

September 21, 2010

T. Crawford
Victoria Chapter of MADD

Dear T. Crawford:

First, I would like to say Kudos to your organization for the wonderful work that you do, and the fact that your work has provided BC police the ability to significantly curtail drinking and driving. However, I believe that we could also further reduce drinking and driving by providing people transportation options through urban planning. More specifically, we need to encourage walkable communities where we can walk, affordably take a cab, or buses if still available after drinking. We need to promote densification. The problem is that in BC with its NIMBY mindset, nobody wants densification or local pubs. I have never drunk and driven home, I walk. However, as you are aware there will always be people that no matter the size of the penalty will use lack of transportation as an excuse.

I am writing you this letter as a strong supporter of urban densification, walkable communities and commuter rail travel.

Our Provincial Government has touted that they are investing \$14 Billion in encouraging transit usage, yet offers municipalities and its own citizens few incentives to encourage the density necessary to make rapid transit viable.

Rapid-transit buses or train lines need a critical level of density to achieve ridership volumes to make them viable.

Ever since GM bought out the street-car system in Los Angeles in the early part of the last century, we have built our housing and businesses around road corridors, not rail corridors. We need to create and encourage density along rail corridors not along road corridors. We need to go back to using rail as a people-mover system. It is much easier to built additional capacity for rail (e.g., additional rolling stock). We could learn from cities like Toronto where they have feeder routes to the main stations along a rail line, yet maintain freeways such as the 401, 427, and the QEW. Portland, Oregon is another city that has both effective rail and expressway capacity. Balance is paramount.

A proposal that will encourage densification along potential rail corridors is to amend the respective current Provincial Property Purchase Tax to stimulate the construction of high density housing with additional exemptions and/or

reductions based on density of dwelling and proximity to major transit routes.

Young growing families who want to upgrade into larger accommodations (i.e., townhomes) and need to raise the upfront money for the tax will now be more able get into the market. For instance, a 1% difference on a \$400,000 townhouse is a \$4,000 upfront cost to a young family or a retired couple.

We need transportation systems where we can choose to use our automobiles not be forced to use them to conduct our daily activities.

We need Walkable Communities.

Please find some links/files to "Letters to the Editors" I have written on this topic:

<http://www2.canada.com/victoriatimescolonist/news/comment/story.html?id=8b3f23dd-bb41-4cdf-9a38-27d03f03a668>

http://www.bclocalnews.com/vancouver_island_south/goldstreamgazette/opinion/letters/101842068.html

Sincerely,

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