

## PRICE TAGS – Issue 2

September 18, 2003

This is the coolest thing you will see all week:

[www.city.vancouver.bc.ca/commsvcs/fade/fade.htm](http://www.city.vancouver.bc.ca/commsvcs/fade/fade.htm)

Trish French (City of Vancouver Planning Department) took the photos in 1978 as part of a city views project and recently discovered the photographs. Dan Campbell and Andy Coupland stitched them together, and took the new images, to create the panoramas. John Atkin found the "fade code" to create the pages.

Thanks to John for the link. To other readers: send me this stuff. It's exactly what 'Price Tags' is about.

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BTW, John Atkin and Michael Kluckner have a new book out: "*Vancouver Walks*" (Steller Press) – self-guided walking tours of Vancouver and regional neighbourhoods. Biggest surprise: there's a neighbourhood in Vancouver called Beacon Hill.

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Speaking of cool things to do on the web, Roseline Melzer of Facet Decision Systems ([www.facet.com](http://www.facet.com)) wrote to tell me of a very nifty web-based consultation process they did for TransLink that you can find at:

[http://www.translink.bc.ca/Transportation\\_Future/Enter.asp](http://www.translink.bc.ca/Transportation_Future/Enter.asp)

It provides some useful information about transportation planning challenges, and then allows you to submit some transportation and payment options you'd like to see in the region for 2013. Then you can compare yours with futures submitted by others.

Ray Straastma of BEST has already observed that TransLink has been test-flying a parking tax that would hit the City of Vancouver particularly hard. (Free parking in the suburbs would presumably be exempt.) One meeting with downtown business people, though, and they're thinking maybe this one should be rethought. Maybe a 'stall tax' cum sales tax.

Oh yeah, that – and another transit fare hike in 2005.

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Here's an item for your calendar:

### **“A Night of Chinatown Films”**

A mini-festival of short films will be held on Sunday, September 28, from 8 PM to 10 PM, outdoors in the magnificent Sun Yat Sen Gardens located at 578, Carrall Street, in the heart of Chinatown. Admission is free.

The event is organized by Amil Niazi, terminus1525 producer in Vancouver and Joseph Grier. The public will have the opportunity to see the works of young Chinese-Canadian filmmakers from the Vancouver area.

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Jim Sutherland, editor of *Western Living*, passed on a piece he did for Air Canada's *En Route* magazine. It answers that question everyone asks who comes here: ***How come this place is so expensive when no one seems to actually do anything?***

Here's a clip:

Give kids a chance to buy a place in Disneyland and they would; so it is with adults. It used to be other Canadians who made us their live-in fantasyland, but sadly, most Canucks can only afford to visit now. You know how it is. Just when the Asian invasion started to peter out, their place was taken by anxious Americans spending inflated U.S. dollars.

Real estate agents say that about a quarter of the luxury condos going up downtown are currently being purchased by Americans, who regard them as weekend getaways, safe havens or, ultimately, retirement homes. When another friend went to sell his humble million-dollar home, two of three offers came from Americans. The successful bidder proved to be an economist from Seattle who didn't like the way things were shaping up in his country and was planning a retirement north of the border.

Want the whole thing? Click "Reply" and ask for the Sutherland piece.

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Here's a Vancouverite's perspective on some place else that's particularly relevant these days. Frankfurt was one of the first

European cities to establish a safe-injection site, and was often referenced when Vancouver was considering doing the same.

Peter Webster, a member of the Vancouver Police Board, wrote down his comments after a recent visit to that city and a tour with the police. Here are a few quotes:

The street-level drug dealing and consumption ... is exacerbated by the fact that this neighbourhood surrounding the main train station is mainly a transient commercial zone. It doesn't appear that there is a large residential presence in this neighbourhood and certainly not one that includes a mix of housing types.

The area is also home to a long-established legalized prostitution industry, in the form of a number of high profile and large-scale brothels. The area also appears to be the city's nightlife entertainment district, with a number of bars and nightclubs. Nonetheless, the area also contains a number of upper-scale tourist hotels.

The street-level drug activity and all of the consequent street problems are quite visible in the area at all hours.

Most of their (the police's) efforts today are aimed at attempting to maintain order on the streets by simply responding to violent offenses largely acting as "traffic directors", attempting to physically keep the sidewalks clear of drug users who congregate on the streets after the injecting facilities close.

They feel powerless in responding to the concerns of area property and business owners who see the open drug consumption as harming the viability of their businesses. Ironically, the police point to the legalized brothels as

examples of “well-managed” businesses, largely controlled by Hells’ Angels in-house enforcers, who maintain order inside the facilities.

There’s lots more. Send me a “Reply” and ask for the Webster paper if you wish the full document.

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Finally, I’m still trying to figure out what the COPE Councillors were thinking when they voted to allow sex trade workers to operate out of live/work spaces in Downtown South. It’s not so much that they were creating a de-facto red-light district, but that they were doing it *without asking a single person who lived there what they thought about it!*

Why is the Left the loudest to argue for public participation, and then the quickest to ignore it when their ideology takes over?

Explanations and arguments welcome.

Gord Price

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Want off the list? Let me know, and you’re gone!