

Transportation is the major cause of air pollution

Dear Editor:

A recent public hearing regarding development permits on Government Street in Penticton generated interesting comments. It is wonderful that Tony Giroux of Giroux Design Group has chosen to forgo huge profits to build 2-, 3-, and 4-plexes for families here.

He was clear they aren't "affordable," but he is adding to the housing stock to meet the need according to CMHC. He mentioned how people critical of his many projects have no better solutions to the housing affordability and climate crises we face. Citizens and experts actually have many solutions that are not difficult for council and the industry to implement.

Parking and traffic issues were mentioned a few times and dismissed as not relevant.

Transportation is the greatest contributor to air pollution and greenhouse gas emissions (GHG) in Penticton, seeing a 16% increase in emissions in the years before 2020 from passenger vehicles. Encouraging more cars in the city by providing double garages and requiring a certain number of parking spaces per home is not incentivizing homeowners to adopt active transportation or to use public transit. Providing more public transit, reducing the fees and improving accessibility to buses while expanding the safe bike route could get people to ditch their cars.

Buildings are the second largest GHG emitters.

Penticton's Climate Action Plan states that one action is, "Changes to City of Penticton policy and regulation that lead to energy and emission reductions in the community, such as requirements and incentives for enhanced energy efficiency in new buildings."

Building to Step 3 (and soon Step 4) is simply inadequate in the face of looming climate disaster, and Penticton should not be so proud of only aspiring to that level. The B.C. government has adopted the Zero Carbon Step Code as of May 1, 2023, in new homes that address greatly reduced emissions. Safe Cities, a group of government leaders and citizens, notes that Saanich, Victoria, West Vancouver, District of North Vancouver, the City of North Vancouver, Whistler, Squamish, Rossland, and others have already begun to work on requiring new buildings to be all-electric and zero emissions at an accelerated pace. Or at least build to the highest Step Code No. 5. Penticton can do the same and lead our developers to embrace better building practices immediately before burdening the buyers with the high cost of retrofitting later.

Passive house design was used in the new UBCO residences building, has been used at Okanagan College and on Penticton Indian Band land, is a building practice used by local builders, and can be implemented without a huge increase of costs up front but huge heating costs savings over the long term.

There are many groups, builders, designers, and engineers sharing their knowledge on creating healthier, safer communities. Climate Caucus, 80 Cities, Strong Towns, and Passive House Accelerator are just a few of the organizations that share resources, knowledge, and expert

guidance on developing structures, streets, and communities to be livable, affordable, equitable, sustainable, and fun with people living healthier.

Lori Goldman

https://www.pentictonherald.ca/opinion/article_5f7cc548-3177-11ee-8c0d-63cab84e0b4a.html