

I recently made the decision to move ^{back} to Richmond and raise my family. I was convinced that Richmond was the best place to be after I read the City of Richmond's Mission Statements on its website. And as Dr. Lu said what is put on a website is something to stand behind.
First, the Vision:

Richmond! Striving for a connected, healthy city where we cooperate to create and enjoy a dynamic and sustainable quality of life.

On the Environment

We are committed to responsible stewardship of the natural environment ...

On Sustainability

We believe that that all resources of the City are respected, preserved, enjoyed and utilized in a sustainable manner both for current and future generations.

Perfect... Health, environment, sustainability were all in the forefront of Richmond's message. Not to mention Richmond's commitment to the Olympic's pledge of Sustainability. Richmond had committed to this in front of the world. I trusted that the city definitely would not compromise our health or that of our diverse landscape.

After I moved here, I started to really feel the vibe of the city. I loved the variety of parks, of course the dykes and the reminders that we were better in every way.

Then I noticed the city spraying. First, there were my neighbours spraying in the middle of the day breathing in the fumes along with my children in the yard. Next, it was the tank of poison being sprayed on a schoolyard. Then it was a tank of poison being sprayed on the sidewalk by a young man. Of course there was also the STAY OFF poison signs around the tracks. I was shocked.

Then cancer struck my family. Not 1 or 2 members, but 8 members of my immediate family in a year. So I did what anyone would do in my situation. I started to ask why? Through a great deal of research, I discovered that the pesticides sprayed daily on our lawns and in our environment were mildly to extremely toxic to all living things. The key word to me was toxic.

From the American Journal of Epidemiology last week, Scientists have shown that in animal models and cell cultures, pesticides trigger a neurodegenerative process that leads to Parkinson's disease. Now, researchers at UCLA provide the first evidence for a similar process in humans.

Toxic

The American Cancer Association published a study that shows clear links between exposure to the herbicide glyphosate and non-Hodgkin's lymphoma in humans.

Toxic

The Alberta Government is quoted as saying "There is field evidence that 2,4-D has long term chronic toxicity to bees, especially in cool weather and where nectar forage plants are treated."²²

Toxic

The University of Kentucky reported that Earthworms, also called the "intestines of the earth" by Aristotle, provided strong evidence for the involvement of pesticidal contamination in the biochemical changes in earthworms, including decreased growth rate and a decrease in functioning.

Toxic

is linked to causes
Numerous scientific studies, including one from the University of California, state that the most common weed killer in the world, Atrazine, disrupts hormone activity in all life and causes prostate, ovarian and breast cancers in animals and humans. The effect occurs at concentrations as low as 2 ppb. It has been banned in the EU. It is still being sold and used throughout Canada. It can be found in our water supply, in our wildlife, and in our food. Interestingly, the makers are obviously very aware of how they are killing us as they are also a major sponsor for national breast cancer awareness month.

Toxic

How could a sustainable, healthy, vibrant city allow the spraying of toxins that kill not only us but, the very animals, insects and water that sustain us?

If this isn't enough, it is proven that the INTERACTION of these pesticides is even more toxic. Although a tadpole may survive a small dose of some pesticides, when combined with other small amounts of pesticides the tadpole instantly dies. After taking a trip to the local garden shop, I realized any homeowner could make his or her very own toxic soup in our environment whenever or wherever they wanted. Richmond, better in every way, would not stand by and watch its citizens, its wildlife, and its water succumb to this toxic soup. I then found out that we are one of the last cities in the lower mainland to pass a by-law.

So I joined the Canadian Cancer Society and RPAC to help educate the city, including its leaders, about the dangers of pesticides. Up till a few days ago, I was disheartened. The city was still amidst a cloud of poison.

Until I read what Councillor Sue Halsey Brandt said to the Richmond Review about the new smoking by-law. She stated that she wants to be part of a council that takes the health issues of Richmond residents really seriously. She also stated that she is pleased about the new smoking by-law and even though she understands that it may be hard to enforce, the city is taking an educational approach – AFTER they passed the by-law. Not the other way around. It took over 100 years for people to finally understand the dangers of smoking. The Canadian Cancer Society, and RPAC have educated you, and now it is your turn to live up to the City of Richmond's motto of sustainability, stewardship and good health. We do not need to wait 100 years for ALL people to realize the dangers of pesticides. The by-law

is the only way we can protect the citizens of Richmond and ensure that their lifespan continues to be one of the longest in the world.

And do not worry about enforcement. I will personally volunteer myself, and anyone who has had to experience cancer or does not want to experience cancer, to circulate Richmond and enforce this issue. I care about the City of Richmond: The people, the environment and our health. Not money, just life. I hope you do too.