

# THE ADDICTION TO GROWTH<sup>1</sup>

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We humans, especially in the western world, have a commitment to growth which, if sustained, will have disastrous results. In fact growth is a self fulfilling prophecy. For as fast as we expand to the outer limit, that outer limit is handled by developers demanding and getting more land to handle the growth, establishing yet another outer limit. That can't go on!

We seem to believe the old saw that if you don't continue growing you will go backwards into the maw of mediocrity. This mantra of "grow or perish" spurs municipal politicians - where the real action is - to attract more and more industry thus requiring more land for residences. Even when land is kept away from developers, existing apartment space will be forced to go higher. Senior governments pitch in by building more highways and bridges which, when built, will attract more and more vehicles.

We promise that we'll stop using petroleum for fuel at the same time as we develop more and more dirty oil and build new pipelines to transport it. More and more people, like me, write editorials and make speeches about all this "progress", more and more people agree and less and less is done about it. The new economic powerhouses in the world, India and China, (the latter of which virtually owns the United States) will, as North America increasingly depends upon them for goods, demand and get the US and Canada to relax immigration laws - which we'll have no choice but to accept - and we'll build more residences and highways to accommodate them. Areas like the Downtown East Side in Vancouver will become more and more crowded creating an ever increasing demand for more social housing.

We're on a runaway train and don't know how to get off.

The trouble with BC and indeed the country as a whole is that, by international standards, we have plenty of space for more people to occupy even considering the weather factor as you get into northern regions.

How do we deal with this?

There Is no magic bullet and people must start thinking - we all must realize that development has become a Ponzi scheme where we need new development to bring in new batches of capital with each new arrival resulting in another new batch able to come in, and on it goes. It all starts at the municipal level and that's where we must make our concerns felt.

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<sup>1</sup> The Common Sense Canadian, July 27, 2010