

The Sterling Report

Clouds Of Change: Is This A Storm Warning For Future Development?



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“Clouds of Change” was published by the City of Vancouver one year ago, in June 1990 as a document to establish a framework of environmental change for the city. The document focuses primarily on city-wide and regional issues. The report’s recommendations therefore will have a tremendous impact on residential and commercial development.

The overall objective of Clouds of Change is to reduce atmospheric pollution and enhance the liveability of the city. The report suggests that this objective is achievable through a co-operative effort between all levels of government, the corporate community and private citizens.

Clouds of Change targets the need to reduce emissions from industrial and transportation sources and focuses on three issues which will collectively contribute to achieving the goal of reducing atmospheric pollution:

- Transportation
- Land use planning and
- Energy conservation.

While the intentions expressed in the report are commendable the methods suggested for achieving the goals are unclear.

It appears that the onus for reducing atmospheric pollution is placed squarely on the shoulders of those with the least resources to solve the problem: The Corporate Community and Private Citizens.

A large part of the Corporate Community, is the builders and developers of British Columbia. With the Clouds of Change implemented, developments must clear one new hurdle placed within the maze that already exists in the approval process; The Environmental Planner. The City Planning Department has already introduced an interim environmental checklist that has been applied to a number of new development permit applications. This checklist will no doubt grow in complexity as will the staff required to review environmental features of development permit applications as Clouds of Change is further realized.

As for Private Citizens; in addition to increased taxes, they will be asked to accept more inconveniences which include among others, parking and transportation.

The City of Vancouver staff will effect Clouds of Change recommendations. The achievement will have a tremendous impact on the corporate community and private citizens. As one of the largest components of the Corporate Community, the building industry has a responsibility to express support and/or concern about performance on Clouds of Change.

The community at large should bear in mind that the primary aim of the report is to enhance the liveability of the region and to provide a mechanism to establish sustainable growth. Government has suggested one direction. Builders, developers, building owners and managers as part of the Corporate Community can play a vital role by suggesting practical and economic methods of achieving an appropriate pattern of sustainable growth as we enter the next century. **R**