

Greetings from "Price Tags"

This is the first issue of an informal newsletter that I hope will evolve into a blog - a web log - on Vancouver and urban issues. If this is not something you want to see arrive in your inbox, let me know and I'll quickly remove your name. (Likewise, if there's someone whom you think would like to receive it, pass on their e-mail address to me.)

There's so much being written about Vancouver these days that it's hard to keep up. Here's the latest piece from San Francisco:

## **Blame It on Canada: Vancouver urban planning guru preaches high-density tower living in San Francisco**

[www.sfgate.com/cgi-bin/article.cgi?file=/gate/archive/2003/09/09/carollloyd.DTL](http://www.sfgate.com/cgi-bin/article.cgi?file=/gate/archive/2003/09/09/carollloyd.DTL)

(Let me know if that web address doesn't work and I'll send you the text. Press Reply and ask for the San Francisco text.)

It's nice to reach the status of guru, but apparently it doesn't pay much more than City Councillor.

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Another complementary piece on Vancouver appeared in, of all places, the Toronto Star.

Here are some of the opening paragraphs.

Jun. 21, 2003.

## **Lessons from Lotus Land**

Christopher Hume

History has been on Toronto's side, but the future may belong to Vancouver. Not because Vancouver is richer or more beautiful, but because Vancouver knows where it wants to go in the decades ahead and Toronto doesn't. Perhaps the most telling comparison can be seen in the effects of the condo boom that has swept both cities. In Toronto, developers build to suit the market. In Vancouver, they build to suit the city. As a result, Vancouver condo architecture has a level of coherence and urbanity that's altogether missing in Toronto.

It's not just that the quality of design is higher on the West Coast, though it seems to be, it's that the condos here, good and bad, are part of something larger - the city itself. Indeed, if there's a single feature that distinguishes the two centres, it is the element of control. Vancouver applies strict building rules to development; Toronto doesn't have the same power. In Vancouver, politicians aren't allowed into the room when development is approved. In Toronto, politicians make the decision themselves, all too often for the wrong reasons.....

The rest of the piece should be available at:

[www.thestar.com/NASApp/cs/ContentServer?pagename=thestar/Layout/Article\\_Type1&c=Article&cid=1056106468447&call\\_page=TS\\_Columnists&call\\_pageid=970599109774&call\\_pagepath=Columnists](http://www.thestar.com/NASApp/cs/ContentServer?pagename=thestar/Layout/Article_Type1&c=Article&cid=1056106468447&call_page=TS_Columnists&call_pageid=970599109774&call_pagepath=Columnists)

If not, send me a reply and ask for the Toronto text.

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Finally, there's another piece that regrettably is not available on the web. This one I really regret, because as author I was honoured (and surprised) to receive the Plan Canada (Journal of the Canadian Institute of Planners) award for article of the year. Though not specifically about Vancouver, it deals with the general question of transportation planning and where we're likely to be in the future.

Here are some opening paragraphs. If you want the whole thing, well, you know the routine: send me a reply with a request for the Plan Canada article.

## The View from '56: Thoughts on the Short-Term Future of Transportation Planning

A few years ago, the Ford Expedition assembling plant in Wayne, Michigan, made more money in after-tax profits than the combined budgets of every municipality in British Columbia. The number of SUVs sold in North America has roughly doubled since 1996, now totalling about four million a year. They are classified as light trucks (in order to drive through various legislative loopholes) and are expected to soon surpass passenger cars as a percent of the market.

If you want to know the future of transportation in North America, start there. That's where most of the money has gone, and where people's expectations reside - in big cars on big roads. The future, apparently, is like 1956, only more so.

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As I mentioned, I'd like to turn this e-mail newsletter into a blog. If anyone out there can assist with technical support, I'd be most appreciative.

And if you'd like to contribute leads, ideas, articles or responses, please send them along by Reply.

The next newsletter will come when I have the material and the time. Thanks for reading.

Gord Price