

**Subject: FW: Costs of growth**

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A MESSAGE FROM ERNIE CRIST

Below is my response to an enquiry from a resident and friend about the cost of development in Lynn Valley. I have on several occasions requested this information FROM STAFF only to be ignored... either that or I received misleading, false and/or incomplete information.

Subject: RE: Costs of growth:

Hi A.....

You have inquired about the cost (infrastructure) to the District taxpayers as a result of the massive redevelopment of the Lynn Valley Core that was supposed to be a Pedestrian Oriented Town Center but turned into an extended Car Mall. I have not, as yet, received this information. Neither do I expect that it will be provided in a satisfactory manner. For one thing, Senior Staff have quite correctly calculated that it is safe to ignore such requests and/or to provide jaundiced, incomplete and misleading information. This was done with a previous request of mine on the same subject. First it took months on end to get it and when the report finally did come, it contained incomplete and misleading information and was useless, more or less.

The game plan surely is to stall and wait in the hope that this or that "bothersome" Councillor "will not be with us after the next election" and that, in any case, if push comes to shove, "we will be protected" by the number one chieftain. Indeed, with some luck, we will make the Councillor who makes such requests angry and make him lose his temper. Then we can charge him with harassment. "Heads we win, tails he loses". This after all is the District of North Vancouver.

The bottom line is that, in my opinion, Staff have no intention of providing accurate information since it would prove beyond a shadow of a doubt that the whole redevelopment and densification of the Lynn Valley Core has brought the public absolutely no benefit. What it has brought is more traffic, more pollution, more noise, more parking problems and a horrendous bill that far outweighs the income received from DCC'S. Why do you think the District now has to accept the burden of finding \$ 36 million? And that is without a community, art, recreation or senior amenity. Why do you think the District now has to look for development partners on their terms instead of District terms?

The development of the Lynn Valley Core was concocted by the developers and

their friends. The first blow against the plan was struck when Council allowed Bentall to build the box stores in isolation of the L.V. Plan. Even while the plan was in progress, a planning staff person went around telling the people " that we have to accept our fair share of regional growth". He should have been fired for saying that. However, he continued saying it even after he had been warned that this was not the way we approach development in the District but rather that development is neighborhood and community driven. The Lynn Valley Community plan was certainly not drawn up for the benefit of the people of Lynn Valley although it was camouflaged as such. However, it was welcomed with open arms for it enabled the District to cover up the mismanaged Heritage Fund as well as the Reserve Funds. It was a "God sent gift" to cover up past incompetence.

The Lynn Valley Community Association was enlisted to sell the "Pedestrian Oriented Town Center" turned Car Mall. The people of Lynn Valley, that is those who cared enough to pay attention in the first, place did not see through the hoax. Those who did were immobilized with glossy brochures, showing green boulevards, designated bicycle lanes and green spaces.

On the other hand, in Edgemont Village, where the people took charge and where the pro development elements within the neighborhood were controlled, the results have been different. The things that were promised were delivered. The question is this? Has the public in the other areas of the District learned from this example or will they continue to allow themselves to be hoodwinked as was the case in Lynn Valley? As to your question does development bring benefits? I can say this with absolute certainty. The only time development is beneficial for the public is if it is done for a specific community identified public planning goal. Any other time it is a loser except for the developers of course.

The other point to remember is that the larger the cities the larger the problems, the greater the crime rate, the higher the cost of living, the greater the threat to livability and the higher the taxes and I might add the fewer the trees. The largest cities in the world are constantly on the verge of bankruptcy and this is with substantial senior level government assistance. In Canada where this assistance is absent, the situation is worse.

I hope this answers some of your questions. The bottom line is this ....development is only beneficial if it is community driven. The other point to be made is, people, beware of slick snake oil salesmen including those who have been duly elected;

Ernie Crist

Hi Ernie:

You may know that some of us are very interested in analyzing the real costs of growth. .... and I are currently reading Eben Fodor's book, Better Not Bigger, in which he provides details from case studies-his own and others-showing how to calculate the costs of adding new residential and commercial developments. The costs he analyzes include schools, new roads, sewage and water. He breaks these down into

dollars per household.


I mentioned in an e-mail to ....., and other members of the Seymour Planning Group, that development costs in Lynn Valley should be readily available because staff was supposed to do a financial impact study with the Plan. After reading my e-mail, ....copied to me one of your last e-mails to Gord Howie in which you asked him again to forward the LValley financial impact information to you.

Would you let me know when that information is available as we want to have current examples from our own District which can be translated into costs of growth.

As you know there are the economically verifiable costs and then the "qualitative" costs. Most people complain about the latter but assume these costs are just "incidental" and unavoidable. Such costs are more pollution, congestion, visual blight and crime rates. Actually, according to a study that an environmental economist gave to me, these costs are quantifiable to the extent that property values in an area reflect the increase or decrease of these factors. You may remember him. He was the economist who spoke against Viacom's (Csl. ....) presentation on trading billboard space for a new bridge. I met him and we discussed his work in this field.

Hope you are having a restful summer,  
Best regards, .....

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