



October 11 2009

re: Official Community Plan Ideas Forum
Submission Proposal

To the Member of the OCP Committee:

TRUE GREEN: Solutions for Bowen is a new broad-based grassroots community organization. We advocate for a range of progressive social, economic, and ecological local-government policies and actions to create a more balanced, inclusive, and resilient community.

Our founding members include Murray Atherton, Sara Baker, Elizabeth Ballantyne, Neil Boyd, Robin Burger, Darcie Buzzelle, James Glave, Richard Goth, Ian Henley, David Hocking, Jane Kellett, Diane Marshall, Brian McCaig, Julia McCaig, Don Marshall, Isabel Otter, Colleen O'Neil, Heather Prittie, Tim Rhodes, Christine Roodcroft, Tom Roodcroft, Gerry Sear, Judy Taggart, Ian Thomson, Shari Ulrich, Jason Vantomme, and Tim Wake.

Our steering committee members are Elizabeth Ballantyne, Neil Boyd, James Glave, David Hocking, and Colleen O'Neil. Members of this group would like to present on October 22 at the IDEAS Forum.

We believe that as members of a small community and citizens of the greater world, we share a responsibility to address the daunting social, economic, and ecological challenges that face us today and in the years ahead. We recognize that our choices about how and where we live and get around directly impact our social fabric and our ecosystems.

Well-meaning efforts to "keep our island small" and preserve and protect our unique culture have created unintended side effects. A culture that draws energy from opposition to change has frequently

split the community; rejecting change has left us with a predominantly large-lot, low-density zoning and a crisis of affordability that has already eroded our cherished economic diversity and character. It has also resulted in a deep dependency on private vehicles, unacceptably high per-capita global-warming emissions, and a vulnerability to high energy prices. Our roads do not generally support safe cycling, and in some areas even walking is a risky proposition.

The land-use decisions we make today will shape our future safety, security, health, prosperity, diversity, and community well-being, and on our prized ability to “take care of our own”—especially given the realities of peak oil and climate change. Proven solutions to these challenges exist, provided we have the courage to embrace them and see them as opportunities, not threats. We want to preserve and protect the island we all love by embracing these strategies ourselves and by encouraging our leaders to adopt them as policy.

We believe the best way to handle growth is to manage it sensibly; obstructionism—i.e., opposing all development—is simply a lack of planning, and it is neither effective nor productive. It only makes our challenges more difficult.

We want to work together for meaningful solutions, and do better for our community and our society.

To this end, we have together created a set of 10 guiding principles that we believe will help us address the challenges facing our community. Collectively, we refer to these 10 principles as the True Green Charter.

These are the principles we would like to share with the community as part of the Official Community Plan update process.

The True Green Charter

SMART GROWTH

1. We support smart growth, a “complete community” approach to development that protects green space, uses infrastructure and tax dollars efficiently, consumes less energy, and creates livable, walkable communities in a rural setting. For Bowen Island, this means zoning that allows smaller lots and encourages a diversity of housing—including more multi-family attached townhomes and low-rise apartments.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

2. We believe affordability is the cornerstone of a healthy community. We support the Bowen Island Affordable Housing Policy statement of intent to deliver affordable housing units as a part of any new development or redevelopment on Bowen. People who work on the island should be able to live on the island, and vice versa.

ON-ISLAND AMENITIES AND SERVICES

3. We support the provision of a wide range of businesses, services, and cultural and recreational amenities so that our citizens can easily access many of the things they need without getting into a vehicle and/or leaving the island to work, shop, play, and learn, unless they wish to.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

4. We support an island-wide economic development plan with measures encouraging the growth of small businesses, home businesses, and telecommuting. We see a community theatre and hall as part of this plan, bringing economic as well as cultural benefits. We support maximized self-sufficiency and fulfillment.

ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION

5. We envision a set of transportation trails and shared-use pathways, physically separate from vehicle traffic wherever possible—that would encourage safer cycling and walking, and reduce our reliance on private vehicles.

ECOSYSTEM PROTECTION

6. We support the protection and restoration of natural ecosystems and environmentally sensitive areas. We encourage on-island food production. We support greenways and the community-building power of festivals, fairs and other public celebrations.

SMARTER PUBLIC SERVICES

7. We support smarter and greener public services that enable low-carbon, restorative, and where possible, “zero-waste” living. For example, community composting facilities, public community gardens, and municipal incentives to harvest and store rainwater for house and garden use.

GREEN BUILDING

8. We support the highest possible green-building standards for our community that transcend the jurisdictional challenges of building codes. For Bowen Island this means new construction and renovations

emphasize energy and water efficiency, use and re-use of local materials, and responsible on-site waste management. We support clean and renewable energy generation in all its forms, including wind, solar, and microhydro.

AGING IN PLACE

9. We support “aging in place” by ensuring we have accessible transportation, walkways, parking, public buildings and washrooms. We encourage a range of housing and care options, support for caregivers, and opportunities for older residents to work, volunteer, and interact with people of all ages within our community.

COLLABORATIVE GOVERNANCE

10. We support collaborative governance, where citizens are provided with full and timely information, where volunteerism is encouraged and the efforts of those volunteers are respected. We support strong leadership in an atmosphere of negotiation, compromise, and respectful engagement.

On behalf of our members, I thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely yours,

James Glave
TRUE GREEN: Solutions for Bowen
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