

I'm Jim Wright, 8300 Osgoode Drive, Richmond, and president of the Garden City Conservation Society.

Mayor Brodie and Councillors,

I am now reluctantly *against* affirming the application. In the Local Government Act, I see you have the option of affirming the application **with changes** at the end of this public hearing. However, at this stage, I think it's better if any changes are brought into a new application.

In that context, I'll discuss why changes are needed in the best interests of the current and future **citizens of Richmond**. I'll focus on *two factors*.

One factor is the **wildlife corridor**, which people also call a *natural buffer* and which always was an *ESA*. With some breaks, it goes from Garden City Road far to the east. On the Odlinwood side of No. 4 Road, the corridor ranges from about 9 metres to 16, but in addition the tree branches extend over walls into the housing developments. I now think that the equivalent for the Alderbridge wildlife corridor bordering the Alexandra Neighbourhood would be 23 metres, or about 75 feet. That allows for taller trees, with their branches *within* the natural buffer. It would be at street level, probably with a retaining wall at the back, the mall side.

A reliable city manager told me that the Alderbridge ESA bordering the Alexandra Neighbourhood would still apply to applications that began while it was in effect. That means this one. I ask that it be applied by mutual agreement between city and developer. Of course, a large segment has been buried under deep grey sand. That has wiped out almost all the life in that segment and affected adjoining ones, so restoration is needed. One approach would be for the developer or anchor store to sponsor and direct it, in consultation with local experts like Michael Wolfe. Maybe it could even be called the Walmart Wildlife Corridor.

As long as the interests of our citizens come first, it's fine with me if SmartCentres and Walmart prosper too. If the 23-metre buffer is *additional* green space, it could take up 15% of the SmartCentres property, helping it to achieve neighbourhood mall size. That will also reduce capital costs. It may even reduce *traffic* — enough that the Alexandra-to-Leslie connector may not be needed, a huge saving. In any case, Walmart and SmartCentres would get terrific natural publicity. It's a win-win for the citizens and the developers.

The second factor is **natural viewscales**. We *had* natural viewscales from the City Centre south of Alderbridge Way until a long pile of sand was deposited on the mall site a few years ago.

[Viewscape graphic]

A year or two before that, Michael Wolfe took this photo from the greenspace to the south, the Garden City Lands. The City of Richmond aims for view *corridors*, and *natural viewscales* are the gold standard of view corridors. From the Lands, we are close to having a *panorama* of natural viewscales from beyond the Lions in the northwest all the way past Mount Baker and the Seven Sisters in the southeast.

Notice that this viewscape goes all the way from one's vantage point as far as one can see into the distance. In a *natural* viewscape, there's essentially nothing but nature and elements that are harmonious with it. Here we see the early spring colours of the Garden City Lands, with one of the red-winged blackbirds that nest there (at bottom right). Further out, there's the northwest berm, the trees of the Alderbridge median and the mixed urban forest of the Alderbridge wildlife corridor. In the distance, we see Grouse Mountain on the left and other North Shore mountains. Because of the berm, Alderbridge traffic is not evident, and there's an optical illusion that the trees are on the lands.

Our panorama of viewscapes from an inland downtown may be unique in the world. It is certainly one of Richmond's great natural legacies. It is a priceless gift from the past, a wonderful asset for community wellness, and a tourist draw when the enhancement of the Garden City Lands as our central park lives up to expectations. Please don't squander our legacy.

### **[Mallscape graphic]**

This second view is *exactly* the same photo as the natural viewscape *except* that an artist took some available Walmart mall art and slid it onto the north side of Alderbridge. (I should mention that the median trees would still be in the view, making it less stark than shown.) The shopping centre looks as though it is on the lands, and that's how it would seem. I do realize that the developer's artists have been adding more trees lately, as you saw in the illustration for my Digging Deep column in last Friday's *Richmond Review*, but being less bad isn't good enough.

### **[Viewscape + Mallscape graphic]**

Here are the natural viewscape and the mallscape together.

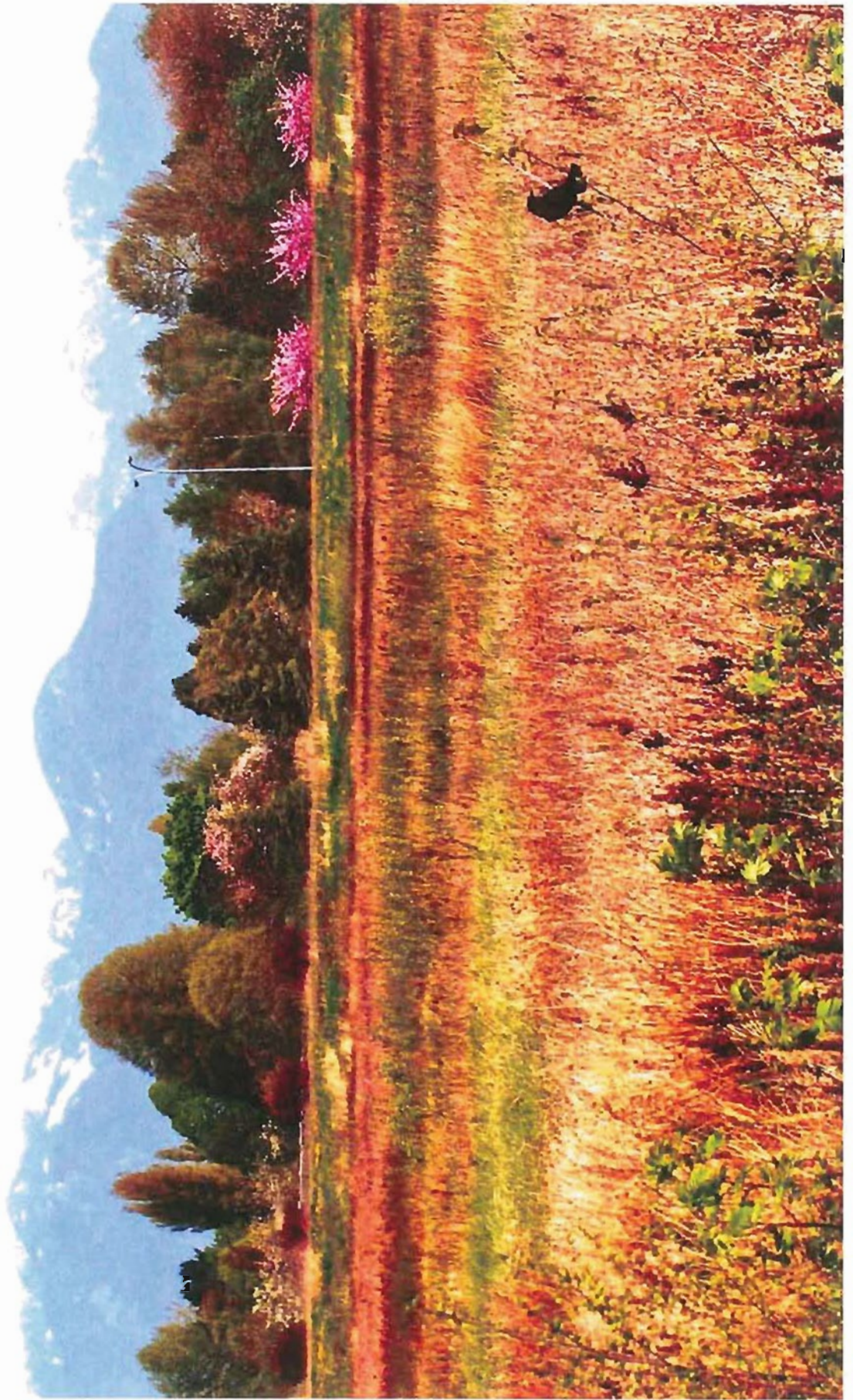
Since the Walmart store and parkade are high, we need evergreens that are tall enough to screen them and perhaps Alexandra Court —without blocking the mountains. That is still doable. Since the mall is a \$150 million project, the cost can still be reasonable. Naturally, the viewscape restoration and wildlife corridor restoration go together.

[IESCO Certificate graphic]

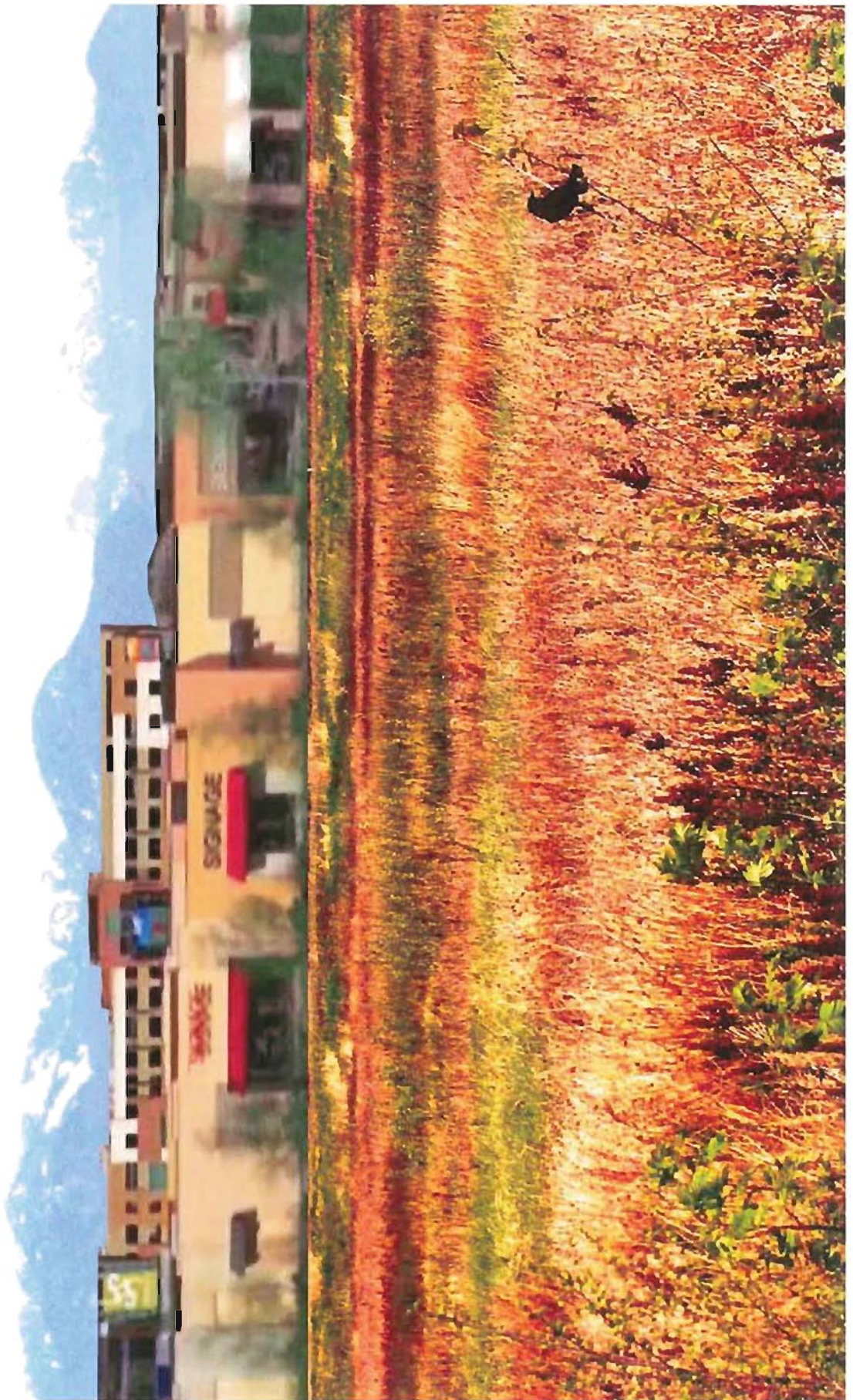
That fits in with my final exhibit, the elegant folder for a certificate. It goes with our spectacular plaque from IESCO, the International Eco-Safety Cooperative Organization, a UN affiliate. In December 2010, we were one of just three cities in the world to be chosen as International Eco-Safety Demonstration Cities. It's an award for a three-year period, and it's different from a trophy because it brings with it a *responsibility*. We are a model of ecological cooperation for the world.

Our 3-year term will end next month, and the timing of the Walmart Wildlife Corridor is perfect. By doing the right thing, we will finish strong with a leading-edge cooperative achievement. It will inspire the world, and it will inspire the people who matter most, the citizens of Richmond.

Please vote against the application as a helpful step toward an achievement that will be far better for SmartCentres, Walmart, the world and the people of Richmond.



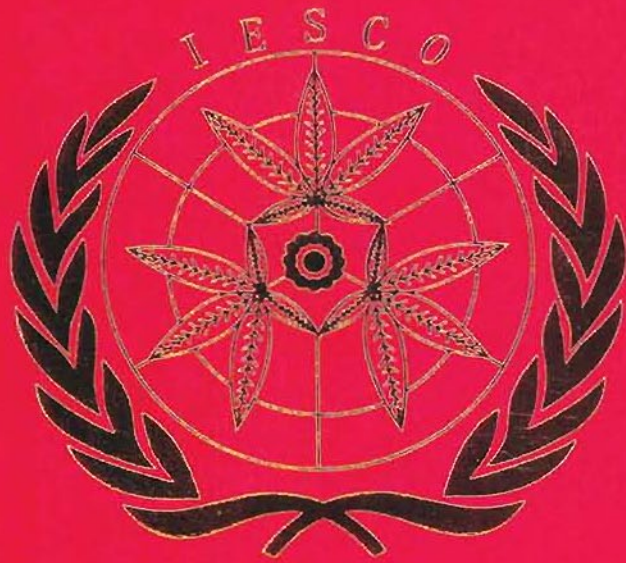












**CERTIFICATE**