

**To: OAK BAY COMMUNITY CLIMATE ACTION
WORKING GROUP**

From: Steve Bowker

January 18, 2020

Before Oak Bay reinvents the wheel, someone in the Group should be assigned the task of reading and reporting on what is already available in the following BC Online Libraries:

Healthy Community Resources

http://bchealthycommunities.ca/news_item/960/view

BC's Climate Action Toolkit - resources and guides

https://www.toolkit.bc.ca/resource_library

To: Oak Bay Climate Change Action Working Group Feb 4, 2020
From: Stephen Bowker Oak Bay,
Re: Feedback on the document: Climate Action Summary Recommendations

1. There is no mention of the significant effects of Oak Bay's current major demographic change.
 - a) 34.3% (6,200) Oak Bayers are baby boomers (ages 54-73) and are retiring en masse.
 - b) In 10 years they will begin dying en masse leaving widows living in existing homes, for an estimated reduction in population of 3,000 over 20 years.
 - c) Retirement and widowhood brings significant lifestyle changes, including reduction in consumption, major drop in auto commuting, and a reduction of the number of autos per household.
 - d) Due to this retirement/widowhood boom, if Oak Bay were to remain otherwise unchanged (ie: no loss of mature trees, no net new building projects, and no increase in density) then she would beat Kyoto goals for the next twenty years.
 - e) In other words, Oak Bay doesn't "have" to do anything for 'global warming' except minimize waste.

2. Tree plantings are mentioned in page 3's Future Vision. There needs to be more emphasis on trees and the urban forest.
 - a) Food production + tree plantings => planting fruit and nut trees (non native species)
 - b) Less irrigation + trees => porous paved surfaces around trees (there are new porous paving materials for roads and parking lots). This also applies to the page 3 point 'improve rainwater management'.
 - c) Burning already dead plant (tree) fibre is carbon neutral when compared to the natural disintegration of the fibre. Does this mean that efficient 'fibre' stoves should be encouraged for heating?
 - d) Sober second thought (restrictions) on the destruction of ANY mature tree.
 - i. It takes 40 years to grow a tree, but only 1 hour to destroy it.
 - ii. It takes 40 saplings to immediately replace the benefits of one destroyed mature tree.
 - iii. Eg: Change foundation plans to match the existing lot, rather than change the lot (blasting, clear cutting) to allow the foundation plans.

3. Boulevard food production is mentioned in page 3's Future Vision.
 - a) See above point about fruit and nut trees. Add vines and berry bushes.
 - b) Native species and food production are almost mutually exclusive terms.
 - c) A major exception is dulse. Dulse harvesting will require non polluted foreshores and some form of permit control. This also applies to the page 3 point 'improve waterfront'.
 - d) Boulevard gardens were in common use for WWI and WWII victory gardens.
 - e) Victory gardens were enabled with bylaws forbidding loose grazing animals (still in place), and the active butchering of all deer (no longer in place).

4. Energy Independence is mentioned in page 3's Future Vision.
 - a) Other than the Elgin yard, subsequent notes are all about energy reduction rather than energy generation.
 - b) Oak Bay is in the Olympic rain shadow and has the highest number of sunlight hours on the BC coast. Quimper St is the Canadian street with the most number of frost free days.
 - c) Encourage solar roofs and walls which either feed household battery packs, or the Hydro grid.

5. Gentle diverse density is mentioned in page 3's Future Vision.
 - a) Recommend the replacement of the term 'Gentle' with 'Transit Oriented'.
 - b) In Europe the planning panacea of 'Gentle Density' means "add low rise multifamily apartments above and around existing shopping precincts on existing transit routes".
Townhouses are sometimes included in the definition as a (less desirable) form of multifamily.
 - c) In BC over the last 20 years the Urban Development Institute (a powerful developer lobby group) has changed the meaning of Gentle to include two other distinct planning terms - 'Invisible Density' (adding suites inside existing houses) and 'Hidden Density' (adding suites in ancillary buildings behind existing houses) – regardless of whether they are in suburban neighbourhoods or around shopping precincts.
 - d) Adding invisible and hidden density in suburban neighbourhoods increases auto use, which should be avoided.
 - e) Warning: the definition of 'Transit Oriented' does not stipulate 'low rise' as the European 'Gentle' does, so that stipulation may need to be added.

6. Waste reduction is mentioned in page 3's Future Vision.
 - a) David Attenborough's #1 priority suggestion for both 'global warming' and 'global poisoning' is "do not waste", so waste needs more emphasis and financial disincentives.
 - b) Eg: The problem with raw sewage entering the ocean is not the pooh (which provides fish food in a warming ocean with a growing scarcity of fish food), but everything else, especially chemicals such as bleach. 30,000 CRD homes are on septic fields and those residents follow simple rules to keep their septic fields healthy (so healthy that extracts from septic tanks are turned into fertilizer). Those simple rules should be followed by everyone.
 - c) Eg: Sealing houses from air leaks (federal code) creates sick homes in damp climates, which then must be wastefully corrected.
 - d) Eg: In the USA, manufactured wooden studs incorporate insulation (studs are a heat waste in a wall equivalent to windows). These are not yet in use in Oak Bay
 - e) Eg: Designer features imported from US sun-belt developers such as 10 and 12 foot ceilings are hugely wasteful in cooler climates.
 - f) Eg: Glass walls are hugely wasteful in cooler climates, especially where buildings are shaded by an urban forest.
 - g) Eg: Replacing small, efficient, existing, entry level houses / affordable rental houses with new, large, costly, designer houses is the most wasteful practice in Oak Bay.

7. There is no mention of Blasting.
 - a) Blasting directly releases massive quantities of greenhouse gasses under pressure.
 - b) Trucking blast rock away is a waste of fuel.
 - c) Introduce a GHG compensating policy
 - d) Eg: for each ton of blast rock removed, one ten foot high tree must be planted in the neighbourhood and be nurtured for 5 years.

8. Reduce overall vehicle parking is mentioned in summary recommendations (page 5)
 - a) By vehicle you must mean personal autos (cars, pickups and vans) rather than bikes, ebikes, low speed electric vehicles, and service vehicles.
 - b) If suburban neighbourhoods increase density via 'invisible' and 'hidden' suites, then the number of autos in those neighbourhoods will increase, so overall parking will have to increase.

- c) The only way that reducing vehicle parking forces multifamily occupants to reduce their number of personal autos, is if they are not allowed street parking (ie: by permit only).
 - d) Reduced vehicle parking significantly effects retail businesses, especially those catering to clients from outside Oak Bay.
 - e) Rather than limit parking in an attempt to curb the number of personal autos in a household, why not directly limit the number of personal autos registered via MVB to each Oak Bay address.
9. E-bikes are mentioned in summary recommendations (page 5)
- a) Caution: 'leave anywhere' bike rental schemes have failed everywhere in the world.
 - b) Caution: In Europe the new prevalence of E-bike commuters is causing towns to reconsider last century's bike solutions (such as separate bike lanes).
 - c) The difference is that pedal bikes cruise at 10-15kph, whereas e-bikes cruise at 20-25kph.
 - d) The new trend is to reduce speed limits on quiet residential streets, and on congested 'high pedestrian' urban streets so that e-bikes can join the normal traffic flow.
 - e) Caution: In China the new trend in electric vehicles is sub-sub-compact low speed electric vehicles. In other words short, narrow 4 wheel e-bikes which are enclosed against the weather and seat a driver and one adult (or two children).
 - f) Such vehicles are classed as bikes and therefore are not only cheap to buy/run, but are useful, weather resistant, multi person, not registered, and not insured.
 - g) They are replacing the old 50cc scooters which filled the role of a family's 'second vehicle' for local errands like picking the kids up from school.
 - h) Suggestion: If Oak Bay were to reduce speed limits to 25 or 30 kph except where posted, and encourage low speed electric vehicles, then households would have a viable alternative to a 'second auto'.
10. Hiring a climate coordinator is mentioned in summary recommendations (page 5)
- a) The CRD has a climate coordinator so there is no need for Oak Bay to have one.
 - b) An alternative is to approach U.Vic (which has 10 academics from 10 research areas assigned to provide information about Global Warming) to provide guidance and coordination to Oak Bay. They may even assign students to help Oak Bay do their environmental planning and impact analysis.
11. In general the document left me with the feeling that Oak Bay was re-inventing the wheel.
- a) EG: the Oak Bay Climate Change Task Force Final Report (2008) covered most of these topics, and simply needed to be updated regarding advances such as LED lighting, Electric Vehicles, Solar power, etc.
 - b) EG: Healthy Community Resources library contains guides for this kind of planning. http://bchealthycommunities.ca/news_item/960/view
 - c) EG: theBC's Climate Action Toolkit library contains guides and resources for this kind of planning. https://www.toolkit.bc.ca/resource_library
 - d) The document seemed to have too much input from people who had a vested interest in development, and not enough from the public, environmentalists, or climate experts.
12. The 'Climate Change' name of the group and the project is problematic and may eventually discredit the effort.

- a) Rename it 'Greenhouse Gas' or 'Global Warming'.
- b) For almost all of the past 2.6 million years (Quaternary Period), Oak Bay has been covered by an ice sheet.
- c) The current 'interglacial' climate trend of 'Global Warming' began with the retreat of the latest ice sheet starting about 14,000 years ago. Except for a few century-long cooling periods (which were disastrous for humans), warming has been continuous and has nurtured humans. All soil in Oak Bay is less than 10,000 years old.
- d) For there to be 'Climate Change' the current trend must end and a new one begin. In other words, the end to 'Global Warming' and the beginning of 'Global Cooling' leading either to another mini-ice age (such as the dark ages disaster), or to Oak Bay being again covered by an ice sheet for about 120,000 years.
- e) 'Global Warming' is actually 'Climate Continuance'.

THE END