

Regional officials are listening to concerns

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into consideration the social impact of growth and how growth can affect the communities in which we live ... from an appropriate mix of housing to access to social programs, my group seemed to take a strong interest in ensuring that growth's impact on people is a positive one.

When we gathered again in council chambers to share our thoughts, these were just some of the ideas and comments the stakeholders brought to council's table:

- Improved provision of transit services would enhance life in our communities.
- The region should promote a live/work style of planning, so that residents can live in a community and find employment there, too.
- The region should have a two-stream approach to planning — a shorter term plan of 10 years and a long-term plan for 50 years. And the planning horizon should be shortened to make it more accountable.
- There was support for an intermediate growth boundary, that is a boundary that identifies areas that are appropriate for short-term growth, while a long-term boundary would identify the ultimate urban edge.
- The region should commit to preserving agricultural land and green space.
- There should be improved dialogue and communication between all parties who are affected by development — the community, the developers and the government — to alleviate what can sometimes be an adversarial relationship.
- There should be balanced community development, taking into account the need for residential and commercial growth.
- And, ultimately, the region should be willing to make a commitment to developing policies along these lines.

In essence, the stakeholders at the symposium, whether they were voicing their passionate commitment to preserving the environment or explaining the lengthy process they undertake to help build a new subdivision, were all working toward the same goal — building a healthy community with a high quality of life for residents.

And, it appears, the region is listening.



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