

## METRO VANCOUVER FUTURE OF THE REGION SUSTAINABILITY DIALOGUES

### *SHAPING REGIONAL PROSPERITY AND COMPETITIVENESS*

October 16, 2012, NORTH SHORE

The Future of the Region Sustainability Dialogues are a series of discussions intended to assist decision makers shape the future of the region by inviting a range of views that challenge conventional wisdom and stimulate fresh thought on regional issues. The sessions explore topics such as housing, industry, labour and immigration, drugs and crime, the regional economy, transportation, energy and agriculture. The “issues summary notes,” below, provide an overview of unique points raised in the October 16, 2012, dialogue on regional prosperity. Summary notes from each regional dialogue and related board reports are available on the Metro Vancouver website [www.metrovancouver.org](http://www.metrovancouver.org).

## Issues Summary Notes

### ABOUT THE TOPIC:

#### SHAPING REGIONAL PROSPERITY AND COMPETITIVENESS

- We are here to discuss the regional economy and how we might influence and ensure the continued prosperity and competitiveness of this region.
  - We will hear about economic drivers, how to leverage assets and how to overcome puzzling situations and challenges.
  - We will consider the future of jobs in the region, and the role of regional affordability. How do we keep and attract talent, and provide somewhere to live?
- These are giant issues, and we want to know how they affect whether we can prosper and maintain a competitive edge in the global economy.

### THE DIALOGUE

#### ECONOMIC INFRASTRUCTURE

##### 1.0 Context

##### 1.1 A social planner’s perspective on economic prosperity

- It may seem strange to have a social planner talking about the economy, but it’s symbolic of our understanding that a thriving, vibrant region requires all pieces working together.
  - At the end of the day, [economic prosperity] is about the quality of life and wellbeing that we can provide our citizens.
  - There are three key investments needed in the economic infrastructure in the region: investment in jobs, investment in education and investment in housing.

##### 1.2 We need well-paid jobs so people can afford a middle-class lifestyle

- The quality and nature of the jobs that we are creating will be important for the future.
  - The Occupy movement started to draw attention to our vanishing middle class—we are no longer feeling pressures just at the low end of the income distribution.



- People are feeling more strain around increasing costs in all areas: housing, transportation and food.
- If we don't make the investments that will create good-paying jobs, we'll feel more and more of that pressure on the low- to moderate-income households.

### **1.3 Making sure we value more than just money**

- I get a sense in the Lower Mainland that money is our god, and we are forgetting that there are other important issues and that human beings are important. The leases and real estate keep going up.

## **2.0 Economic development strategies**

### **2.1 Most economic development strategies are doomed to fail**

- I have trepidation about a dialogue on sustainable development, because I think it will lead to strategy for sustainable development—and I have a lot expertise in poking pins into such strategies. I'm not an economist, but I hang around with economists.

### **2.2 Development strategies in Atlantic Canada have failed**

- I spent about 30 years in Atlantic Canada, which is the home of development strategies. We had ERDA, ARDA, DREE, DRY, FRED, ADA—a whole alphabet soup.
  - By and large, they all had some short-term successes but collected some serious long-term problems, where the whole economy of that region became geared to going for the government grant rather than going after the customer.

### **2.3 The few development strategies that worked were tightly controlled under strong leadership**

- Not every development strategy is doomed to fail. I have come across a couple exceptions, but, in general, it's not optimistic.
- One example was the impressive success of Singapore, though I challenge anybody to even think about implementing the kind of micromanagement that Lee Kuan Yew imposed.
- The other example was Frank McKenna in New Brunswick.
  - If McKenna had a strategy with a name, or if he had it all written down in a booklet, I don't know or remember what it was.
  - But I do remember the results, and I remember the laser-like focus that permeated every aspect of his government when it came to development.
  - [I have a] story about when he "stole" the UPS call centre from B.C., which enraged Glen Clark who was premier at the time. The UPS president of the day confirms that he was doing blue-sky stuff with his staff at about 8:00 p.m., and New Brunswick came up. He was very sceptical that that would be a place of interest, but there was a well advertised number, 1-800-Mckenna, to get information. He dialled it, expecting to get a message and hoping to hear back in the morning. Frank McKenna, who was working late at his office, personally answered the telephone at 8:00 at night, and UPS went to New Brunswick. But McKenna's development strategy fell apart quickly when he left office.

### **2.4 Sufficiently strong leadership and co-operation among municipalities is unlikely**

- I'm not optimistic that a formal strategy for this region will work.
  - First, I don't see [the right] kind of leadership in the woodwork. Maybe it's there in some of the municipalities but it doesn't coalesce into regional leadership.

- If [such leadership] ever [emerges], I can't imagine 21 or 22 municipalities marching in lockstep behind that leader. It just won't happen.

### **3.0 Focusing on fundamentals that support economic development**

- [Even though a regional economic development strategy is unlikely to work], there are a few ducks that the region can and should get into a row if we want to grow.
- First and foremost, governments at every level should forget about picking up winners and losers, or, worse yet, propping up losers with subsidies. That is a formula for failure. It's been tried time and time again.
- The trick is to focus instead on the fundamentals. As Louis Pasteur famously said, "Fortune favours the prepared mind"—or, to stretch it, the prepared municipality.

#### **3.1 Reducing red tape**

- Among the fundamentals that can be controlled, are minimal and manageable red tape, a competent and responsive bureaucracy, commonsense dispute resolution, one-stop permitting—all that kind of thing.
  - Don't give away the farm completely but put speed and certainty into the process of approving or turning things down.

#### **3.2 Intelligent tax policy**

- [Another fundamental] is intelligent and fair tax burdens, with tax policies that pay at least as much attention to the nature of the taxation as to the level.

#### **3.3 Affordable, practical education**

- A solid, practical and affordable education is needed for the labour force and potential pool of workers in the community.

#### **3.4 Affordable market housing**

- Affordable housing [must be available].
  - By that, I don't mean spending gazillions on some form of subsidized housing.
  - The only thing that will work is housing policies that allow the market to bring home prices down from the stratosphere to the level of reality.

### **4.0 Getting things done without a co-ordinated regional strategy**

- If co-ordinated strategies won't work, how will we get stuff done?

#### **4.1 Working with 22 different municipalities presents challenges and opportunities**

- I'm not optimistic [about getting things done because] there are huge problems in having 22 municipalities.
  - [Metro Vancouver is] a quasi-fourth level of government that is not quite fish nor fowl, and I don't favour instituting deeper levels of a fourth level of government.
  - I do favour a regional approach to some services, which Metro Vancouver provides.
  - I like the idea of competing jurisdictions with competing policies on amenities, housing and so on.
  - But I don't like that the separate municipalities can't get their act together on overall development. They often, despite formal agreements in some cases, work at cross purposes to each other, [resulting in] scattered transit and inaccessible office parks.
  - I don't have a better idea, but I see inherent challenges in the way this region is laid out and hope smarter people than me can deal with them.

- Leadership and stewardship are crucial: doing by example good things that work, that other municipalities can see and then follow.
  - One of the advantages of having multiple municipalities is that you get competition going.

#### **4.2 Incremental solutions through partnerships among universities, businesses and local government**

- It may not be possible to create a complete, comprehensive plan, but many incremental solutions can be put into place through the kinds of partnerships that the region has [already] started working on.
  - We can tie the universities, the business community and local government together and look at what is needed for growth that creates a shared prosperity, which is what we really want.
  - I see potential in the areas of jobs, housing and education.
  - There would never be a complete plan, but there are many innovative pieces that we can do that would add to quality of life.

#### **4.3 Metro Vancouver’s municipalities have been co-operating successfully for decades to create a livable region**

- There are decades, now, of co-operation between our municipalities.
  - It doesn’t always work, but it’s worked awfully well for developing one of the most livable regions in the world.
  - The issue with our region and the municipalities is a challenge, and it’s [also] a unique situation.

#### **4.4 The new Regional Growth Strategy provides stronger direction on industrial lands and the location of densification**

- [Metro Vancouver’s] new Regional Growth Strategy is more directive.
  - It restricts people from taking industrial or employment lands and making them residential.
  - It is more directive about where density goes into growth centres.
  - There is still municipal discretion, but [the new strategy] will be helpful.

#### **4.5 Finding a way to fund transit will help economic development**

- To me, the biggest [problem from a co-ordinated regional planning point of view] is that we haven’t found a way to fund transit.
  - That’s the biggest obstacle to growing in a sustainable way. We desperately need to find a solution.
  - That will help economic development. It will help lay the groundwork for an efficient, organized urban system that actually works.
  - No matter how dense or complete you make communities, if they are not supported with transit, [the urban system and its economy] just won’t work in the future.

### **5.0 Complete communities**

#### **5.1 Sustainable economic development means complete communities**

- I have worked for the City of North Vancouver for 26 years, and for me, the big thing at the local level is to think about building complete communities.
  - I’ve been involved in a variety of economic development issues, development processing and business ventures.

- [We need to think about complete communities] because it's a synergy of things that we are trying to achieve.
- We need to be thinking about environmental, social and economic concerns. As soon as the economy isn't working, nobody cares about the environment anymore. When things are going well, you're happy to spend some money on environmental and social issues, but as soon as [there is talk of] closing plants, [that changes].
- So the idea is to balance those three efforts. It's the classic three-legged sustainability stool concept, which is a bit tired but valid.

## **5.2 Complete communities reduce the need for transportation**

- Complete communities reduce transportation demand, which is something that people don't necessarily realize.
  - If you put people near their jobs or give them opportunities to live and work in [the same area], suddenly you don't have a huge transportation infrastructure to fund. The best transit system is one where you are walking to work.
- So a plan for getting people around ought to start with the question, how do you put things together in a such a way that our subregions—the regional town centres—can thrive and people don't have to get transported around the region all the time.
  - That helps bring the cost of living down, because the cost of transportation goes down. So it's helping with affordability.
  - Significantly, it also brings down greenhouse gas emissions. We all have lived with the great drought here for the last couple of months, [so we know] greenhouse gas emissions are a problem. Metro Vancouver is tasked as we all are with getting our emissions down.
- The complete community concept includes diversity of housing, a variety of uses [land], and then connecting [everything] with good transportation. That includes walking, cycling and other alternative transportation options.

## **5.3 Complete communities have a diversified and stable tax base**

- By having a balanced, complete community, you also have a more diversified and stable tax base.
  - You're not just a residential community or a single-industry community.
  - We need to work toward that throughout the region.

## **5.4 Metro Vancouver's Regional Growth Strategy supports complete communities around the region**

- The new Regional Growth Strategy tries to [encourage complete communities throughout the region]. It takes us to 2041 and looks to create and reinforce these [town] centres around the region. It's important for us to think about those.

## **6.0 The role of municipalities in supporting the economy**

### **6.1 Municipalities control what you can build where**

- At the municipal level, we don't think much about the economic side—it happens out there. [But we are subject to] market forces and we're definitely players in [the economy], and especially in the housing market.
  - We have levers that control what you can build and where you can build it, and how dense it is, which results in how expensive it is.

## **6.2 What can local governments do to create jobs?**

- What can local and regional governments do to create jobs within their jurisdiction? What kinds of tools, options and opportunities can they leverage in light of the growing income gap and the changing world economy?
  - I saw a provincial government ad aimed at people in the Lower Mainland, trying to entice them to move up north where we have a flourishing economy.
  - What options do local and regional governments have to create jobs as an income source, as opposed to reducing costs of those jurisdictions?

## **6.3 Land use as a municipal planning tool for jobs**

- The primary tool of municipalities is land use. Municipalities don't actually physically create jobs.
- Businesses need a place to go. If you don't have office space in your town centres, there's no place for jobs to arise.
  - You need to find some way to create the incentive for developers to build that, because the market is simply not there to build it, especially once you get out of the downtown core.
  - The option of density bonusing to create the economic incentive for commercial development can at least set up some of the infrastructure for things to happen.

## **6.4 The example of preserving industrial land as part of the Park and Tilford development on the North Shore**

- Park and Tilford was an old distillery at Brooksbank. It went out of business and was sitting there as a dormant industrial site. There was a proposal to put a shopping centre on the whole thing.
  - Council, back in the 1980s, said, "No, we don't want to lose all that industrial land, but maybe half of that site could go commercial and half could find a good industrial user." And they found Lions Gate Studios.
  - So the fact that a shopping centre went on the south end of the site is the only reason why Lions Gate Studios exists on the North Shore, and that's been a huge economic engine for the whole North Shore.
  - That's an example of creative use of land use planning tools.

## **6.5 Municipalities must protect industrial land**

- You have to protect industrial land. Metro Vancouver has done a poor job of protecting industrial land over the years.
- North Vancouver City and District together have done the best job of anyone in Metro Vancouver in protecting industrial land. It's firmly entrenched in the OCP.

## **6.6 Local incentives for creating high-wage, high-tech jobs?**

- A federal government official who works in the Vancouver area in new business development told me that almost all of the people starting new businesses have home-based businesses, using their computer and the Internet.
  - That's interesting because there used to be a day when you might set up a factory rather than a website.
  - I link that to an article I read a couple of years ago about the situation in places like San Francisco, where computer-software startups bring their ideas to fruition. The [production] jobs actually go to China. You still have high-paying jobs in San Francisco, but you also have a lot of low-paid people who are left out in the cold.

- Considering the brain drain due to all kinds of people are leaving because they can live in other parts of Canada at half the cost of living and double the wages, what incentives would help develop other kinds of industries?
- With 8 cents of the tax dollar, it's hard for municipalities to offer much. These are mainly senior government directions. So we provide the infrastructure of the places where work could happen.
  - A neighbourhood becomes an agglomeration of antique stores not because the municipality said that 14th and Main is antique row but because the market let it happen and it evolved over time.
  - If you try to force it, it's very hard to do.
  - We try to support the industries we have, like Lions Gate Studios. We'll fight to keep ICBC. Taxation [structure] is part of that.
- Do you think ICBC will go?
- There was talk of them going to Surrey a while ago.
- I'm suspicious of the kind of deal-making you were talking about, but if it works it works.

### **6.7 Municipalities can reduce red tape and increase trust in processes**

- Red tape is an important issue, and municipalities in this area have done a poor job of reducing it.
  - There are some happy exceptions. There is some kind of regional move where your business licence can cross municipal boundaries.
- But the process is not trusted.
  - I wrote recently about a guy in Gastown who did a lovely major renovation on a historic property in Gastown. He made a deal with the city to spend more money than the building was worth, and he delivered on it.
  - But through a series of errors by many people, one of them his own, he got screwed out of, he thought, \$110,000 of his tax break. On closer calculation, it's \$83,000.
  - Absolutely nobody wants to fix that. He finally got the City of Vancouver to agree to a hearing on it, but he's been excluded him from talking about his main argument.
  - This is the tax incentive to restore the building to [city] standards, and he was the first person in Gastown to do it. He did a first-class job that was leveraged into getting a lot of other people to do [similar projects]. He's put in a vibrant business that employs 30 people. But nobody cares that he's getting screwed out of his tax break.
  - It took him two years to get the approvals, which is a huge cost when you own the property, and he tells me that literally dozens of people who won't speak to me [as a writer] have spoken to him to say they have a similar problem.
  - Developers and others who spend money to do a job are scared to dis their councils in public because they are afraid it will be held against them when they go for the next permit.
  - That's shocking and governments have to deal with it and make it better. Any municipality that does make it better, becoming the first good house in a bad neighbourhood when it comes to regulatory snarls, will be in a good position, particularly in an environment like this, where somebody can choose to build on this side of the [municipal boundary] or that side.

## **6.8 Municipal taxes need to be both at the right level and the right kind**

- Taxes need to be not only at the right level but the right kind. Unfortunately, that takes provincial co-operation.
  - The province has hamstrung municipalities so badly by giving them such limited tax tools that the only answer is to [increase] property taxes way out of proportion to what they should be.
  - Property taxes are not a bad way for municipalities to raise money, but they are a terrible way for municipalities to raise all of their money. They're not income-sensitive, and they hit you in bad years every bit as hard as in good.
- Over on the Island, the municipalities got so heavy on overtaxing industries—with the ratios between residential and industry out of sight—that two industries sued them, stopped paying their taxes and so on.

## **6.9 Which municipalities are the most and least business-friendly?**

- Vancouver is the worst in the commercial-to-residential [property tax] ratio, and my perception is that the City of Vancouver is one of the most business-unfriendly towns.
  - It seems to be doing everything it can to make it hard for business to operate, and that sort of thing gets around town and around the country quickly.
  - I wouldn't put a business in Vancouver to save my life. Municipalities can do a lot to attract business if they do it right.
- Ten years ago, in a CFIB survey, the District of North Vancouver was the worst municipality in Canada west of Winnipeg in terms of being business-friendly. We just won an award recently for being the best.
  - That was a lot of work on the part of the new council and Mayor Walton.
- North Vancouver District just won the most business-friendly award at the UBCM, which we're very proud of because we went from last to first in about five years.
  - We still have a long way to go. There is still a lot of red tape and a lot of horror stories, and we're working on it. Every time we hear a horror story, it's a learning experience for us and a chance to fix something.

## **7.0 The North Shore economy**

### **7.1 Housing and local jobs for a growing population on the North Shore**

- On the North Shore, by 2041, we expect the population to increase by about 62,000.
  - We can easily do that, because we can put a real estate sign on anything and put housing on it, and it will sell tomorrow.
  - That equates to about 28,000 dwelling units. The market is there for these units.
  - Accommodating people is the easy part, except maybe getting through the rezoning process.
- The other challenge will be finding 33,000 new jobs. That's much harder, and it's not something that we do directly [as municipalities].
  - You can have programs, but municipalities rarely get into that these days.
  - But how do you get those jobs? If you put a for-sale sign up saying "commercial real estate available," you don't get anywhere near the same interest [as for residential property].
  - [Developers] want to make it a "mixed-use" site, by which they mean a little trickle of retail on the ground floor and a tower or three or four storeys of residential above.
  - So you need to stay focused on finding a way to get jobs and keeping the town centres evolving as complete communities.

## **7.2 The harbour and the hospital are economic strengths on the North Shore**

- Each subregion has its unique attributes, and the North Shore has the harbour and port activities.
  - There is a lot of investment in the port right now. The shipbuilding contract is huge for us on the North Shore. Neptune is expanding. Grain terminals are expanding.
  - So the natural attribute that we have to work with is coming to the fore to give us more employment.
- We also have the medical sector here in the City of North Vancouver, and building on the strength of the hospital is hugely [important to the local economy].

## **7.3 The North Shore has compromised transportation systems**

- [The North Shore] is not good at transportation-based systems.
  - Burnaby and other places such as Richmond, which is flat and accessible to the whole region, [have stronger transportation systems].
  - People hate the bridges here, so there are things that we just can't do on the North Shore. It's hard to get large headquarters here, and you won't get a cruise ship terminal. The bridges scare people off.
  - It's a mixed blessing for us. It does create a quieter life with less traffic over here, but it makes it hard for economic development.

## **7.4 ICBC, BC Rail and the BCIT Marine Training Institute came to the North Shore because of senior government decisions**

- Senior-level investment contributes to the development of the subregions and what is unique to each one.
  - The fact that ICBC came to Lonsdale Quay in the 1981 period as part of the Lonsdale Quay development was huge for diversifying the region and getting employment on the North Shore.
  - At the time, BC Rail and the BCIT Marine Training Institute also came here.
- TransLink and Metro Vancouver going where they go [have an impact] on developing employment throughout the region. The senior governments have a role in that as well.

## **7.5 The City of North Vancouver uses density bonusing to support rental housing and commercial development**

- [To support economic development], municipalities should start with supportive policy and an official community plan.
  - You apply that [plan] with the levers that you have. For [the City of North Vancouver], it's often zoning, which is a huge tool. Just last night, we did a 25% density bonus to get market rental housing added to a condo project.
  - You'll find market rental housing being built in this city when there isn't in fact a market to do it. You couldn't buy the land and build market rental housing and make money on it, so we need to bonus those uses in.
  - The new thing that we're doing is bonusing for employment. The North Shore Credit Union at 13th and Lonsdale pioneered for us a density bonus provision that, for employment-generating uses, we're now giving extra density.
  - There' is an application coming forward now for the Safeway site, where we might get a full 70,000 square-foot office building, that would only be built because it's happening through a density bonusing mechanism.

- This takes the land cost out of the equation for the developer, because, in this market, it's the residential prices that are driving land and construction costs. It's making commercial development almost impossible to do at market rates.
- The City of North Vancouver is again taking the lead in bringing jobs to the North Shore.

## **8.0 Affordable housing**

### **8.1 Investment in affordable housing ran out years ago**

- In Metro Vancouver, a tremendous asset was created through earlier government investment around housing, and that [investment] more or less is no longer there.
  - The investments are now at the absolute low end of the continuum to address homelessness, which is actually a high-cost area.
  - For low- to moderate-income housing, it's the assets that were created years ago that are [partly] addressing the housing problems that we see today.

### **8.2 The effect of the 1994 withdrawal of federal support for rental unit construction**

- I've been amazed at the level of innovation in the region on low-to moderate-income housing. But before the federal government decided that housing wasn't its responsibility, you could count on 1,800 new units being built in B.C. per year.
  - Municipalities could plan for that. Seniors and low-income families had housing. You had the more-complete community idea.
  - The federal government stepped away from that kind of commitment in 1994. I'm not arguing that it should always be 1,800, but [federal funding] was the way to start to address some of the need.
  - In the last year, the B.C. government doing it alone, except for a small amount of federal capital, was creating 300 units a year for the entire province.
  - There is no longer a predictable supply.
  - There is a giant gap and a growing need, and the three levels of government are not working together. The municipalities on their own can never address that gap or need at the low end.
  - So there is a need to bring the provincial government and especially the federal government back into the conversation as partners.

### **8.3 Purpose-built market rental units versus condo rental units**

- In the rental market, we have two types of [unit].
  - We have purpose-built market accommodation, which is there in perpetuity.
  - And we have the condominiums and townhouses, where the tenant is at the mercy of the property owner. Whether the tenant is a young person or a senior, he or she can be evicted based on [the owner moving] back into the property.

### **8.4 Statistics on rental affordability on the North Shore and in the region**

- I pulled a few stats for the North Shore, to understand some of the dynamics [of housing cost and affordability].
  - On the North Shore, the city and the district are different: almost half of all households in the city are renters.
  - Across the North Shore, one in every four households that are rented has an income of under \$20,000. These households would need a rent of about \$500 a month to be able to carry the cost of food, recreation and other needed services and supports.
  - This is the kind of pressure we see when we look at rental stats today.

- An average rent on the North Shore is actually about \$1,000 a month, which means that a household would need an income of \$40,000 to carry that rent.
- Region-wide, the average is about \$1,200 for a two-bedroom, which means that a family would need an income of closer to \$50,000 to be able to carry that rent.
- The problem becomes more complex in that some of the older [rental housing] stock with the most affordable rents is under redevelopment pressure.
  - In the new rental supply, it's upward of \$1,600 a month [for rent], and a household would need about \$60,000 in income to carry that rent.
- Translating [salary] into a wage, that's \$27 per hour for the average rent, and \$36 per hour to carry the cost of the new rental. You can see how it relates to the kinds of jobs we need to create.

### **8.5 Relating job types to housing cost on the North Shore**

- You can see how [rental rates] relate to the kinds of jobs we need to create, [when you consider that wages of \$27 and \$36 per hour are needed to pay an average rent and a rent for newer accommodation, respectively].
- There are about 91,000 individuals on the North Shore who are employed in the whole range of jobs, including in finance, management, education and health. But 1 in 10 of those jobs are in sales, retail, clerical or other positions that are much lower in income.
  - So 1 in 10 individuals on the North Shore now don't have the [income] they need to afford rental housing on the North Shore, never mind ownership.
  - From a social planning perspective, it's absolutely critical that we maintain our social and economic diversity in the region.
- Ownership is tremendous, but we don't have all owners on the North Shore. Ownership is creating assets and wealth for some, and that's valuable, but it also creates a divide for others.

### **8.6 We need to develop affordable market housing and well-paying jobs**

- I work with a group on housing affordability, and I agree that jobs and housing are drivers of prosperity. Supporting that is education and transportation.
  - We're having a symposium in February 2013.
  - [The group is] often talking about the price of houses, but it's also about the ability to have well-paying jobs.
  - This is market housing, not the affordable housing that Metro Vancouver is working on and has supported for many years. It's a combination of rental and ownership.
  - The City of North Vancouver is taking a leadership role in a mixed-use project, where there is retail, ownership of condos and rental units.

### **8.7 We are not creating new rental housing, so demand drives rents higher**

- We are not adding new rental supply, so we see an erosion in affordability of the rents.
  - Having more demand than supply will keep pushing the rents up.
- I'm doing a study on seniors and the threat of economic eviction.
  - In this region, between 2001 and 2006, we lost about 9,000 units that were renting for \$500 or less. A lot of that wasn't demolition but just upward pressure on rents.
  - If incomes don't keep pace, we see real strains.

## **8.8 Owners of older apartment buildings who provide most of the affordable rental housing are getting a bad deal**

- The real community heroes for affordable housing are the people who own the 1960s and 1970s apartment buildings of about 20, 30 or 40 units.
  - They're mostly just families, and they've been delivering the affordable market rental housing that is the backbone our community's rental stock.
  - That rental stock is aging and they get very few breaks.
  - The taxation laws have changed to work against them. Capital gains have worked against them.
  - So many things have been done to lock them into a lousy situation.
  - But they provide more housing than any of our government agencies, and finding a way to save that housing and support those people is the best thing that we could do.

## **9.0 Problems with the landlord-tenant act**

### **9.1 Is there an imbalance in the landlord-tenant act**

- Is there really an imbalance in the landlord-tenant act, and should there be redress?
  - Even though I am a tenant and will never be able to afford a condo, I've often asked myself, if I did have the resources to buy a property and have a tenant, would I have any interest in doing that? My answer has always been, no way.
- I don't know the intricacies of the legislation, but I do know that there is always friction, and landlords do find it difficult.
  - It's the same with commercial landlords and commercial tenants. There is friction there as well.

### **9.2 Laws favour the tenant over the landlord**

- I would never be in the rental business in this province, because of the landlord-tenant act and other legislation that makes it impossible even to kick out a tenant who won't pay rent.
  - We bought a condo just down the street for our son, and we'll sell it when he leaves.
  - The legislation is so lopsided that my wife and I wouldn't touch the idea of renting out with a 50-foot pole. It's even worse than Ontario.
  - That's one of the things that is driving up housing costs.
- It's very tough as a landlord to get rid of a bad tenant.
  - The tenant gets all the support, and not one iota of support goes to the landlord.
  - I was a landlord, and a good one, not interested in raising the rent constantly just for the sake of it.
  - But when I had an opportunity to sell and get out, I did, because I knew would have a hard time if I got someone in who wasn't a good tenant.

### **9.3 Vacancy acts as a rent “de-control” so there are fewer affordable rentals**

- The landlord-tenant act [recognizes] that the buildings will need maintenance and improvements and therefore you have to allow certain rent increases to go through. But we also have a vacancy de-control: as a unit becomes vacant, it can be rented at a much higher rent. So, as the unit becomes vacant, you've lost an affordable rental unit.

## **10.0 The costs of homelessness**

### **10.1 It is cheaper to house a homeless individual than to pay for crisis services**

- We have been told repeatedly that whereas one single homeless individual may cost society \$45,000 or more per annum, providing suitable housing for such a person reduces the per-person cost to about \$29,000. Is that claim based on solid data that can stand up to hostile scrutiny?
- [Yes.] The study you are referring to was done through SFU CARMHA.
  - It was tremendous research that took the entire mental health database for the province of B.C. and looked at those who were without an address.
  - It found that there were 11,000 individuals across B.C. without an address, and determined that these individuals were homeless and living on the streets.
  - It then went on to quantify the cost of the services tied to these individuals and found that the cost was in fact \$55,000 per individual, for crisis and emergency services. It found that if these individuals were able to access social housing, the cost would be significantly cheaper.
- Homelessness is a huge cost to all of society because it's the most inefficient way to address a housing problem.

### **10.2 Investing in housing as part of an overall strategy**

- The types of investments that were, [in the past,] made in affordable housing are an important part of an overall strategy if the goal is to respond to the full range and depth of need in a community.

## **11.0 Accommodating a growing and diverse population**

### **11.1 Getting people to move to towns outside Metro Vancouver to find cheaper housing**

- [From] a seniors' group [perspective, giving newcomers and low-income people a reason to live elsewhere would be beneficial because it would lower the cost of living].
  - An article yesterday was discussing housing in North Vancouver and what the mayor would like to have done. The construction companies would give some apartments to low-income people.
  - There was an important comment from someone in West Vancouver suggesting that people be given a reason to live somewhere else, and then [our] cost of living would be lower. People would move away from Vancouver and would have decent housing somewhere else where it is cheaper.
- This subject has come up in the *Sun*. It has been said that if you can't afford it, move, and move out of the city. But it's kind of a motherhood issue. If you were born or settled in this area, you want to stay. You don't want to move far away and then can't get to work. I don't know what kind of incentive it will be.
- But you have a reason to move if you can work elsewhere.
- It isn't fair to say, "We don't want them in our neighbourhood, so please find somewhere else for them to move." I think there was a bit of that tone.
  - We hear that tone, that they should live somewhere else.
  - We all need to accommodate the diverse range of people that there are.
  - Homeless people come from West Vancouver and Dunbar and other neighbourhoods as well as from the Downtown Eastside.
- I agree that there was sometimes a tone the writing, that if you don't like it, leave. I don't think that's the right answer. You need to look at a whole lot of things.

- When you consider economics, pollution and land use, there are huge reasons for wanting to intelligently densify the centres of your urban area, and Vancouver is the centre of ours.

### **11.2 We shouldn't pay taxes to accommodate those who can't afford to live here**

- [Subsidizing newcomers to live in places that they can't otherwise afford increases taxes and drives out retirees].
  - There are a lot of retired people on the North Shore, and we're a fast growing group.
  - We have to accept that a lot of people just plain can't afford to be here and shouldn't be here. Of our four kids, only two can afford to live here.
  - The steps we take to allow newcomers to come in and put them in places that they couldn't afford on their own means taxes go up for all the rest of us, and those of us already living on the North Shore are driven off it, particularly retirees on fixed incomes.
  - I ask that when planners think of ways to help people who need it, they should keep in mind that it's a zero sum game, and that the money is coming out of somebody's pockets.

### **11.3 Metro Vancouver is B.C.'s magnet for population growth**

- The Vancouver region is attractive, like a magnet, and functions as a primate city for B.C.
  - Outside Vancouver, where would most people want to live in B.C.? The list of where Vancouverites would choose to move to is short.
  - That's [a result] of a provincial-level notion of economic development. What's the province doing to get Kamloops and other places to offer more?
  - The province's choices about where to invest can help provide more choices in the region. When we extract resources out of smaller communities, how much of that money winds up in Vancouver versus in those regions?
  - Places like Ontario have done more—although I don't know if it's been fully successful; they have their own problems.
  - But B.C. has been quite comfortable letting it all drain into Vancouver, creating a focus of intensity and interest, and a lack of that in the other municipalities around the province.
  - There is a lot that could be done.

### **11.4 People drive until they can afford to buy a home**

- The never-stated but effective policy for many years in this region has been to let people drive until they can afford to buy. This is done by subsidizing the commute.
  - Car drivers do not pay their own freight: the taxes related to owning and operating a car do not cover all the costs. They cover more or less the cost of building roads, bridges, etc., not any of the indirect costs such as pollution, opportunity costs of traffic, accidents and injuries and deaths.
  - We subsidize driving so that people will drive out to the Fraser Valley and get out of our hair.
- [People who move out to the Fraser Valley] get into high personal costs—huge opportunity costs of the time that they spend.
  - When my wife and I moved to the centre of the city, the first thing we did was sell one car. And we don't drive the other one, so we get to keep it a long, long time.
  - We have imposed those costs on people by making the real estate prices so high that they think they can't pay.

### **11.5 Town centres with employment opportunities will accommodate people**

- Part of the answer is to develop town centres and real jobs there. Then people who live in communities other than Vancouver don't have to come to Vancouver. That's an elegant solution.

### **11.6 We need complete communities to accommodate people of all ages and incomes**

- I like the idea of planning for complete community, because you want to be planning for people at different life cycle stages.
  - If you don't have the full continuum of housing choices for all segments of society, then you are excluding the young and disadvantaging the elderly.
  - You have to be thinking about how to keep economic and social diversity in our community. So many people have service jobs. It's 1 in 10 on the North Shore. They should be part of that complete community mix.

## **12.0 Food and agriculture**

### **12.1 Food is expensive, harmful or low in nourishment and imported**

- What can we eat?
  - We can't eat the meat, and bread has no bran in it.
  - Years ago when people first processed wheat for bread, it had bran in it, and within 6 months of taking the bran out in England, they were told they had to put the bran back in because people's digestive systems weren't working properly.
  - We are coming from the point of shelf life as opposed to nourishment.
  - When I moved here from Ontario 20 years ago, food already cost 15% more here. I was shocked, given that we have the Okanagan fruit belt, so much water and a moderate climate.
  - Our food seems to be getting less and less local, and farmer's can't afford to live here. When you don't have a local food supply, you're cutting yourself off.
- People still want oranges from afar, and we can't turn the clock back on that. But what drives me nuts is Finnish water, brought over in glass bottles.
- On the question of what can we eat and the health of it, look at the bottom line: life expectancy. We live longer than any generation ever in the history of the world.
- In the last five years, that has been reversing.
- No it hasn't.

### **12.2 Growing everything locally would require much more land than we have**

- I couldn't agree less on the local food fetishes. If we went to organic and local food to feed everybody, not just the elite who can afford to pay a premium for what may indeed taste better, we would need vastly more land.
  - If we took the rich world, the OECD, and started feeding everybody locally, it would take a land base roughly the size of South America, in addition to what is used now.
  - One of the problems is that, as you produce more and more locally to feed a city, which has a very large number of people, [you start using less-productive land]. The best land, at least what's in the ALR, is already in production, so you get into the second-best, and then the third-best and the fourth-best.
  - You would be flattening massive areas of B.C. in order to try to feed us locally. It is a very bad idea.
- The people who are objectively advocating local food are not trying to get rid of what is there. The estimate of what can be done by urban farming and intelligent use of land,

vertical spaces, etc. is 15%. If you took 15% off the demand for [imported] food, that would be significant.

### **12.3 Urban farming may push density out into the suburbs and beyond**

- When you feed people through urban farming, to the extent that that takes up land, it erodes density and pushes people who aren't here yet farther out into the suburbs.
  - You just create the footprint somewhere else.
  - If you permanently set aside that piece of land at Burrard and Davie for gardens, then that's land where nobody can live or work, and somebody is going to Mission.
- In North Vancouver, we are trying to make a move into urban agriculture, and we don't think it will displace ports.
  - There is a lot you can do with land that is residual. We had a piece of a park that was a gravel lot for decades. It's now a working farm with a farmer operating it. It's income-producing and it produces food locally. It's only a minor amount.
  - We are also trying to move into community gardens. Part of it is just the relationship that you build between people and the land and food. It's part of building a healthier community and getting people to connect.

### **12.4 For food security, we need to produce more food locally**

- The big picture is that there are 7 billion people on the planet, and it's heading toward 9 billion, 12 billion or 14 billion. If tragedy happens, perhaps population will dip way back down, but the trendline is a line of exponential growth.
  - In addition, with climate change, fewer parts of the world will be able to produce food. California may no longer produce enough food to export.
  - So, just for security reasons, we want to do whatever we can [to produce food locally].

### **12.5 Bold vision is needed to create local food security**

- We need bold visions. Think back to the 1970s and how we got the Agricultural Land Reserve and how controversial that was. That was a bold provincial effort. It was one of the most dramatic public policy decisions that this province or any province has ever made. It was so far-sighted, that it is amazing to me that it happened.
  - I don't know what else could go farther in that direction, but there are some options for that.

### **12.6 We lost Richmond's prime agricultural land to urban development**

- I never understood why we took land to build condos in Richmond, on possibly the most exquisite soil on the planet, and wouldn't build anything for years and years on the mountains. As long as we didn't cut all the trees down, the mountains were the perfect place to build housing and leave the agricultural land alone.

## **13.0 Green space**

### **13.1 The benefits of using urban green space for housing**

- I did a column a few months ago on what would happen if the City of Vancouver sold a 20% strip of Langara Golf Course, which is wide open land along Cambie Street.
  - [The city] would get \$675 million. If I remember correctly, the left-over land in the golf course and the \$675 million could build 5,000 units of subsidized housing.
  - That's the kind of impact that tying up urban land for non-urban uses has.
- You might recall that the follow-up to that was blood on the rug. Citizens in and around Langara went ballistic over that one.

- And there was a story on the radio this morning, about how each school has about 6 acres surrounding it for playground and recreation. One particular school had about 9 acres. A group of citizens wanted to claim that and build housing on it.
  - Of course there has been a complete uproar. Nine acres is way in excess of the allotted space for the elementary school, but [the plan] probably won't go anywhere.
- Whether or not we develop these lands, we should understand cost of our decisions.

## **14.0 Resource industries**

### **14.1 We need to support B.C.'s resource industries, which create jobs**

- We tend to oppose every project that comes into B.C. that might bring jobs.
  - We are a resource economy, whether we like it or not. We don't know that in Vancouver, but the people who do the actual work up north know that.
  - What concerns me is that we have mayors who, long before the hearing on, say, Gateway, comes out with its conclusions, are criticizing projects. We criticize mines.
  - The same people getting U.S. funding will criticize the LNG project, once they finish beating up on Gateway and Kinder Morgan.
  - We need to do something to recognize that we are highly reliant on resource industries. We are letting American-funded groups beat the heck of them.
- I agree that we need to be supporting the resource industries, which help drive the economic engine, which is Vancouver where 50% of the population lives.
  - There is Vancouver and what we call the rest of B.C. So there are two different economies.

## **15.0 Regional disparities, sharing and consensus**

### **15.1 More regional consensus is needed for shared prosperity**

- How do we get more of a regional consensus, because it is shared regional prosperity [that we want]?
  - There were comments about one municipality taking too much of the share of the region.

### **15.2 There is no consensus on the North Shore about the scope of homelessness**

- There is disagreement among the three municipalities on the North Shore as to whether there are there homeless people in West Vancouver, the district and the city. So there isn't unanimity even on the North Shore.

### **15.3 Vancouver disproportionately takes responsibility for homelessness**

- How do we get regional consensus? How do we get national consensus? With the homelessness problem, Vancouver disproportionately carries the can.
  - We have a higher percentage than most communities, and that doesn't mean that just North Vancouver or West Vancouver or the Fraser Valley is tending to siphon a proportion of their homeless into Vancouver—all of Canada is doing that.
  - If we implement solutions too well, then we become an even greater magnet.
  - But part of it is geography. If I was going to be living on the street in December, I'd far rather do it in Vancouver or hereabouts than in Montreal or Regina.
  - Part of it social. If I'm antisocial and living on the margins of the law, an essentially no-enforcement drug zone in Vancouver is a very attractive place.
  - Part of it is policy. We have done an abysmal job of caring for people with mental problems.

- I don't know how we can get regional consensus to even out [the responsibility for homelessness].
- But Vancouver disproportionately gets many other advantages.

#### **15.4 The North Shore has a disadvantage with transportation**

- The North Shore is specifically disadvantaged with transportation, and doesn't get its fair share. It has fast way to get anywhere. Other communities for the most part have some [ways to get around quickly].

#### **15.5 Metro Vancouver does a reasonable job of making things more fair**

- Metro Vancouver does a reasonably good job of making things fair, given the resources and the challenges. The challenges are huge and the resources are finite. and I don't know how we can do better.

#### **15.6 Focus on planning for the people and incomes in your own community, and share the results**

- I use the rule that you plan for the people who live in your community, and for the incomes in that community. I don't worry about the fair share issue, because I know that the need is across the entire region.
  - Really strong, positive demonstration projects that respect the needs in the community are a good way to start the needed conversation and to show results.
  - There are positive things that can be done, one project at a time.

#### **15.7 Challenges such as housing affordability are similar across the region**

- I pulled the MLS data on recent sales in Metro Vancouver number and was shocked. Region-wide—that includes all the more affordable communities—a single detached home was \$989,000, [or almost] a million dollars.
  - You'd expect that in certain areas, but not region-wide. The price is out of reach everywhere. And it's no surprise that the North Shore has even higher prices.
  - For townhouses, you're looking at upwards of \$500,000 region-wide.
  - We're seeing the stresses and strains on ownership. Very few people who live and work in this region could afford [those prices] starting out now.
  - It's great when you have that asset and you can turn it over, but that's not sustainable for [maintaining] the kind of region we have.

#### **16.0 Working together at all levels**

##### **16.1 Civil society and local government can work together to create regional prosperity**

- It's at the community level that we see the challenges and pressures, so local governments have an important role. They frequently have to live with the decisions of other levels of government. Civil society and local government can speak to what we know is happening in our communities and some of the ways to make it better by working together.
- How we work together is key to that shared vision of the future.
  - When we consider what we want as a region, we need to ask ourselves how we can create growth that creates shared prosperity as a region. What does that mean in terms of the investment in transportation, education, jobs or housing?
  - Tremendous insight can come out of civil society, local governments and working together to create the shared future that we all want.

## **16.2 All levels of government are interrelated and have to work together**

- All the levels of government are interrelated. We want regional prosperity in Metro Vancouver, in B.C. and in Canada, and we need the three or four levels of government involved to create a solution.
  - If we are travelling internationally, we call ourselves Canadian. Within Canada, we call ourselves British Columbian. Or, in Vancouver, you're from the North Shore, or the City or District of North Vancouver or the City of West Vancouver.
  - But it's our community that is the strength and backbone of society—our connectedness.
  - How do we get prosperity at [all levels], because then we're all better off?
  - Taking it from the micro to the macro level, how do you bring all levels of government in to create a solution?

## **16.3 With only 8 cents of the tax dollar, municipalities need funding from senior levels of government**

- Everyone has heard that 8 cents out of every tax dollar is all that a local government receives. So you really need partnerships with the other two levels of government.
  - You often see stresses, pressures and challenges of growth at the local level, and if you don't have a responsive system or the ability to access some sort of intervention, you often end up with a bigger problem.
  - Homelessness is a good example. If there were an ability to create more affordable housing as the need emerged, you would have a lower-cost solution than the crisis intervention that we have.
  - There are [some] good partnerships in place, but it's the predictability of funding that is key.
- On the social housing side of the ledger, municipalities can't do it on their own any longer, and there is a need for senior levels of government to be partners.

## **17.0 The FCM and UBCM as incubators of ideas**

- The Federation of Canadian Municipalities is a good venue as an incubator of ideas. What comes out of the FCM conferences in the context of what we're discussing today?
- The City of North Vancouver participates in [the FCM], and there is the group ICLEI, which is an international environmental effort that works through the FCM.
  - [These organizations allow] people with common interests and opinions to get together, but they have no clout.
  - The idea is that you bring suasion to the federal level about what can be done.
  - It's never resulted in national housing policy, for example. It's fair to say it's had some success but limited success.
  - There is also a UBCM—a Union of B.C. Municipalities. We met just last month with the province.
  - These are ways for grassroots ideas and blueprints to reach up to the senior governments, but there is the dynamic of municipalities amongst each other, and the province, and the provinces amongst themselves, and the feds.
  - Tension exists, and some of it is a check-and-balance, but it's hard if you're not on the same page. We had a provincial government pushing hard on climate change, and the feds ignoring it. It's a question of leadership.
  - You have accept that some of it is a check-and-balance and over time hopefully you wind up in the right direction, election after election. It's definitely challenging.

- The thing I like about the municipal level is that you're getting things done at the grass roots. You're implementing things, not just talking about what might happen.

## **18.0 Appropriate direction, powers and resources from senior governments**

### **18.1 Municipalities are ultimately controlled by the province, which could play a bigger role**

- Municipalities don't exist by any constitutional right. They only exist because the province has chosen to create municipalities and give them some limited authority.
  - The province also chose to create a different authority for transit, and to create Metro Vancouver.
  - The province has the authority to direct things, and if wanted to compel every region or every municipality to have a homeless shelter, it could simply command it.
- [Municipalities] are working with legislation that hasn't changed since the 1990s, and to a large extent, not since the 1950s. Some of our planning tools are antiquated.
  - We're trying to find ways to pay for amenities that benefit the community, and we're using tools that weren't designed for that purpose.
  - So developers, politicians and municipal staff all find it difficult, and they try to get creative.
- The provincial government is potentially a major player, and it does participate by deciding to do things like the Gateway road project, the Port Mann Bridge, highway improvements, and the Canada Line instead of the Evergreen Line.

### **18.2 Municipalities need appropriate taxation tools to pay for transit**

- I agree that we lack a way to pay for transit, and that is a major failing. This ties in with antiquated planning and taxation tools.
  - I don't like the idea of a big government paying money to a little government to do things.
  - But big governments have to step away from some revenue sources and give them to the little governments. They should not offer 4 cents of the gas tax but reduce the tax and allow municipalities to implement it if they want. Or they could reduce the sales tax and allow municipalities to [implement their own].
  - The mix of taxes and tools that municipal governments are given to do their job is dreadfully inadequate.
  - Federal grants come in here and there, which means that federal or provincial priorities are funded, and municipalities do not get the say.
  - That's why our SkyTrain and road systems have gone the way they have, according to federal and provincial priorities, not necessarily community priorities.
  - That's wrong and wasteful, and it needs to change.

## **19.0 Principles to consider for the long term**

### **19.1 Paying attention to the difficult, long-term questions**

- It's good to admit to not knowing answers to difficult, far-sighted questions. But we should not set them aside because we have answers to medium-sighted questions.
  - The polluter not paying is a wicked problem.
  - We are not investing our time and effort into dealing problems that we can see appearing, such as half of our food coming from elsewhere. Food is becoming unstable on the planet. What are we doing about it? We seem to view it as part of the guaranteed prosperity that we've come to enjoy.

- I hear a lot of talk about growth and prosperity, as though growth is good. But we know that lots of growth is not so good.
- Why are we taxing good thing and not taxing a lot of bad things? Tax not just the polluter, but also the depleter of resources. It bothers me when we assume that we have an endless supply of cheap water and energy.
- Are we just local citizens, or are we citizens of a larger continental community, where, if we have hydroelectric energy in excess, it can offset somebody else's bad energy?
- Are we asking these questions? Or are we persevering with the idea that growth is measured in material?
- Do you think we should be dealing more with far-sighted questions that people won't vote for? People don't want to hear about problems. In the last federal election, how much was the environment on the ballot question?

### **19.2 Taxing only bad things has its limits**

- The idea of taxing bad things, not good things, has its limits. If it works really effectively, you undermine your tax base, so you can never go entirely that way.
  - The carbon tax is a great example. If it works really well in reducing carbon consumption and production of CO<sub>2</sub>, you [won't have much left to tax].
  - If you put the tax on fuel, and people use a lot less fuel, you've eroded your government's money supply.
- If you do this in transition, you can do [compensating things] at the same time.
- You can't go 100% that way all the time, but that is clearly a direction to go.

### **19.3 Money obtained from depletion of resources is not ours to spend**

- I agree with treating depleters as polluters, on balance.
- I don't have a problem with selling petroleum resources, for example, but I really have a problem with spending all the money.
  - That money isn't our generation's to spend. It is an asset over time.
  - The only jurisdiction that is handling it responsibly that I'm aware of is Norway.
  - Peter Lougheed made a start, but every subsequent Alberta leader has peed away that start.
  - Alaska does a little bit.
  - But B.C. does worst of all.
  - We should be getting value for our resources, and when they're non-renewable, that value should be creating investments that are not just a value to our generation but also to succeeding generations.
  - We are taking their legacy and spending it today.

### **20.0 Is there any such thing as a good policy?**

- In the spring of 2001, at a national event for community economic development, a Maritimer spoke bitterly about the p-word "policy," giving terrible examples of people being hurt by policy. Is it conceivable to have policy that is sufficiently flexible and intuitive that it does not do much more harm than good?
- Policy is anything and everything, and all governments have policies. A decision to do nothing is a policy to do nothing. Many policies and possibly even most do different degrees of [both] harm and good.

- Few things are all good or all bad, and that's where politics interjects. Politics in its best form balances harms and helps. Bad politics has done much more harm in the world than bad policy.
- One of the problems with politics is that it often gets hijacked by vocal minority groups. Often in policy discussions, a small group will lose entitlements and the cost of those entitlements will be spread thinly over large groups, so that small group becomes the tail that wags the dog. That's not a very harmful consequence of any given policy that you can name, but when you add scores of them together, it becomes a perverse system. That's what we often get in governance.

## **21.0 Positive prospects for economic development in the region**

### **21.1 We have one of the most sustainable and livable regions in the world, and will continue to grow**

- Metro Vancouver is one of the best, most sustainable and livable regions in the world, and the North Shore is one of the best parts of the region. The region is positioned extremely well for the future.
  - There is a huge interest in people coming here, and that will give us a strong economy.
  - With an economy, you can do things. You can leverage the economy to deliver the things that we want, if we are creative.
  - Developers will build affordable housing if you give them the incentives to do it.
  - In Tumbler Ridge, if the mill or mine is shut down, there is no economy and you have no hope.
  - Here we have huge hope. We have to keep the economy strong, and it's more than just growth.
  - Regardless of what happens around the world, this area will continue to grow, whether it's by migration or immigration.
  - We have to be clever enough to focus and leverage that growth intelligently.

### **21.2 People want to live here because of our natural amenities, and that's an economic strength**

- This region has won the lottery for natural amenities, and we have preserved them and kept them usable.
  - And we do use them to astonishing degree.
  - I travel a lot in Canada and elsewhere. In Canada I notice, and visitors notice, how many people do things. How many hiking trails are there in the Vancouver area? When I go out on one of hiking trails on a nice weekend day, there are a lot of people there. Multiply that by all the trails. And then there's everybody at Stanley Park and Ambleside. There are people everywhere doing stuff.
  - This is a place where we have things to do and people do them.
  - It is a wonderful strength and an economic strength in the sense that if they can afford to, people want to live here and work here.