

RCMP REPORTS 185% INCREASE TO CRIMINAL OFFENSES



According to North Cowichan's previous Mayor in late 2022, the new supportive housing on Paddle Road was a great addition to the Cowichan Commons area and the street problem (we didn't have in that area) were solved; however, according to local business owners and this year's first quarter report from the RCMP, crime has risen drastically in the area since the facility became occupied.

$13 million-dollar taxpayer funded project, that now costs a minimum $1.2 million dollars a year to operate, has not actually decreased addiction or helped the mental health crises, it in fact serves as another draw to the community of folks in need from all over the lower mainland.

There was a commitment from B.C. housing to create ongoing street clean-up projects that would be run by residents of the facility to create pride of residency. According one of the workers at the Paddle rd. complex, there have been multiple fires, and extensive water damage to the building by residents during its short life. It is well known globally that temporary housing is not the answer, especially that allow drug usage does not tend to create pride, as permanent housing is shown to do.

We often hear housing crises as a blanket statement used to justify this type of housing being placed right inside neighbourhoods, without any consultation with the tax paying residents of these areas.

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This seems like a chicken and egg scenario. These housing units that have been built, and that are being built, are not for our communities' residents, but more so to create another hub in B.C. where folks can be relocated to.

We have an affordable housing crisis, as well as a mental health and addiction crises, and we watch as the B.C. government so-called tools, and local municipal bureaucracy around building permits, have only caused both situations to become worse. What is that saying? Insanity is doing something over and over.

The B.C. government has run campaigns to remove the stigma of drug use, changed "overdose" to "drug poisoning", legalized deadly amounts of hard drugs, caused the overdose crises to only get worse by the month, spends over 100 million a year on treatments like the methadone program, yet here we are.

Now with crime rates rising, especially after the last influx of folks from East Hastings arrived, it may be time that local councils start to find their voices with the provincial government.

According to the first quarter report from the RCMP, Crimes Against Persons occurrences were up in all jurisdictions 316 from 241 (+31%)

Overall Assaults became more serious with common Assault up 10%, Assault with a weapon & Cause Bodily Harm up 26%, Assaults where Assailant and Victim were not in any relationship were up 33%.

Sex Offences were up significantly (+85%) 53% were on victims under 19 yrs old, 43% for the Quarter were historical (1 month or later)

Extortion files are up 12 from 7 (+71%) "Sextortion" events is the driver for this category which is consistent with regional trends.

Crimes Against Property occurrences were up 825 from 624 (+22%)

Auto Thefts have risen for the Quarter and we are seeing a number of similar offences/trends throughout Vancouver Island

Shoplifting remains high in all jurisdictions.

The city of Duncan saw a massive 185% increase in other criminal offences, some of which include; possessing child pornography, indecent act, trespass, causing a disturbance and more. There was a substantial increase to Missing Persons investigations; 123 reports for the Quarter, compared to 52 reported in same Quarter 2022. All persons reported missing this year have been located. (Does not specify dead or alive).

We allow the B.C. Government to place a legal drug site between four schools, so that a vast amount of volunteer resources must be devoted to early morning clean ups, and needle searching on playgrounds, so that our children can be somewhat safe. Children report that they don't even look at people lying on the ground anymore to see if they are alive or dead, and that they are numb to the whole thing. This is a sign of PTSD.

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January to March 2023 – 3 Month Comparison (compared to same period in 2022)

Type of Offence & Occurrence	NCD Jurisdiction Totals			Municipality of North Cowichan			City of Duncan			Cowichan Tribes			Cowichan Valley Regional District		
	Jan to Mar, 2023	Jan to Mar 2022	% Change over prev year	Jan to Mar, 2023	Jan to Mar 2022	% Change over prev year	Jan to Mar, 2023	Jan to Mar 2022	% Change over prev year	Jan to Mar, 2023	Jan to Mar 2022	% Change over prev year	Jan to Mar, 2023	Jan to Mar 2022	% Change over prev year
Crimes Against the Person	316	241	31%	156	127	23%	61	42	45%	63	42	50%	23	20	15%
Assaults	173	144	20%	89	77	16%	33	28	18%	38	28	36%	9	8	13%
Extortion	12	7	71%	7	5	40%	1	2	N.C	1	0	N.C.	2	0	N.C.
Harassment	19	17	12%	8	10	-20%	5	4	25%	4	0	N.C.	2	2	0%
Homicide	0	0	0%	0	0	0%	0	0	0%	0	0	0%	0	0	0%
Human Trafficking	0	0	0%	0	0	0%	0	0	0%	0	0	0%	0	0	0%
Kidnapping	5	3	67%	3	2	50%	0	0	0%	2	0	N.C.	0	1	-100%
Robbery	6	7	-14%	4	2	100%	1	1	0%	1	4	-75%	0	0	0%
Sex Offences	37	20	85%	13	9	44%	4	2	100%	10	1	900%	4	4	0%
Utter Threats	57	43	33%	29	22	32%	14	5	180%	7	9	-22%	5	5	0%
Weapons Offences	3	0	N.C.	1	0	N.C	2	0	N.C.	0	0	0%	0	0	0%
Crimes Against Property	825	674	22%	407	343	19%	161	136	18%	187	133	41%	63	54	17%
Arson	13	8	63%	7	0	N.C.	2	3	-33%	2	5	-60%	2	0	N.C.
Auto theft	23	13	77%	13	8	63%	2	2	0%	0	2	-100%	8	1	700%
B&E - Business	34	31	10%	21	11	91%	6	9	-33%	1	3	-67%	6	8	-25%
B&E - Residential	17	13	31%	10	7	43%	3	2	50%	3	3	N.C.	1	1	0%
B&E - Other	17	13	31%	12	7	71%	4	5	-20%	1	1	0%	0	0	0%
Frauds	82	64	28%	47	41	15%	15	10	50%	9	5	80%	8	4	100%
Mischief to Property	336	306	10%	181	169	7%	83	70	19%	53	46	15%	19	21	-10%
Possession of Stolen Property	21	11	91%	11	4	175%	4	0	N.C.	1	2	-50%	4	3	33%
Shoplifting	148	82	80%	34	28	21%	14	4	250%	99	50	98%	1	0	N.C.
Theft from Vehicle	38	49	-22%	22	25	-12%	6	10	-40%	3	6	-50%	6	6	0%
All other thefts (combined)*	96	83	16%	49	42	17%	22	21	5%	15	10	50%	8	10	-20%
*(Bike, Mail, Utilities, Other)															
Traffic Offences															
Non fatal crashes Resulting in injury	27	37	-27%	8	18	-56%	7	6	17%	3	4	-25%	9	9	0%
Fatal crashes	1	0	N.C.	1	0	N.C.	0	0	0%	0	0	0%	0	0	0%
Impaired Op MV	61	64	-5%	30	32	-6%	12	11	9%	7	15	-53%	12	6	100%
Other Criminal Code Offences*	313	245	28%	124	123	1%	131	46	185%	46	58	-21%	7	14	-50%
(*Cause a Disturbance, Breach of Conditions, Counterfeit Currency, Possess break in Instruments, Public Mischief, Possess Child Porn, Indecent Act, Tresspass, et al.)															
CDSA Offences															
Drug Posession	33	48	-31%	22	20	10%	4	22	-82%	3	3	0%	2	2	0%
Drug Trafficking	12	7	71%	6	3	100%	3	3	0%	1	1	0%	0	0	0%
Drug Production	0	1	-100%	0	0	0%	0	1	-100%	0	0	0%	0	0	0%
Mental Health															
Mental Health Related	321	357	-10%	180	209	-14%	59	69	-14%	40	34	18%	32	29	10%
Sec 28 Apprehensions	126	102	24%	63	58	9%	28	20	40%	17	7	143%	13	11	18%
Sudden Deaths	37	32	16%	21	17	24%	4	2	100%	5	4	150%	4	7	-43%

Quarterly RCMP update given to North Cowichan during regular council meeting on May 3, 2023. (northcowichan.ca)

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We asked students of Cowichan Highschool and Quamichan secondary whether they would support a Bylaw against open drug use, and every single one stated they would.

We need rehabs, detox programs, support, and training, as well as permanent housing. There is no way to find dignity and self-worth, or a place in this world when you are given free drugs, instead of free detox, or being given temporary housing where you can use drugs instead of a home to feel pride in. There are places who understand what is really needed, but they are all privately funded as it seems everything the province touches becomes a burden for local citizens.

These privately funded initiatives know that people need to first detox, then rehabilitate through learning skills, and feeling they're worthy of this life. Places such as Volken Academy in Vancouver and other areas was started in a small home and now has a very large facility that offers a free 2-5 year in-depth rehabilitation program, with a success rate in the high 90s, which blows any provincial legislation/program out of the water. Locally we have outreach like Life On Wheels, which is run by volunteers without government funding.

Life On Wheels offers food, clothing, emotional support, detox and relocation to rehab after detox. Anyone who has lived in The Duncan area for 10-years or more can see the trajectory we are on, so lets support community initiatives that work, and take back our streets before someone, at worst a child, gets injured or dies.

Support initiatives like Life On Wheels, and say NO to Provincial solutions in your area.







LIFE ON WHEELS PROVIDES SUPPORT WHERE IT'S NEEDED DIRECTLY TO THOSE WHO NEED IT MOST

When one first meets Cheryl, you immediately know she is full of passion and strong in her mission filled with kindness and compassion.

Westward Independent met with Cheryl of Life on Wheels to sit down and have a conversation with her on her diligent work with those most in need.

Cheryl has a mission to offer help to those who are willing to take it, and states that she does not go out of her way to make folks that have addictions comfortable but is there for simple things like a bottle of water, a snack, a piece of clothing, but especially an ear.

Life on Wheels is run by dedicated volunteers, who open their container and their tent every Tues. Wed. and Thursday from 12:00–3:00 to welcome those who may need some company, or a chat over coffee. In the discussions with those addicted to drugs, the volunteers will keep the offer of detoxing on the table, and some have taken them up on this, and some keep putting it off.

Cheryl, along with her team, have managed to put up three trailers on a property solely for detoxing.

One day she had the amazing idea of calling Island Rail Corridor, who privately owns the property the rail line is on and asked them if she could set up on their property, and they graciously said "yes, of course!". Well, now that she had a spot, something more permanent would be helpful to keep all the clothes and items in, so a call was made to Green Life a container company who generously offered her a container, and even delivered on their own dime.

Cheryl is steadfast in her convictions that treatment, either not offered or not accessible locally, is where she comes in. She will not take any money from the province and depends on generous donations from family and friends, as well as her own pocketbook. At life on Wheels detox, there is a zero drugs or alcohol policy, and the clients are supported through on the ground volunteers.

After folks have detoxed in the campers, Cheryl's team of volunteers, often taking multiple teams for one trip, drive the patient to the ferry and across to one of the recovery center's on the mainland. The problem Cheryl sees after the rehab though, is that there are no real job placements and long-term support programs to help give these folks a goal, skills and a life's purpose, so sadly many relapse; but Life On Wheels is always there to help them start the process over again when they are ready.

There are a few other programs like life on Wheels, for instance the Volken academy in Vancouver, who also will not take provincial funding, but they have a greater rate of success than any provincial programs because, though they started in a small house, they now have grown to a very large facility. Volken Academy's clients run three businesses that in turn gives those recovering, skills, a purpose, and a future.

This model is how the Academy can be free to those who enter as the self-run businesses, a moving company, a grocery store, and now a garden, create a self-sustaining eco-system of hope and recovery. Often it is citizen-led initiatives that truly get the job done.

Those who live amongst those in need, can see clearer what is truly needed, than multi-level bureaucracy created by politicians who are so far removed from the reality of the streets.

Cheryl and her team feel they are working through God and continue to spread their compassion towards their fellow man. As her card says, "God is our refuge and strength".

For the complete interview visit www.coap.ca

If you would like to support Life On Wheels, contact cheryllynnehoward@gmail.com or 250-706-2428

DON'T BE A CHICKEN, DIVE IN!



Have you ever considered having your own backyard chickens but haven't yet taken the plunge?

Well, that was me too, until about 2 months ago, and wow has it been fun (and surprisingly easy)!

Our feathery friends have so much character which bring heaps of laughter on to our little homestead.

Just watching them go about their business with the many different and varied sounds, the way they interact with each other, and of course when they scratch the earth for tasty treats. It's hilarious and brings a joy to your life that you maybe didn't know was missing.

Witnessing the cats or dog interacting and co-existing with the flock is priceless. They relate on few things, but yet are still capable of living amongst one another in harmony··· most of the time.



Perhaps some lessons could be learned from this?
The pure bliss they get out of dirt baths almost makes you consider giving it a go yourself. I mean, why not?!

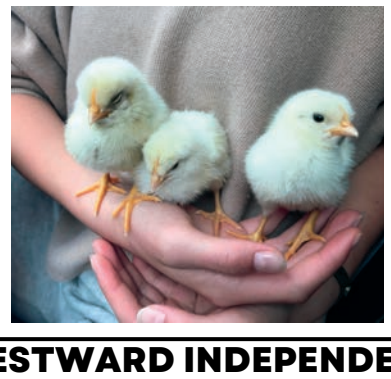
But, I think one of my favourite experiences about having our own backyard freely ranging chickens, is when they follow you up the drive way and through the orchard, all the way to the top of the property, just because they love you so much!

(or maybe because you have chicken scratch treats in your pocket, but who knows for sure.)

Oh yeah, and at the end of the day, you will likely even get some eggs out of the deal.

It's pretty win/win if you ask me!

– Savanah





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BALANCING PUBLIC HEALTH AND COMMUNITY AUTONOMY: A CASE AGAINST SAFE INJECTION FACILITIES WITHOUT COMMUNITY CONSENT

In the mid to late 90s there were 300 overdose deaths that led to a declaration of a health emergency in Vancouver.

After many unsanctioned sites were set up, in 2003, the regional health authority in Vancouver successfully applied to the federal government for a legal exemption to pilot North America's first medically supervised safer injecting facility.

An exemption from the federal Minister of Health is required to operate a health service where people consume illicit drugs. This exemption was granted to Insite based on the experience of a growing number of international settings which suggests that such initiatives may have unique potential to reduce public illicit drug use, which we know has not been the case.

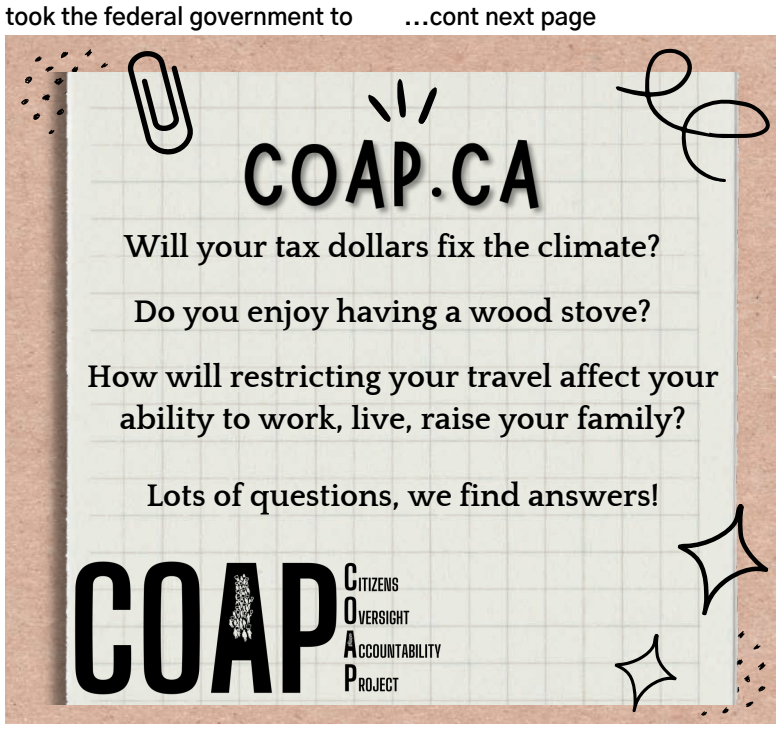
In 2006, the final year of the pilot program, a Conservative Government was elected, which was publicly vocal in its opposition to harm reduction and Insite in particular. Eventually, the PHS and two local drug users (Dean Wilson and Shelly Tomic) took the federal government to the Supreme Court of British Columbia in an effort to prevent the closure of Insite. The Supreme Court judge ruled in support of the continued operation of Insite, recognized it as a health service, and noted that it would be unconstitutional to deny PWID access to this life saving service. The federal government appealed, and the appeal court judges also ruled in favor of the continued operation of Insite.

The federal government was then granted 1 year to revise its policies to allow for the legal operation of Safe Injection Facilities in Canada.

The government responded with a new bill (Bill C-2), which made opening a SIF more difficult than before, listing 26 conditions that had to be met before a SIF could be opened. Among them, municipalities had to have local community support and the support of local police.

In October 2015, Canadians elected a new Liberal government under the leadership of Justin Trudeau, whose government had publicly expressed support for SIFs. With the change in the political landscape, various municipalities began planning to open SIFs. The federal government then went on to amend bill C-2 which outlined the various

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conditions that needed to be met to open a SIF.

After much lobbying, the government introduced a new bill, Bill C-37, to replace Bill C-2.

The new bill replaced the 26 conditions with five conditions, including: demonstration of the need for such a site to exist, demonstration of appropriate consultation of the community, presentation of evidence on whether the site will impact crime in the community, demonstration that regulatory systems are in place, and provision of evidence that appropriate resources are in place.

Community consent:

The implementation of SIFs should not be undertaken without the active involvement and acceptance of the local community. This argument is rooted in the principles of democracy, social responsibility, and community well-being.

Firstly, democratic principles dictate that individuals living within a community should have a say in shaping the policies and facilities that directly impact their neighborhood. The potential ramifications of a SIF, whether positive or negative, will be experienced most profoundly by the community in which it is located. Therefore, it is only fair that community members have a voice in deciding whether or not a SIF is established in their area.

Furthermore, the establishment of a SIF without community consent may result in social discord and resistance, undermining the facility's effectiveness and potential benefits. Opposition to SIFs often arises from concerns related to public safety, property value, and a potential increase in drug-related activity. Ignoring these concerns can lead to a breakdown in social cohesion, contribute to a decrease in community well-being, and foster a sense of resentment or fear among community members.

It's also worth noting that SIFs are not the only solution to the opioid crisis. Other harm reduction strategies, such as increased access to treatment and rehabilitation services (severely lacking in the Cowichan Valley), public education about the risks of drug use, and programs to address the social determinants of drug addiction, like poverty and lack of housing, could be more acceptable to certain communities and should be pursued alongside or instead of SIFs.

Community acceptance is written into the current Bill C-37, so did Island Health breach this bill?

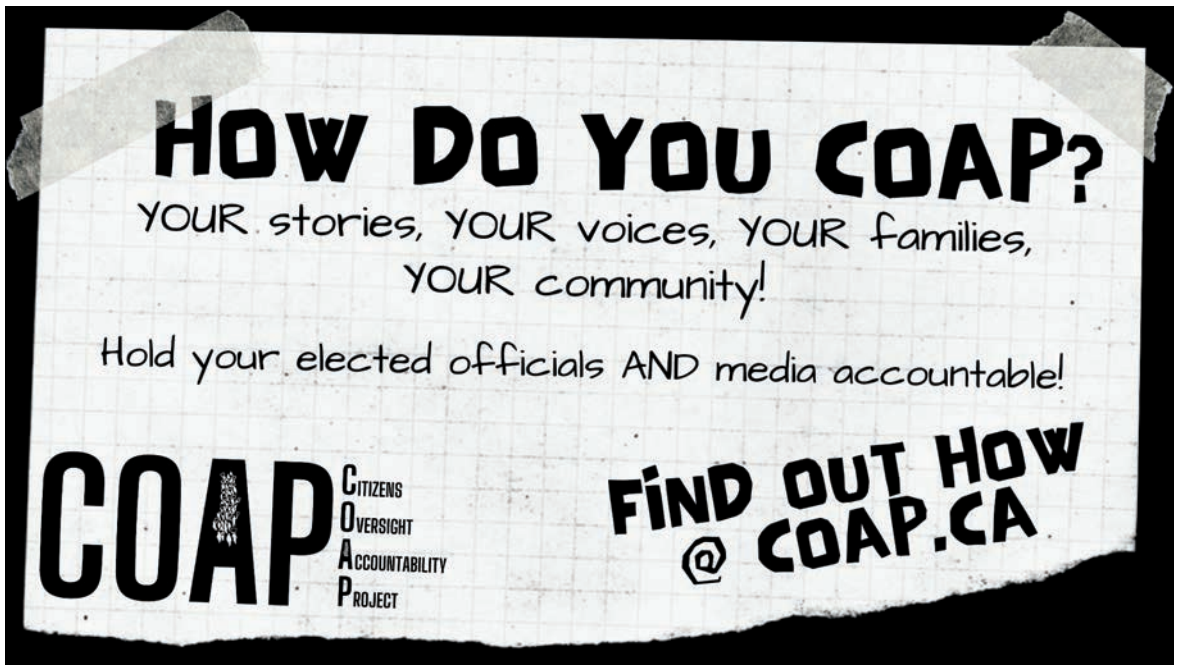
When the current OPS site was suggested, Council was against the location, Schoolboard was against the location, local business were against the location, and it garnered a protest that was made up of 300 residents. All these community voices were ignored by Island Health.

Additionally, crime prevention was touted as one of the benefits of SIFs, but we have seen an 87% increase in crime the first quarter of 2023.

In conclusion, while the benefits of SIFs in reducing drug-related deaths are well-documented, they are not reducing drug use or crime, and the establishment of these facilities should not override the importance of community consent.

Communities should be given the right to determine the interventions that best align with their values, needs, and circumstances. Forcing the implementation of SIFs without community agreement risks exacerbating social discord and could potentially undermine the effectiveness of these facilities. Therefore, community involvement and consent should be a prerequisite for establishing SIFs, to ensure public health measures strengthen, rather than erode, community well-being.

Now that it is here, and the province keeps building housing that allows drug usage inside, which has drastically increased crime in the areas they are built, and community sense of safety is eroding, what are our local governments doing to advocate on behalf of the rest of the community, especially the children?



WE ASKED CHAT GPT TO RUN A SATIRE ARTICLE ON 15-MINUTE CITIES

LOL

Title: The Hilariously Absurd 15-Minute Cities: A Comedic Take on Urban Fantasies

Introduction:

Step right up, ladies and gentlemen, for a whimsical journey into the realm of 15-minute cities! These urban paradises promise a life of convenience and efficiency, but let's not forget to inject a healthy dose of satire and humor into this grand illusion. Join us as we unravel the hilarity behind the far-fetched concept of 15-minute cities in the real world.

The Leisurely Sprint:

In the enchanted land of 15-minute cities, leisurely strolls to work, the grocery store, and the gym are guaranteed. Or so they say! In reality, we find ourselves frantically power-walking, trying to beat the clock and avoid becoming late for our perfectly timed lives. Imagine a hilarious scene of disheveled individuals sprinting down the streets, briefcases flying, groceries bouncing, all in an attempt to adhere to the whimsical rule of 15 minutes. It's a race against time that would make even Usain Bolt blush.

The Raging Battle of Parking Spaces:

Picture this: a neighborhood filled to the brim with inhabitants vying for the same limited parking spots. It's a comedic ballet of cars circling the streets like vultures, drivers engaging in passive-aggressive standoffs over the last remaining space. As tensions rise, the spectacle becomes a slapstick routine of honking horns, exasperated gestures, and the occasional "friendly" exchange of colorful words. Who knew parking could be the highlight of our day in the 15-minute city?

The "Everything-in-One" Fantasy:

Ah, the promise of having everything within a stone's throw! Need a cup of coffee? Just pop into the café around the corner. Want to catch a movie? The local theater is just a skip away. But wait, what if you're craving Thai food or yearn to visit an art museum? Well, in the 15-minute city, you're limited to a one-cuisine-fits-all restaurant and an art gallery the size of a shoebox. Who needs variety and cultural exploration when you can experience the joy of monotonous mundanity?

HA HA!

The Bizarre Encounters:

Living in a 15-minute city means encountering your neighbors at every turn. From awkward elevator rides to chance encounters at the local grocery store, you're bound to become familiar with the intimate details of their lives. Brace yourself for in-depth discussions on the neighbor's pet iguana or their questionable fashion choices. And remember, you must smile politely and nod along as you secretly wonder how to escape this never-ending reel of neighborhood tales.

Conclusion:

As we bid adieu to the fantastical world of 15-minute cities, let's revel in the sheer ridiculousness of their real-world implementation. The leisurely sprint, the "everything-in-one" fantasy, the raging battle of parking spaces, and the bizarre encounters with neighbors all present us with a delightful opportunity to laugh at the absurdity of it all. So, dear readers, as you navigate the landscape, remember the humor that lies within the far-fetched ideals of 15-minute cities. After all, a good laugh is the best antidote to the impracticalities of urban utopias!



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LOCAL RANTS AND RAVES

Just Questions!

I often wonder what the viewpoint of the other side might be. Up until a few years ago, friends and family might have considered me to be politically center. Over the past few years the left ideologies have become so extreme there's no more center. The line has shifted and for those of us that remained firm in beliefs, suddenly you find yourself more right than center.

For those of you that followed along and walked further left, I'm curious if things are going as you planned? We don't have an actual plan for action regarding climate change, we just have taxes. Those taxes have failed to achieve every single target they were implemented to meet.

Companies can choose to opt-in to washing (carbon) schemes and pass the cost to customers. We also have local taxes, provincial taxes, federal taxes, and increases to consumers on the goods, since companies now have to buy into the same ideologies their consumers do.

All of these funds funnel into a plan to address climate change. Canada is responsible for 1.5% of global emissions. Which, according to the recent survey North Cowichan accounts for about 0.0009% of the pie. Also curious, what would the tax base say if they understood all their sacrifice and changes to North Cowichan might assist with global climate initiatives less than 1/1000th of a percent. That's a huge ask of children, grandchildren, friends and family to fundamentally change how you live to maybe make a 0.0009% adjustment. Some families right now can barely afford their rent and future prospects aren't promising any change.

So my questions, to anyone leaning left, are the policies working? Do you believe these tax burdens drive change? Aside from your emotional beliefs of saving the planet, are our dollars, time, and effort actually achieving the results you're looking for?

According to all available data, Canada is missing every single climate target. If Canadians invest for the duration of their lives and we drop Canada's 1.5% to even 0.5% of global emissions, how much does that change global temperatures? Just what change are you looking for, because changing the climate doesn't seem to be one of those.

– Rick (North Cowichan)

What the &$%# Happened to Berkey's Corner???

Is anyone else seeing what I'm seeing? Berkey's Corner is becoming absolutely OVERRUN! The entire area from Walmart right over to Berkey's is positively insane lately. Traffic has never, EVER, been this much. People speed like CRAZY from Sherman to Drinkwater. Moorefield is so packed with cars it's now a one-lane street. On top of that MOST of these side streets don't have any lines, so people just park and drive anywhere they fit or sometimes where they don't. Want to turn left from Lane to Sherman, forget about it. Mary St, Truesdale, left hand turn? I don't think so. What about our little trail at the end of Lane road, that's been closed FOREVER. North Cowichan labeled our quaint little neighbourhood as a growth center and I'm guessing all that means is packing as many bodies as possible into the space. I think because Berkey's Corner doesn't have a neighbourhood association the municipality took advantage here and just pumped as many condos into the area as possible. Not to mention the island health building, the wet-housing, and now the RCMP building. Are we widening the streets, adding street lights, or upgrading public transit or something? Things are now so messed up around here it's frightening sometimes to even walk the street as people FLY down the roads to avoid the highway. AND we haven't even built the decade-long low income housing next to the Curling rink yet. Enough is enough, STOP expanding Berkey's corner, you're making it sucks here!

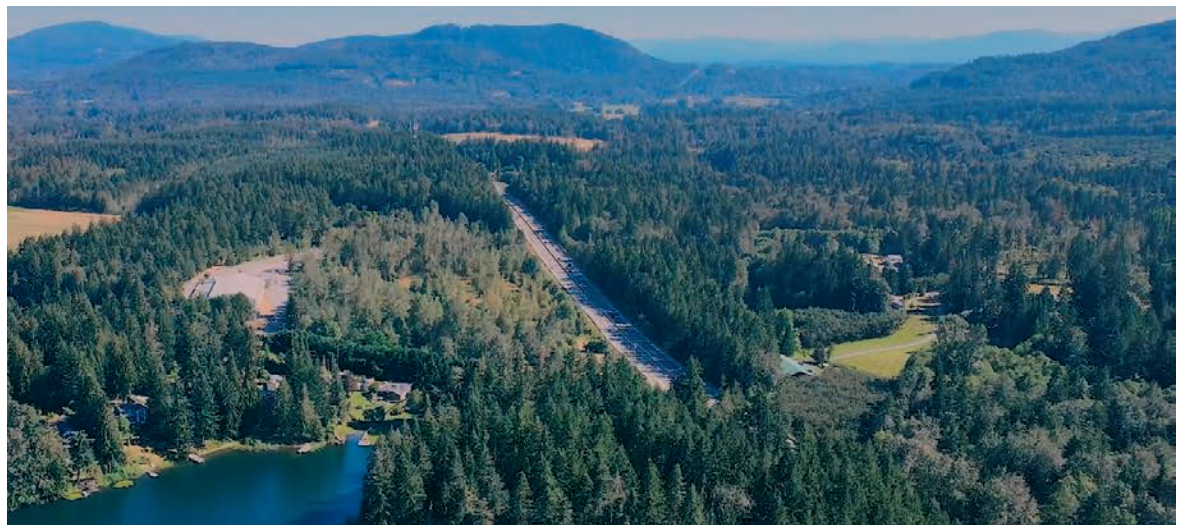
– Berkey's Resident

Thanks and maybe no thanks?

I am in love with community members who take their time and money to assist with those in need, you are amazing human beings. But, I find it insulting that we allow this to happen. Our local governments botch plans and cause us hardships, residents pull up their socks to fix what they've done, and then the elected officials praise themselves for the good work being done. To my community, I love you. To our officials, do better and stop relying on kind hearts to fix your mistakes!

– Joan Wright

POLITICAL OR IDEOLOGICAL BIAS FOR THE MUNICIPAL FOREST RESERVE?



We recently spoke with a North Cowichan resident who attended all 3 feedback sessions for the Municipal Forest Reserve (MFR) and they had very interesting feedback.

"It was rather shocking to say the least." We spoke with a local resident, Jay Adams, who attended an in-person session in Maple Bay, as well as 2 online sessions hosted through connectnorthcowichan. The public survey portion included opportunity to ask questions of the host as well as engage with other community members.

"If you asked any questions about how the carbon credits work, you were immediately dismissed. One fellow asked how the system collects funds, who pays them, where do they go, he was met with hostility and multiple people jumping in to defend their use."

Adams recalled, stating questions leaning against carbon credits or pro-logging were met with hostility.

"At one point I asked how we are paying for the upkeep of the forest, since we've stopped logging. They told me to ask local council, who in turn told me to go to a survey session. It's a feedback funnel straight into the garbage can." Adams mentioned throughout the surveys certain viewpoints were attacked as not being progressive enough.

Scenario 3: Active Conservation, had the most community feedback. Which favours carbon credits as a source of income with minor harvesting to support the safety of the forest. Community feedback however states the presentation and direction from the hosts were incredibly bias toward carbon credits.

"It's just ridiculous," Adams recalls from one of the survey sessions.

"They let the public speak their voice, which was mostly thoughts of support and praise for the forest. I mean, everyone loves forests, everyone loves trees, nature is a massive part of enjoying life here. But when asked about the economics, or anything logical of, how does it work exactly, your thoughts were instantly dismissed."

Adams, as well as several others we contacted for this article, recall the meetings structure becoming very misleading.

"They hosted breakout rooms where about a dozen people were in a smaller group. Of the dozen people maybe 4 or 5 said anything at all. If one person stated something, that ended up in their breakout summary. Some of those statements on the website for 'key takeaways' literally came from one person."

Local groups are also questioning the data being used for the community engagement sessions as well. A report created by the United Steel Workers Union states over $12 million dollars have been lost in the past 4 years since logging was stopped by the municipality.

The UBC partnership undervalued harvesting.

The UBC report showed $90/m3 however the low value in August of 2022 was $193/m3.

UBC also overvalued carbon credits, according to USW

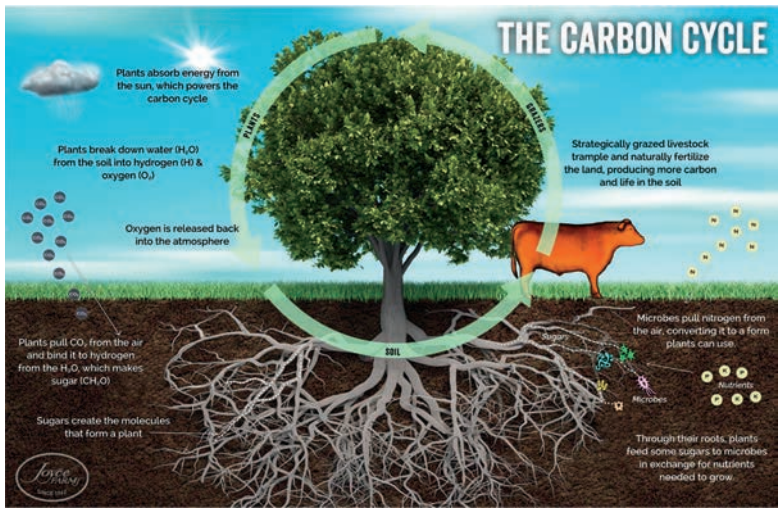
The UBC study shows carbon credits worth $25/tonne and rising to $102/tonne over 30 years.

Current value is only $3.50/tonne and the 3GreeTree report shows it will rise to $20/tonne over 30 years. The UBC study states their predictions are just 'assumptions' however Mr. Adams states none of that was spoken in the presentations.

USW released their own report earlier this year.

"Permanently halting logging in favour of carbon sequestration and justifying the decision on the basis of carbon credit revenues exceeding log revenues is simply not correct! If Council believes it has a mandate to permanently halt logging in favour of achieving carbon sequestration credits then make the decision for THAT reason. Do NOT try to incorrectly justify the decision by telling the North Cowichan public that carbon revenues will be greater than logging revenues. That is simply not true!! If Council is uncomfortable accepting the information provided to-day then strongly recommend MNC engage the services of a credible auditing firm (ie KPMG) to confirm or correct the figures and information provided in the UBC Partnership report. Engage a firm with qualified professional foresters and qualified accounting staff able to assess the veracity of the carbon sequestration credit assumptions/proposals and to recommend alternate selective logging forest management practices."

While this issue appears to have set people into different camps, it has opened the door to ask questions about feasibility. Whether you're pro-logging, pro-environment, pro-climate action, or any other politically driven viewpoint, there is common ground here. Is what we're doing, working? At the moment reserves in the MFR have ran dry, the upkeep of over a half million dollars per year is now on the tax-payers shoulders. If UBC overvalued carbon credits and undervalued harvesting what motive would they have? Or more importantly, how does that affect you, your home, your family?



CELEBRATE C02

Carbon dioxide (CO2) is a vital gas that makes up only a small fraction of Earth's atmosphere, accounting for approximately 0.004% of atmospheric gases. Despite its relatively low concentration, CO2 plays a crucial role in supporting and sustaining life on our planet. Here are some of the benefits of CO2 to all life forms on Earth:

Photosynthesis: Even though CO2 is a trace gas, it is an essential ingredient for photosynthesis—the process by which plants convert sunlight into energy. Plants absorb CO2 through their stomata, small openings on their leaves, enabling them to produce glucose and release oxygen. This process not only fuels plant growth but also provides oxygen for other organisms to breathe.

Plant Growth: The limited availability of CO2 can be a growth-limiting factor for plants. Increased concentrations of atmospheric CO2 act as a natural fertilizer, enhancing photosynthesis and stimulating plant growth. This leads to increased crop yields, healthier forests, and more robust vegetation, thereby benefiting both human societies and ecosystems.

Food Production: The importance of CO2 extends to the agricultural sector. Higher levels of atmospheric CO2 can enhance crop productivity, improve water use efficiency, and increase the nutritional value of certain crops. These advantages contribute to global food security and help meet the needs of a growing population.

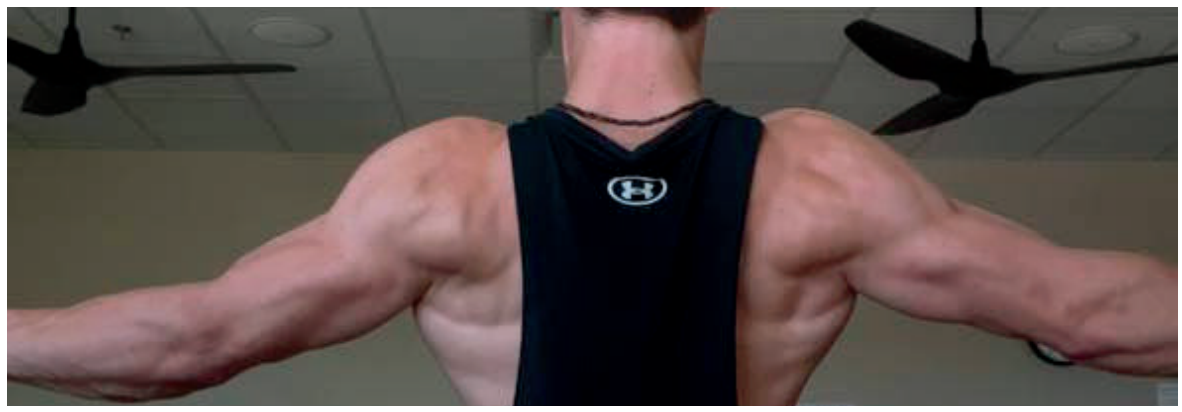
Biodiversity Support: Vibrant plant ecosystems, fueled by CO2, provide habitat and food sources for diverse animal species. By promoting plant growth, carbon dioxide indirectly supports the survival and thriving of numerous animal species, including insects, birds, and mammals, thereby preserving biodiversity.

Carbon Cycle: CO2 is a crucial component of the carbon cycle, which regulates the exchange of carbon between the atmosphere, oceans, and land. This cycle maintains a balance of carbon in various reservoirs and ensures the availability of carbon for biological processes, including photosynthesis and respiration.

So when you go out strolling in the beautiful natural abundance we have here in the valley, take a moment to appreciate this wonderous gas that makes up such a small part of our atmosphere, yet is essential to all life on earth.
Happy Summer! Happy Harvest!



SOCIAL MEDIA & POSITIVE INFLUENCES



In an age where information is available at our fingertips, it's an interesting notion that learning has become so polarized over the past few years.

If you were shopping for a new car and took time to learn about safety features, warranty, options, and any other detail about your car you'd be considered a smart shopper.

Recently however, such endeavors have been discouraged, stating 'doing your own research' is not viable or encouraged, and instead you should simply trust the experts. If you've purchased a car before, I believe most wouldn't walk onto the lot asking the salesmen what you should buy.

More often than not, learning about personal health and fitness has slipped into the world of 'misinformation' and as such as been discredited, cancelled, and otherwise targeted as taboo. In fact, even posting online about your recent diet or fitness regime could end up with warning banners plastered beneath. It's precisely why we're so excited to see a massive uptake with youth flocking to the community center gym. We were fortunate to run into a local fitness hobbyist who had some wonderful thoughts on why the world of fitness has exploded.

"I started reading forums and just asking questions, going to the gym and observing, then just doing what worked."

We spoke with a Cowichan Highschool student who frequents the gym and has designed his own fitness routine from information he obtained online.

"You just have to start, eat what you know you should, and get active. Days you're motivated are a gift, it's dedication and commitment that get you to the finish line."

"There's so many videos online you can watch for proper form and the do's and don'ts, it really makes it easy to get started."

Throughout the conversation the young teen credited YouTube influencers for the inspiration, stating "there's a world of knowledge just waiting to be viewed". We found this so encouraging that youth are utilizing social media and online influencers to better themselves and gain knowledge for their hobbies and ultimately their health.

"It's been amazing, really. Lots of my friends have joined and there's new faces all the time. I really think fitness is becoming popular again. For awhile there people were almost making fun of fitness folks saying they had body image issues, I just wanted to be healthy!"

It does drive the question, who is demonizing online content as misinformation or perhaps even discouraging people from doing their own research? In an era where literally all information is made available to anyone who wishes to find it, some concerned community members think the internet should remain this way, others believe the government should step in to police content they don't wish to see. The days of 'just keep scrolling' appear to be under attack. At least for this local fitness hobbyist, he's happy that wasn't the case and he's free to learn and view unfiltered, at least for now.



LIGHTS FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, OR MONITORING ?



Guest Column

A while back, I noticed my streetlights had changed, from 2 warm orange-glow streetlights on the whole block to 1 cold LED white light every couple of houses on the block and beyond. I surmise they were installed under some "green" initiative, although I fail to see how replacing 2 lights with over 20 would be done for 'planetary wellbeing'.

When I called the municipality to ask what brand they were, this was the answer:
"I have spoken with the Buildings Manager regarding the LED Streetlights that were installed in your neighborhood. They are the NXT-Lite series LED streetlights and the black circular thing on top is a photocell (turns the lights on at night and off during the day). If you have any further questions, feel free to contact our office!"

I chuckled, yet my first thought was: that is the largest "photocell" I have ever seen!

While many continue to contemplate whether the notion of "Smart Cities" is a 'conspiracy theory', or 'a wonderful idea that should be ethically adopted in our region as soon as possible' (to save the planet?), many more dedicated evidence based researchers are vigorously trying to warn us of a potential 'dystopic future' that may be looming, if allowing ourselves to be connected and monitored 24/7 becomes our new collective reality.

Research reveals other countries have already 'turned on' many of these surveillance and monitoring systems, while at the same time, turning a deaf ear to legitimate citizen concerns, which are clearly backed by enormous amounts of scientific data and evidence!

Perhaps the person at North Cowichan didn't know the "black circular bit" on top is designed to serve as a receptacle for multiple monitoring devices, able to be placed there with a simple twist-on, tool-less feature? 'Options' in such devices allows for reporting to a central computer that not only dims or turns lights off or on, they are also capable of recording and monitoring vehicle and people movement, sound, air quality, emissions, speed and more.

To date, far too many aspects of this "end game" are unclear.

I have since learned B.C. Hydro has installed some of these same devices in my residential neighborhood also.

When one researches this brand of LED streetlights further, we read sentences such as:

"We offer a complete range of control and monitoring solutions";



"Automations allows for the generation of alarm or alerts to individual users or groups";
"Supports heat map analytics"; and
"Supports TALQ protocol for smart cities".

According to Simon Dunkley, Secretary General of the TALQ Consortium, the clear goal is to:

"make it easy for cities to connect any 'smart' device to their computer monitoring device, allowing the data produced to be stored, displayed and/or used with any/all other 'Smart City' processes or applications".

Not only can the lights 'talk' to each other, they have the capability to 'talk' with the smart meters on our homes, which in turn can then be linked to 'smart' appliances, and so on (otherwise widely known and referred to as the "Internet of Things",

...the 'brainchild' of big tech who have been investing billions of dollars for many years to bring this to fruition).

As concerns pertaining to data security, tracking and tracing, EMF electro-smog etc. have grown exponentially for so many millions of us around the world, citizens also have become increasingly aware: public consultations and even referenda, prior to implementation of these 'Open Smart Grid' protocols, not only are not being done, such concerns continue to be invisible or worse ··· by decision makers, who for the most part seem entirely unaware how relevant and seriously important it is for them to be addressed, indeed prioritized ... for the critically important part of the processes such dire concerns merit!

Meaningful opportunity for citizen involvement in decision-making processes, pertaining to these massive worldwide infrastructure initiatives, continues to be conspicuously absent in most communities ... across the board! While it's evident almost anything can be (and is being!) pushed through using the current "climate change" lens, when we reflect on how many esteemed scientists have spoken out passionately for decades about the negative environmental, health and other impacts of emf, it's rather astonishing municipalities throughout our very own CVRD, N.C. and Duncan appear to be going 'full speed ahead' installing thousands more of these harmful EMFR-transmitting products, with woefully inadequate involvement of residents who continue to demand their legitimate concerns be responsibly heard and acted upon!

What's even worse, as those who listen to Professor Barrie Trower's lecture can easily learn, all such technologies can easily be rendered safe! So why isn't that occurring and how can ordinary citizens help to ensure this happens?

Most of us are at least aware we shouldn't hold a cellular phone to our head*. Don't these critical concerns at least beg the question:

What scientific research or adequate due diligence, if any, have Municipal Council members and Regional District Board members done to properly inform themselves about the impacts thousands of such lights 'talking' to each other will have/are having in our communities already ... on birds, bees, trees, children, pregnant women, those already diagnosed and suffering with acute emf sensitivities, all living organisms!?

190 scientists UN member states and the World Health Organization (WHO) requesting they adopt more protective exposure guidelines for electromagnetic fields (EMF) and wireless technology in the face of increasing evidence of risk. These exposures are a rapidly growing form of environmental pollution worldwide.

Joel Moskowitz, PhD, University of California, Berkeley, says: "ICNIRP guidelines set exposure standards for high-intensity, short-term, tissue-heating thresholds. These do not protect us from the low-intensity, chronic exposures common today. Scientists are signing the appeal request that the UN and member nations protect the global human population and wildlife from EMF exposures."

Besides biological heath, mental health deserves responsible consideration as well, i.e., our continued unrestricted ability to move around the Valley for physical health pursuits without being contained! Not so very long ago, the notion of "Smart Cities" was called a conspiracy theory; now they are being touted on mainstream media as a "solution to a global crisis".

We can already see, in Oxford, England, how politicians and governments attempted to keep people in their 15 min cities through such monitoring technologies and how the citizens are passionately fighting back against such tyranny!

We have heard warnings about "climate lockdowns"; is it not incumbent upon us to ask: "How will more lockdowns be enforced in the future?"

We see technology and 'Smart Grids' (named specifically in the CVRD OCP) as the ultimate solution to monitoring citizens' movements; or perhaps use the emissions attachment as they attempt to entirely remove wood-burning, oil and gas as heating options for our houses? (As stated in the CVRD OCP : "Advocate to BC Assessments to collect and track primary and secondary heat sources including number of houses that have upgraded heat sources or have alternative energy and woodstoves.")

Or perhaps these are just implemented for environmental reasons, so one would think it would at least save money? According to the CVRD OCP, it does not.

If we ask, "do 15 min cities have merit if we look at the overall basic idea", we find:

- currently, 80% of North Cowichan residents commute to work, meaning, unless/until we create jobs within the bounds of such cities, folks must be free to continue to move around as usual?';

Would only some be burdened to 'stay within boundaries', while others outside these boundaries are excluded from the '15 min plan'?

Does any of this even matter? I say not, if we don't value being able to move about freely without such intrusive and unhealthy monitoring systems installed for innumerable 'reasons', such as:

- "More crime, we should install street cameras";
- "You have used up your carbon credits for the month";
- "Just monitoring emissions for your health" ··· and so on.

What can you do?

- Express your concerns to your local municipalities, towns and regional district directors;
- Attend local council meetings;
- Have meaningful conversations with others;
- Look at the data by doing your own research.

Without exaggeration, the health and ultimately the very survival of future generations and all living organisms is clearly at stake.

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CONTRASTING APPROACHES: THE ALBERTA PLAN VS. BRITISH COLUMBIA'S STRUGGLE WITH ADDICTION AND OVERDOSE CRISIS

The addiction and overdose crisis is an urgent issue that demands effective strategies to save lives and provide long-term support for individuals grappling with substance abuse.

In Canada, two provinces, Alberta and British Columbia, have adopted divergent approaches in addressing this crisis.

Alberta has implemented a comprehensive plan that emphasizes addiction recovery, immediate help through a single phone call, and a focus on long-term needs. On the other hand, British Columbia's approach, including the provision of "safe drugs," drug legalization, and harm reduction measures, has been plagued by a dramatic surge in overdose deaths.

This article aims to compare the success of the Alberta Plan with the challenges faced by British Columbia in tackling the addiction and overdose crises.

The Alberta Plan: Focusing on Addiction Recovery and Long-term Needs:

The Alberta Plan takes a proactive approach to addiction recovery by prioritizing treatment and support services. The plan places great emphasis on the importance of immediate help through a single phone call, ensuring a prompt response to individuals in need. By streamlining the process, Alberta has reduced barriers to accessing treatment, resulting in more people receiving the support they require.

Furthermore, the plan recognizes that addiction recovery is a long-term journey and strives to address the underlying factors contributing to substance abuse. This comprehensive approach has demonstrated promising results in reducing addiction rates and providing sustained support for individuals on their recovery path.

British Columbia: The Pitfalls of "Safe Drugs" and Drug Legalization:

British Columbia's approach to the addiction crisis has revolved around the concept of "safe drugs" and drug legalization. While harm reduction measures are essential in preventing overdose deaths, the overemphasis on providing safe drugs as a solution has yielded negative consequences. The policy effectively normalizes and accommodates drug use, rather than addressing the root causes of addiction. By adopting a stance of harm reduction alone, without a comprehensive approach to treatment and recovery, British Columbia has inadvertently perpetuated the cycle of addiction, resulting in a dramatic increase in overdose deaths. The focus on harm reduction without a simultaneous emphasis on treatment and recovery has proven to be ineffective and has further exacerbated the crisis.

In B.C.'s "harm reduction" model we also see multiple housing units being placed in areas without the community's support, that allow folks to do drugs within them. When over 70% of people die alone on their floor, BC now provides that floor, and deaths keep increasing.

Dramatic Increase in Overdose Deaths in British Columbia:

Despite the intentions behind British Columbia's strategy, the province has experienced a tragic upsurge in overdose fatalities. This surge is largely attributed to the availability of potent and unregulated substances on the black market.

The emphasis on "safe drugs" has failed to prevent overdoses and has instead fostered a false sense of security among users. The lack of focus on treatment and recovery has left individuals trapped in a cycle of drug dependence, leading to higher risks of overdose and loss of life.

The Unintended Consequences of "Safe Supply":

Another alarming aspect of British Columbia's approach is the unintended consequence of the "safe supply" policy. While the aim was to provide regulated and safer alternatives to illicit drugs, it has resulted in a significant diversion of these drugs into the hands of other individuals, including non-addicted individuals and even within school settings. Addicts often sell their safe supply to obtain stronger substances like fentanyl, which poses a greater risk of overdose and perpetuates the cycle of addiction. This unintended consequence raises serious concerns about the effectiveness of the "safe supply" approach in British Columbia and highlights the need for a more comprehensive strategy that addresses the root causes of addiction rather than solely focusing on harm reduction measures.

Lessons Learned and the Way Forward:

The Alberta Plan offers valuable insights into addressing addiction and overdose crises effectively. By prioritizing addiction recovery, immediate help, and long-term support, Alberta has created a framework that acknowledges the multifaceted nature of substance abuse and provides a comprehensive solution. British Columbia's experience serves as a cautionary tale

HOW ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION MIGHT SHAPE YOUR COMMUNITY?

If you've attended your local council meetings over the last 6-10 months you might have heard the term 'active transportation' come up more than once.

Despite the varied names for it, it's actually rather simple, you're the engine for transportation. While this does include vehicles such as e-bikes and scooters, for the most part active transportation simply means you're getting around without a traditional motor vehicle.

Thus we should soon see the rise in e-bikes, scooters, electric skateboards and everything in-between. Your local council is likely working hard right now to determine road upgrades for bike lanes as well as safety considerations and possibly even ride-sharing.

With all this focus on active transportation you might be asking, well where are they now? That's a wonderful question to ask, especially if you are often travelling along the roads and streets throughout the Cowichan Valley.

The reality is, less than 8% of residents currently use active transportation to complete their daily tasks. Aside from enjoying mountain views and wonderful forest trails, getting groceries, going to work, or attending your hobbies are seldom completed via e-bike or other active alternatives. So why the push?

The push for active transportation comes from your local Official Community Plan. Where a large portion of the emissions removal is done through cancelling the family vehicle. Vancouver Island has on average 155 days of rain per year, and a cold season from Nov-March. Making an ideal bicycle season just 7 months a year. When you factor weather as well as obstacles such as additional cargo, passengers, and distance concerns, it's unclear who will be travelling via bicycle so often.

Many residents are skeptical for the push on active transportation, especially since the Cowichan Valley is considered a community of communities. Distances such as Maple Bay, Crofton, even Chemanius would be too great to travel to the nearest grocery store. According to the 2016 Statistics Canada census, only 1% of Cowichan residents commuted to work by bicycle compared to 83% as a driver. 6-years later, the 2022 census shows still only 1% commute via bicycle. This leaves residents wondering if we're actually listening to voices of the locals or if we're stuck in this 'active' scheme to try and quantify a top-down agenda for emission targets.







The Vanishing Skylines: The Ominous Rise of Buildings and the Loss of Natural Beauty in Duncan, BC

Duncan, a charming city nestled in the heart of British Columbia, has long been cherished for its stunning landscapes, including breathtaking mountain views. However, the once-pristine skylines of this picturesque region are facing a formidable threat: the incessant construction of towering buildings that progressively obstruct the vistas that make this area so enchanting. The race for urban development has inadvertently resulted in the destruction of skylines, diminishing the harmony between man-made structures and the awe-inspiring natural wonders. This article explores the consequences of this unfortunate trend and delves into the specific case of Duncan, BC.

The Battle Between Progress and Preservation

As cities around the world strive for urban development and economic growth, the desire for taller and more imposing buildings has become increasingly pervasive. In the quest to erect architectural marvels, the consequences on skylines and the surrounding natural environment are often overlooked or undervalued. The loss of unobstructed views, such as mountains, rivers, or forests, contributes to the erosion of the balance between urban landscapes and the natural world.

Duncan's Mounting Challenge

Duncan, situated in the verdant Cowichan Valley, has long been cherished for its stunning vistas, where the majestic peaks of the Vancouver Island Mountains once served as a captivating backdrop. However, recent years have witnessed a surge in construction, leading to the proliferation of towering buildings that threaten to obscure these breathtaking panoramas.

The Impact on Residents and Tourism

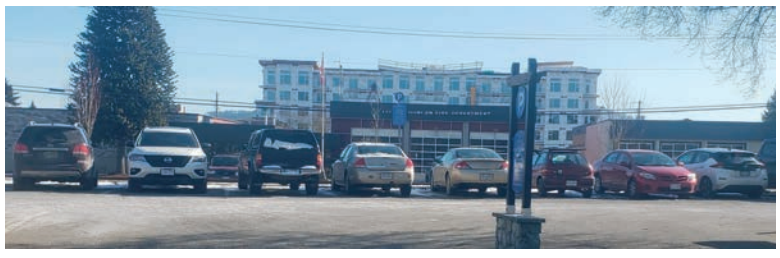
The encroachment of massive structures upon the skylines of Duncan has left a profound impact on both residents and visitors alike. The loss of unobstructed mountain views diminishes the sense of awe and wonder that the city's natural surroundings inspire. This loss not only affects the local population, but it also hampers the tourism industry, which thrives on the allure of pristine landscapes. As tourists seek solace in the beauty of Duncan's environment, the destruction of skylines risks alienating them, resulting in potential economic ramifications for the region.

Striking a Balance: The Importance of Urban Planning

While progress and development are essential components of a thriving community, they must be balanced with the preservation of natural beauty and the protection of skylines. Thoughtful urban planning, taking into account the impact on the visual landscape, is crucial for sustainable growth. By implementing regulations that limit building heights, encourage green spaces, and preserve key viewpoints, cities like Duncan can strike a harmonious balance between progress and preservation.

Community Involvement and Conservation Efforts

Preserving the skylines and the overall aesthetics of a city requires a collaborative effort between local authorities, developers, and community members. Engaging the public in decision-making processes, such as land use planning, can lead to the development of sustainable strategies that prioritize the conservation of scenic vistas. Encouraging responsible development practices, such as incorporating rooftop gardens, green roofs, and setbacks, can help mitigate the negative impact on skylines.





The gradual destruction of skylines, exemplified by the unfortunate situation unfolding in Duncan, BC, serves as a poignant reminder of the need for balanced and sustainable urban development. The race for taller buildings should not come at the expense of the natural beauty that surrounds us. By embracing responsible urban planning, fostering community involvement, and incorporating conservation efforts, we can preserve the integrity of skylines and protect the visual harmony between our man-made structures and the awe-inspiring wonders of the natural world. Only through such collective action can we ensure a future where progress coexists harmoniously with the preservation of our planet's most remarkable vistas.

GOT A HOT TIP FOR A STORY? LEAVE A MESSAGE AT 778-400-7667
RANT/RAVES AND LETTERS: EDITOR@WWIND.CA

Tues.Wed.Thurs. 12- 3:00



LIFE ON WHEELS

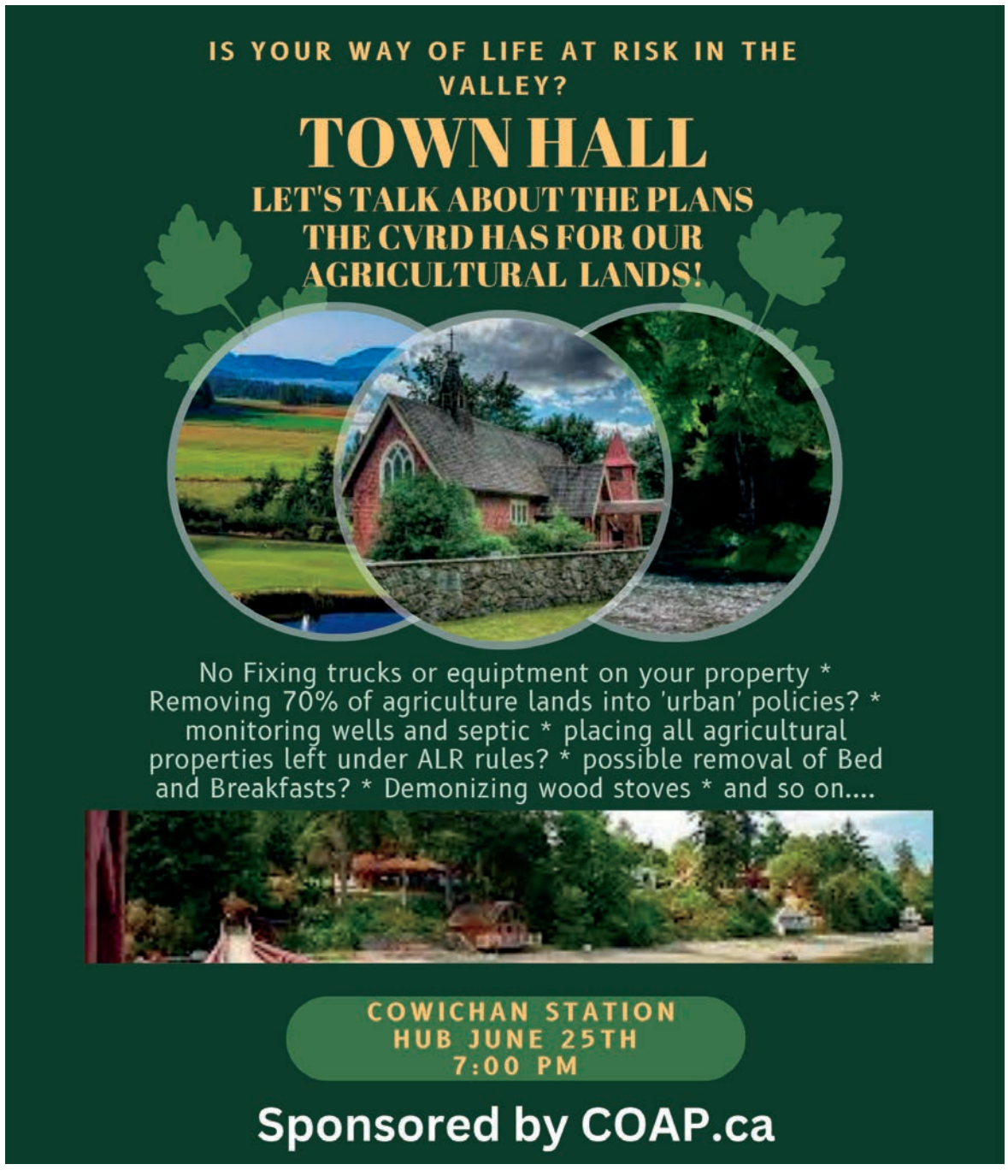
Life On Wheels is volunteer run and led Initiative in the Cowichan Valley .

Donation Drive May - Dec 2023. Help us continue our work and grow our detox iniative.
Donations graciously accepted

Making connections with people to move them forward in hope, faith and love.
We provide necessities for living on the street, first aid, education on healthy living, etc., options for detox and rehab.

250-706-2428

"a little help goes a long way"



Letters to the editor

Your parents can read the heading

Shawnigan Water Woes

Shawnigan lake became worldwide news in 2015 for our communities fight to stop a provincial Liberal Government approved Contaminated soil dump from receiving 5 million tonnes of soil over 50 years. On November 9th, 2015, residents began blocking truckloads of contaminated soil from entering the pit. My friend Carolyn Dowell and I were on the front line virtually every day.

Injunctions were issued and SLAPP suits were threatened. The community, stood together to say no and spent the winter blocking trucks and fundraising for legal challenges.

In Feb 2017, after receiving 105,000 tones of toxic soil from Port moody, DND Esquimalt and other contaminated sites, the permit was pulled but the dumpsite remains above our watershed.

Our community watershed group, The Shawnigan Basin Society held strategy meetings and supported volunteers who were testing the water.
Tax function 488 was designed to fund water stewardship. Unfortunately, 5 years ago, CVRD Area B Director, Sierra Acton decided to reduce the funding to zero. Shawnigan lake is at risk. The pit has never stopped leaking and the trees downstream are dying.

"Why is the CVRD afraid to test the water?"

Why is the cvrd funding the Cowichan watershed board when they have no tax function and Shawnigan does?

Director Acton refuses to talk to SBS and is determined to shut the Basin Society down. It seems personal.

SBS has done everything to get funding restored and begin testing again...we need to get a baseline now to compare in the future.

What do you do when your local govt ignores you? you get louder.
It's about to get loud Director Acton.
My Granny said
"If you want to change the world, start in your own backyard with your local politicians".

The Basin Society is surviving on donations and bottle drives. Never in my wildest dreams did I think I would be fighting with my local representative to do the right and moral thing and restore the tax function so we can test our water and create solutions. We need to clean the contaminants flowing downhill with biochar/charcoal and oyster mushrooms. That's a future article.
Shemama Bell-Irving

Dear Mr. Dix, Premier David Eby and MLA Michele Babchuk:

I am very concerned about the status of health care in this province of BC. On Nov. 24th 2022 you quietly stabbed health care in the back in the form of Bill 36, which was rushed through the approval process with little notice and no opportunity for the 24 professions to discuss or debate, as it received royal assent on the same day.

I am told the NDP government invoked closure at clause 233, leaving more than 400 clauses unread and without proper scrutiny. This is an egregious lack of transparency, no matter which way you look at it. I am writing to you today to reverse this piece of legislature and give opportunity for proper debate and discussion amongst the professions.

▪ I do NOT trust this government to appoint any of the Six Proposed Colleges without having the appropriate professionals on each board. I do NOT trust that this government will make decisions in the best interest of my health. Keep in mind the recent debacles with flu shot supply and withholding information about COVID deaths in children.

▪ I do NOT feel safe talking to my doctor knowing that the government could seize and copy my clinical records at any time! The government does not have access to my private medical records now. Apparently, my legal right to confidentiality, a sacred principle upheld by physicians for generations, is relative in the province of B.C.

▪ I do NOT trust government appointees being able to impose arbitrary conditions of licensure, restrictions on the ability to practice, determine who has good character and who does not, and mandate medical interventions including vaccinations of any kind.

▪ The health minister will have overreaching power in the form of a discipline tribunal, but what will warrant disciplinary action? Could being critical of the government or the College bring reprisals on well-intentioned health-care professionals?

▪ I do NOT want my government, or my doctor (or any other health-care professional), making decisions about my health care. After all, according to Bill 36, the government will have the power through the courts to compel a doctor or other health professional to comply with government direction. Should this not be an informed discussion between a patient and their health-care professional? Forgive me for not seeing where the government enters into the therapeutic relationship!

HealthCare is not a practice of "one size fits all." The health care that I want is individualized to my needs not what the government thinks I need.

Bill 36 compromises my right to confidentiality, and it creates a climate of suspicion and mistrust between the government and my health-care professionals. The government has left it open to new regulations to be added to this bill without notice. Many of the terms in Bill 36 are not properly defined. I do NOT agree that the government defines what the term "misleading" means.

Even now, I know of doctors and other health care professionals considering licensure in other provinces as a "backup plan," in case the current government's need to control and micromanage health care means they can no longer practice in B.C. How is this going to address the healthcare crisis we now have in BC?

"Mr. Dix et al: will you listen to the united voices of BC citizens and the health-care professionals standing united against Bill 36?"

Please do what is right and reverse this egregious Bill 36 and open it up to further discussion and debate by all parties involved.

(Citizens who cherish their Charter right to bodily autonomy, not to mention their Charter freedom of conscience, would be well-served to read Bill 36 and contact their elected Member of the Legislative Assembly voicing your concerns.)

Sincerely,
Dr, Ingrid Pincott
For more information visit :
CSSEM.org/bill36





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What is the OCP, and why should you care?

I first heard mention of the new Official Community Plan mid 2022. I was curious and decided to educate myself... how would it affect my life, as a member of the Cowichan Community? I downloaded/printed the several hundred page draft available from the CVRD website and set about the arduous task of reading through it, to find out what plans they had in store for us.

At first glance it appears to a thoughtful and fairly innocuous piece, full of wonderful environmental plans and warm and fuzzy keywords such as "equity" and "engagement" (with the public) and "support, advocate and encourage" etc. However, if one takes a deeper dive and gives closer inspection to the implication these words have when presented within the context of this plan, and if one takes the time to read all they are proposing, there is real cause for alarm and numerous obvious red flags to note throughout this document.

Here are just a few examples of said "red flags":

Woodstoves- intention is to phase out woodstoves (and natural gas) and "advocate" for B.C Assessment to register(track) all homes currently using one.

Septic systems-ensure individual sewerage systems meet the new 2022 Septic Guidelines and standards (what does this mean for systems built before 2022? Fail? Mandated replacement and fines for those who don't comply?)

Water Wells- intention to install meters across the region, including our private older existing wells. (What do they intend to do with the data collected from these meters? Why do they intend on monitoring our water usage?)

Cont. next page ....

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[We were assured by the presenter of "Plan your Cowichan Ideas Fair" that none of these plans would apply to rural folk.... but considering we are all, areas ABCDEFGH and I, now to be lumped into this "one-size-fits-all" umbrella plan, and there's no mention of any compromise or exceptions for any residences in any areas, I find it difficult to have much confidence in the verbal assurances of a paid presenter who is not from the valley and has nothing personal at stake.]

Metrics- the introduction of Metrics, a measurable (therefor billable) way to track/collect and share our usages, footprints, carbon emissions, our livestock and farming practices (at this point it's only aimed at the larger farms, but the plan states their intention to also include hobby farms) our vehicle usage, our water use etc. etc.

Existing Residential housing Retrofits- The plan proposes to "Advocate to the Province for authority to regulate building emissions" meaning YOU will be "regulated" to have a very expensive retrofit done to your existing home. This will likely only be a voluntary action until the federal Gov. has completed their $10 million project for training 2,000 new "energy advisors" to go door to door to do emissions audits on residences. There are several references to residential retrofits in this plan. According to the 2030-2050 agenda, all buildings will be mandated to have 45% less emissions by 2030 and be Net zero emissions by 2050

The wording of many proposals appears intentionally vague, in a manner intended to not cause questions or alarm, but to ensure they are inserted into the plan, and once they have officially voted in the OCP they may proceed to refine and mandate as they so choose to. It's a case of "buyer beware", and I'm certainly not interested in the deal until we can see all the missing fine print in this contract.

The most disturbing aspect of this "Community Plan" is the fact that it wasn't written by anyone in our community. Tax paying residents did not write it, our local directors, planners, mayors and other elected officials and staff didn't write it.... nor did any members in the next level of provincial government. I'd hazard a guess that none of the authors of this plan have ever set foot on our island, The only local "community engagement" sessions held by the CVRD were held in 2020, during the ongoing "covid crisis", and there were only 400 participants. This is from an area which is home to 80,000 residents, who will ALL be impacted by this plan. Most of us who have become familiarized with it, only found out about it in 2022...when we were presented with the already completed first draft. We were invited to come to presentations of this draft to have our say and give our input. Obviously, this was just done to make us feel like we had a say, not to actually hear our concerns and suggestions because when the next draft was presented it was basically identical to the first, less wordy,less pages but the same proposals we'd raised our concerns over.

This OCP was designed from the same model being used in every community plan in every member country of the U.N. This is not a local plan... it is a global plan, written to serve the 2030-2050 agenda of global unelected "leaders "and there are plenty of references pointing to this throughout the plan. (For some context on the global connection, here is a direct quote from the W.E.F website "in 2019 the WEF and the UN formed a partnership to accelerate the implementation of the 2030-2050 agenda...".) The WEF and the UN are joined at the hip, therefore the references to 2030-2050 emissions goals in our plan have been handed down directly from these entities.

Each community is given the same template, then the names of local communities and their specific development area plans, places of interest, coastlines, local flora and fauna etc. are incorporated into the local drafts to make it appear it was conceived locally. They are all structured around the 2030-2050 emissions agenda. By 2030 there will be 45% less cars on the road (and anything else powered by petroleum products...farm equipment, chainsaws, boats, lawnmowers.) There will be 45% less fertilizers in agriculture (which means 45% less food available) and every household will have to pay 45% of their home retrofit. (At current prices45% of the cost will be approximately $80,000)

I believe this draft was already approved and decided upon before it was ever presented to the public, and will undoubtedly be voted in by the majority, if not all, of our CVRD directors if we don't use our collective voices to loudly reject it. Once it's voted in, we'll be stuck with it and will bear the burden of the consequences, and none of the area directors that I am aware of seem to recognize that there are real issues/dangers in this plan, nor the fact that they too will be impacted by the outcomes.

In this article I have only touched on a few of the many questionable proposals and alarming aspects within this draft. I would strongly urge everyone in the 9 Areas to take a close look at this CVRD OCP, and read between the lines, if for nothing else but to prepare yourselves for the massive increasing costs -property tax/carbon taxes/retrofits etc. the amount of government overreach and control it will introduce into our and our children's lives and realistically, our future ability to be able to continue to afford to live in our homes and properties.

K. Dodd Cobble Hill



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