

Schedule 3 to the Minutes of the
Planning Committee Meeting of
Tuesday, October 8, 2013.

Dear City of Richmond Planning Committee,

Being born and raised in Richmond I have seen the city undergo a wealth of transformations, some for the good, some for the detriment of our community. This proposed Smartcentre falls under the category of detriment. As someone who has worked in environmental and sustainability planning and holds a Master's degree in Planning and Development I can assure you that the impacts of this proposed development are not mitigated in the least by the concessions offered (e.g. native plantings, bicycle facilities, charging stations).

The loss of an acre of ESA, particularly one that is within the urban boundary will change the nature of Richmond's character. In addition, it is well documented that all plant and animal habitats, hydrological flows and ecological processes are drastically altered. These kinds of development also induce other commercial green-field development in the area (Curran 2002). That is, one superstore can result in dozens of hectares of paved landscape. It is already the case that green space within City centre is diminishing and the way in which we make decisions around this ESA will create a precedent for future ESA decisions. Compensation in the form of utility and sustainability initiatives is not equivalent to mitigation of an ESA.

From a socio-economic perspective, knowing that we have approximately 25% of our population as low-income, working poor, a Walmart location flies in the face of everything that is known about social impact. The presence of these shopping centres *perpetuates* low wages, access to unhealthy and unsustainable foods, while significantly impacting the local economy. Employees within these developments are typically not unionized, and have little protection outside of existing regulations.

In addition, increased traffic and congestion will lead to greater air pollution and promotes an anti-community feeling (people are less likely to interact with others in a big-box setting than on a pedestrian oriented environment). Finally, there are many case studies that demonstrate that the presence of Walmarts and other large shopping centres impacts small, local businesses and fails to invest in the local economy by capturing a large percentage of regional markets at the expense of smaller, local businesses in the downtown core. The result is an increase in retail vacancies in a declining commercial core and fewer living wage jobs. These stores do not create new markets; they simply reallocate existing retail consumption from local businesses to national chains (Curran 2002).

I urge you to consider: (1) stricter guidelines when considering development proposals of this type, (2) to utilize your existing advisory committees to provide public opinion and technical support, and (3) to develop clear processes by which development proposals will follow which take into account social and environmental impacts.

Kind regards,

Colin Dring
236-7397 Moffat Rd,
Richmond, BC