 25 years.

Q. Is there minimum parcel size in ALR?

A. No. This will have to be looked at. Big challenge. Agriculture needs a diversity of parcel sizes.

Q. Does the LRC have a mandate to look at other sustainability issues such transportation planning, etc?

A. Most of our staff are planners by trade, and so we look at a lot of different issues. But we're missing a wholistic approach.

Q. What about golf courses and the ALR?

A. Landscape is altered too much to be used for agriculture again. Now they get converted to houses. They used to act as an effective buffer between agricultural land and urban areas.

Workshop # 2 - A New Road Ahead

Mark Allison, Transportation Planner, City of New Westminster and former Regional Growth Strategy Coordinator, Fraser Valley Regional District

Workshop Overview

Arguably the two most important determinants of smart growth in a community are how the land use is designated and how the transportation network is designed. This workshop will examine the basics of how to develop a sustainable transportation system to ensure more livable communities.

Key Presentation Points

- Energy crisis is imminent.
- Sustainable transportation is economically, environmentally, and socially sustainable — it should appeal to most people.
- Streets are for people and accessibility, they are not for cars.
- Local governments control their land and streets — they are also the most accessible. For example: Local government controls whether a road is open or closed, the speed limit, turning movements, number and width of lanes, vehicle types, etc. Municipalities own the public right of ways.
- Land use planning and transportation planning cannot be separated.
- Comprehensive plans are great, but the true policies are found in budget statements.
- Transportation route & mode choices are fairly predictable, as are policies & tools to influence these. To create a sustainable transportation system, tailor your streets for preferred modes. For example, put in High Occupancy Vehicle lanes, pedestrian lights, bus-only lanes, etc.
- Transportation Model: TIME, CONVENIENCE, and COST (in this order) —what matters most to people is that they can get somewhere quickly. Next is that it is convenient to get there, and finally that the costs are in line. Organize a transportation system to reflect this hierarchy to get people to use alternative transportation modes. Example: New Westminster's Walkable City Project: greenways, bikeway networks, predictable and linear transit system — to promote efficiency.
- The determinants of transportation use are obvious, but implementation is a political process.
- Accessibility is Mobility

Other Points

Location Efficient Mortgages

Since part of calculating a mortgage is the assumption that you need a car (which essentially will cost about \$50,000, including maintenance, insurance, etc.), then the concept is that, if you don't need a car, for example, if you live close to transit, then you can afford a bigger mortgage. This is an incentive for people to buy homes located close to transit and complete communities. VanCity is looking into that.

What we can do about the transportation & land-use connection - policy / implementation

Policies are important as they guide and support action and decisions. Senior level policies set the context for local level policies. Fast growing Regional Districts are asked to develop a Regional Growth Strategy that addresses housing and transportation needs and has to work towards decreased auto use. Municipalities have Official Community Plans (OCPs) and must have Regional Context Statements that articulate how the OCP is, and will be, consistent over time with the

regional goals. OCPs dictate land use and thus control zoning. As far as policy implementation goes, the Regional Growth Strategy (RGS) should discourage car use, the Official Community Plan (OCP) must conform to the Regional Growth Strategy, and Zoning must conform to the OCP. Citizens should check that this is the case.

Advocacy

- Requires money.
- Create political will through lobbying, education and create awareness among politicians that you've got votes on your side.

Transportation Planning

- Traditional transportation planning has been based on models with a lot of built-in assumptions. The most common solution to transportation demand has been building more capacity. The focus of transportation planning has been on accommodating automobiles.
- Transportation Demand Management offers an alternative. Increasing transportation options reduces traffic congestion, reduces the demand for roads, bridges, etc.
- Route and mode choice are a function of time, convenience and cost. Time has two components: 1) the waiting time and 2) travel time. The former is actually worth 2-3 times the latter. In order to encourage alternative transportation modes, actions and policies must take these three things into account.

Transportation and Land Use

Research shows (Newman and Kenworthy) that density, mixed-uses, transit frequency and speed increase the propensity to walk, cycle and take transit. For example, in New Westminster, census tract information shows that in dense areas many people commute by transit, in low-density areas within 400 metres of a Sky Train station 24% use transit, in low-density areas with no transit only 10% use transit.

ABCs of Street Tailoring

- Prioritize modes and mean it
- Identify trip origin and destination by mode
- Determine what you want on your streets and reallocate capacity (do not create it)
- Monitor local government budgets, 5 year Capital Plan and analyse it down by 'mode'
- Monitor and adjust measures, get feedback

Retrofitting Existing Neighbourhoods for Bike Networks

In New Westminster, quiet streets were tailored to bikes and pedestrians, keeping in mind that the routes had to be convenient, time efficient, and had to save money. New Westminster accomplished it through traffic calming and traffic signals at intersections. The costs were about \$10,000-\$20,000 per km but if there is a 5-10% bike mode split then those modes should have allocated funds in the budget.

Transit

- Tailor the streets to it
- Create area transit plans
- Create grid routes and focus them on major activity centres

Local examples

Walkable City Program (New Westminster) used \$1/2 million on curb extensions, street narrowing, and greenways route. At first there was community resistance to the program, but now citizens are asking for more. This program needed a champion to provide money and

political support. Other infrastructure includes pedestrian overpasses, top quality crosswalks, curb extensions and normalization from car space to pedestrian space.

Impacts of road system on water and fish

- Need to integrate water, fisheries and transportation issues
- Amount of impermeable surface is important, in Vancouver 30-35%
- Need to minimize the amount of impermeable surfaces/asphalt
- Need to make sure aquifer is recharged
- Require on site water retention and natural percolation, as they do in Washington state
- Keep the swales and gravel shoulders
- No legislation on this yet

Questions & Answers

Q: What can citizens do to make sure their OCP's have "bite"?

A: Advocacy, but just not to prevent a certain development, but to support progressive developments also.

Q: How can we make change within the government?

A: Practice what you preach as much as possible, and educate your colleagues—use statistics to change minds, and make sure your councillors are fully informed on each decision — that is your responsibility.

Q: Is there any way to overturn BC Transit routes/systems? (e.g. the "spaghetti" routes that wind in and out of a neighbourhood to collect as many people as possible, but proves to be very slow).

A: You can always work with your local BC Transit planner, or get the province to allocate transit responsibilities to your city — but beware that the funding might not follow the responsibility. There might also be business-licensing options to allow private companies to provide some transit services.

Q: In the interim, before our built form can be significantly modified (e.g. densification, complete communities, etc), what can be done to curb pollution from transportation?

A: As energy becomes more expensive, and health concerns get more serious, people should start to pay more attention to environmental concerns. Still, in the meanwhile we have to concentrate on building higher density neighbourhoods to support transit.

Q: How can we get kids involved? Especially with regards to transit to school.

A: Lobby school districts—this is an institutional responsibility. There are also the Better Environmentally Sound Transportation (BEST) Program and the Way to Go Program for kids — but still, this battle will be a difficult one if it has to be fought on a school-by-school basis. It's a good idea to approach the school district directly.

Q: Does New Westminster do its own traffic studies and does it show a decrease in traffic?

A: Regional studies show a 1-2% increase in traffic per year. There are lots of examples of transit/bike facilities that follow 'build and they will come', e.g. B-Line.

Q: What kinds of local control are there in rural areas over the roadways?

A: In many cases the Ministry of Transportation and Highways (MoTH) is the approving officer for land use. There are many problems with having external MoTH control over even secondary roads. However, there are possibilities to work with the Regional Districts on land use; ask for a land use plan for the area.

Comments

One planner agrees that alternative standards for roads are good if we continue to build more suburbs but if the approach changes and there is greater urbanization / densification / clustering in rural areas then such alternative development / road standards would be difficult to implement. For example, in Maple Ridge, there is a large urban expansion of 3700 units. Under current suburban standards, 1/3 would be left in a natural state. Under alternative approaches, 2/3 would be left in natural state, 1/2 of the remaining 1/3 would be alternative suburban standards and the other 1/2 would be more urban where it is hard to use alternative standards.

Workshop # 3 - Where We Live Work and Play

Joyce Drohan, Architect, Associate with Hotson Bakker Architects

Workshop Overview

What makes a community vibrant? This workshop was intended to inform participants on how pedestrian oriented, mixed-use developments can be designed to create more livable communities. Joyce presented an overview of various mixed-use projects in urban areas, using examples from the City of Vancouver.

Key Presentation Points

- Mixed-use zoning is not a new idea – it has been a common feature in Vancouver for many decades, as we emulated our European predecessors.
- However, zoning practices during the latter half of the last century have helped to decrease mixed-use's acceptability to planners and residents.
- The move toward suburbs in 1950, 60s, and 70s has gradually reversed. In the 70-80s Vancouver became more interested in mixed-use again as population increased sharply. With the more recent move back toward urban centres, improved urban design guidelines increase the utility of outdoor space and makes urban areas more liveable, and thus more attractive to new residents.

The Capers Building (4th Street & Vine) illustrates ways to decrease urban sprawl with 80 dwellings on the first floor. The second floor is office space and the ground floor holds commercial / retail space. Benefits include:

- Local shopping for residents
- Close to transportation
- Reduction of urban sprawl
- Increased street vitality

Challenges include adjacencies to neighbours (biggest controversies)

- Loading bays (noise, garbage, smell, etc.)
- Obstructed views (taller buildings than on local streets)
- More cars in neighbourhood
- Economic viability of retail operations (should compliment rather than compete with each other)

Density has everything to do with context such as the Dunbar live-work complex; initially it was not acceptable to the then Dunbar residents, where 70% of current housing is single family homes (translates to suburban densities)

Other Points & Examples About Mixed-Used Developments

- Mixed use development on an arterial road is key for putting more people closer to transit
- There are 'eyes on the street' for security
- They have bulk and scale that contribute to the appeal of the urban environment
- Trafalgar Mews has buffer between units to secure privacy, and it strongly identifies the distinction between public/private use spaces
- Guidelines for facades in Trafalgar Mews and Capers are done to compliment those of surrounding/local buildings
- There are different lifestyles that can and should be accommodated in mixed use developments
- Yaletown has residential and commercial next to each other that is quite complimentary
- Parking lots open for garden/food markets in some developments
- Critical mass in Vancouver helps support mixed use development, however, it is not perceived to be as desirable in other areas
- Think of mixed-use as primarily residential with another activity or use below
- Introduce a degree of flexibility to allow interim uses until retail demand requires it
- Better off designing spaces rather than uses!
- Lack of constituency, market and mixed use in the suburbs
- Property management is an integral component for the success of these projects; their management skills / licensing needs to be properly addressed according to the property type
- Parking options are necessary; e.g., cash in lieu of parking subsidies, utilizing underused parking, trade parking space for living-unit price reduction, developer to purchase a carpool van, developers have active partnerships with car cooperatives for available space for autos at the development, etc.

Questions & Answers

Q. When a site is chosen, what are the pitfalls in design for zoning? Are banks prepared to finance?

A. Consult with city. Lots of banks are demanding to know retail tenants up front before planning.

Q. How do we convince people about mixed-use when there are areas in Victoria that aren't working?

A. Point to models that are successful in your own backyard.

Q. How do we keep our neighbourhoods safe?

A. Zoning has to ensure that there are some open spaces for families to go. Good healthy sidewalk environment as well as green space.

Q. Do building projects target groups such as families so that there is commonality in order to please more people - vision for who wants to live with whom?

A. Co-ops are a good example of targeting families as residents. Assisted housing is also aimed at families. You need to identify key resources.

Workshop # 4 - Home Is Where The Heart Is

Kimiko Karpoff, Lower Mainland Network for Affordable Housing & Vanessa Geary, Coordinator, Tenants Rights Action Coalition (Vancouver). David Stott & Jill McFarlane of the Capital Families Association (Victoria).

Workshop Overview

"Where will your children and your parents live within the next 15-20 years?" Each community needs a range of housing options to meet its diverse needs. This workshop looked at affordable housing as a smart growth issue and how to advocate for housing accessibility and affordability in our communities.

Key Presentation Points

Why affordable housing is sustainable

- Encourages people to participate in their community
- Shelters people: Prevents families & individuals from becoming homeless
- Allows people to live and work within their community
- Community must be able to sustain everyone - Homelessness is not a sustainable community

A good home gives people a positive outlook. They are more willing to contribute to their surroundings. An example of a community that is not so sustainable is Seattle. With the growth of high tech industry, many neighbourhoods became too expensive for the average wage earner. The result was evictions, incessant working hours, and the de-stabilisation of jobs and loss of neighbourhood.

The barrier to sustainable housing is the widespread dream for low-density, single-family housing. This leads to:

- Urban sprawl
- Lack of diverse tenure
- No where to walk to get food or green space
- Not child friendly
- Too much concrete
- No transit access

The perception in the past was that affordable housing must be 30% of a person's or families' taxable income. Now it is becoming closer to 50% of taxable income.

Affordable housing = diverse tenure

- Health for ecological, social and personal well-being.
- Transport within the community is walking and cycling
- Safer communities; mixed-use zoning means more eyes on the street and neighbours knowing neighbours.
- Less pressure on green and agriculture land
- Less commuting = less dependency on the car = less air pollution
- More time with families
- More time to participate within the community

Questions & Answers

Q. How does one stop Strata councils from increasing the fees and thus making the home less affordable?

A. Raise your voice via different lobbying groups

Q. Are there design concerns in housing for the disabled?

A. The design of buildings for the ageing and disabled must come from community advocacy groups to the architecture community. There is at present a miscommunication from what developers think is marketable and in high demand, to what people actually want or need.

A. The City of North Vancouver has recently passed a bylaw for adaptable housing. A good example of this type of housing is Quayside Village in North Vancouver.

Q. Why are there no 3-5 bedroom in co-op housing or other affordable housing options?

A. There is a perception that most affordable housing needs are for single parent-homes. Occupancy standards are based on Western Standards, on what a family consists of, and how many people in a bedroom are allowed.

Comments

Must look at the long-term picture for building sustainable communities; longer than 10-20 years, as much as 50-100 years. The Lower Mainland will have 4 million people in 2020. What will our communities look like? Must look at: street-use design, stream inclusion, policies on limiting infrastructure, tax incentives for landowners and developers for building more sustainable communities.

Workshop # 5 - Lighter, Cheaper, Greener, Smarter

Patrick Condon, James Taylor Chair in Landscape & Liveable Environments, University of BC

Workshop Overview

How can we accommodate our growing communities in a way that won't kill fish and destroy the landscapes we love? By using alternative development standards, in particular in the way we design and construct roads and storm water systems, we can create great communities and protect our natural areas. Patrick used a case study of a development called the East Clayton Project, in Surrey, British Columbia, where a number of alternative development standards have been proposed.



Key Presentation Points

How We Build Communities Today

- Hierarchical streets — superblocks, collector (arterials), to local, to cul-de-sac. These are very wide street standards — there is even a class structure based on which street you live on. Results in segregated uses, long distances to major destinations, car dependency, excess infrastructure.
- Single-use zoning produces exclusive demographics — neighbourhoods are homogenous with respect to age and income.
- Cars and services are out front and people are out back — our streets are very car convenient (dominated), with little attention paid to people.
- Houses are the least important component of our neighbourhoods — houses can be "changed" relatively easily (i.e. they are modified, demolished, renovated etc), but infrastructure is "forever" — we don't often change an entire road system, or sewer system.

How We Built Communities Yesterday

The different type of streets in the Kitsilano case-study proves that the narrowing of roads:

- Slows traffic down
- Is cheaper
- Allows more permeable surface for drainage (less pavement)
- Supports the commercial area
- Increases the diversity of housing choices (social diversity according to different tenure types)
- Interconnected street system (uniform block size, permeable grid pattern) is easy to get around
- The grid system is not inherently "boring" — street planting, building types make places appealing or unappealing; the street system isn't the key to visual appeal
- Local streets — are trolley car arterial streets and local curbside streets with car parking on crushed stone
- Streets are for people and lanes are for services (e.g. garbage) and cars
- The grid system allows for "rat running" (short cuts through residential neighbourhoods) which is not a negative — the grid system releases pressure from main roads when needed. This way, we do not have to over-build main roads to accommodate infrequent high use times.

The Way We Should Build Communities Tomorrow (Case Study: East Clayton, Surrey)

- The natural stream system should be used as part of the watershed's drainage system
- Soil filtration is the best method for water drainage. Reduces costs by using the natural system for drainage of runoff (1mm of water per hour is needed to maintain a natural soil filtration function for ground water).
- Combining the 'green infrastructure' (streams and watercourses) with the road network increases people's access to green areas and reduces the time needed to get there.

More Sustainable Communities Could Be Achieved By

- More homes per acre
- Taller homes (same square footage as present homes)
- Smaller yards, smaller garages, narrower streets
- Alleys for garbage and cars
- Use of a "Trolley Street System" - a street design that promotes local commercial use and easier access to public transit.
- 5 minute walk to amenities such as green space, shopping and transit
- Higher density (promotes more use of public transit)
- Alternative storm water and stream corridor management systems to promote more permeable surfaces, improved better water filtration and thus healthier groundwater.

- Everyone should have a garden.
- Diversity of home and tenure types.
- Community organized around nature, natural drainage systems, streets and yards should work with the stream systems.
- Use of low impact bridges to transverse environmentally sensitive areas.

What Would Our Cities Look Like If We Made These Changes?

- We could use our land much more efficiently by using sustainable alternative development practices — higher density, integrate natural areas, minimize impervious surfaces, provide amenities within walking distance of residential areas.

If We Don't Adopt New Practices...

- Natural systems will be excluded
- Commercial and residential areas will remain divided
- Parks and schools will be located illogically
- Car dependent
- Arterial roads will be congested
- Impenetrable street pattern

Questions & Answers

Q: How can we break down homeowner ignorance?

A: The main problem here is not consumer awareness, it's that we are simply not getting a good product on the ground. There are several pieces that must come together in order to get good development going. Once we have tangible results, then consumers will take notice, and realize that higher density is very livable. The 'big yard' ideal is unaffordable to the average BC family. Fiscal constraints will begin to put pressure on families to consider alternatives to the single-family home.

Q: Why aren't we teaching these concepts in our schools (i.e. universities)?

A: We are teaching these concepts, but it's still a matter of who is willing to assume the risk of developing in a new fashion. Assumption of risk is the key issue here, much more important than education.

Q: In the Netherlands (and most of Europe), space constraints have prompted better infrastructure planning — how can we do that here?

A: Hold fast on the Agricultural Land Reserve and crown lands.

Q: It seems that the focus is still on roads — should we not be designing greenways first, and then roads? A grid system doesn't seem like it accommodates nature.

A: This is a huge debate. It's much more important to think about inter-connectivity rather than a grid pattern per se. Our concept includes multi-use corridors (e.g. bike paths, trails etc. through green spaces).

Q: How do you apply these ideas to existing communities?

A: Retrofitting in urban areas is tough. An excellent example that could be applied is the City of Vancouver's current problem with old drainage pipes for runoff and sewage. If they could look at existing infiltration systems rather than replacing all pipes, could prove long-term savings and promoting green areas that sustain natural filtration systems.

Comments:

We must use federal and provincial money more carefully. We must treat innovative developers "gently" since they are assuming the most risk, e.g. Lower Development Cost Charges for the first developer to do something innovative, and then tax succeeding projects.

QUEST Demonstration

Dave Biggs is President of Envision Sustainability Tools Inc. and Associate of the Sustainable Development Research Institute at UBC. During the lunch-break in Vancouver, Dave introduced conference participants to an interactive demonstration of the Lower Fraser Basin QUEST, an innovative tool that facilitates debate and discussion among a variety of stakeholders about regional sustainability. QUEST is a state-of-the-art technology that has the look, user-friendliness, and appeal of a computer game. Yet, it is an integrated modeling approach that combines the latest scientific knowledge and data to generate future scenarios for a region. QUEST is a sustainability model, which allows users to explore and evaluate the social, economic, and environmental consequences of their scenario results. Participants collectively created and explored a 40-year future sustainability scenario for Vancouver and the surrounding region. CD-ROMs of QUEST were available to attendees free of charge.

Sharing Smart Growth Resources

Smart Growth Toolkit

Bernard LaRochelle is Community Relations Coordinator at Smart Growth BC. He coordinated the research, writing and production of the Smart Growth Tool Kit that was distributed to all conference participants as part of their registration. Bernard walked participants through the various sections of the Tool Kit and explained its contents as well as how to use it. For more information about the Toolkit, check out Smart Growth B.C.'s website at www.smartgrowth.bc.ca under the Publications link.

Smart Growth Guide to Local Government Law and Advocacy

Linda Nowlan is Executive Director of West Coast Environmental Law Association. She is the co-author of the Smart Growth Guide. Linda highlighted the contents of the Guide's ten chapters and made reference to a few specific sections by way of explaining the value of this publication. The Guide contains a comprehensive but easy-to-use listing of various land use topics and how smart growth advocates can more effectively influence planning outcomes. West Coast Environmental Law Association is selling the Guide, which is an excellent companion document to the Smart Growth Toolkit. For more information contact WCELA at 1001 - 207 West Hastings Street, Vancouver, BC V6B 1H7,
tel # (604) 684-7378 fax # (604) 684-1312 1-800-330-wcel (toll free in BC)
info@wcel.org www.wcel.org

Taking Smart Growth Home Closing Comments

Applying smart growth ideas and tools to BC communities

Patricia Howie, of Praxis Consulting, the conference facilitator, moderated a closing dialogue during which participants were invited to share their thoughts and action plans with the entire group. Time had been allotted near the end of each workshop for participants to integrate any new learning into a personal action plan that they would commit to achieving over the course of the next few months. During the closing session, participants noted what they would do as a result of having attended the conference. A number of others provided feedback to Smart Growth B.C. regarding future activities and programs they thought the organization should address.

