

Opinion: To dream, perhaps to solve country's ills

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Lance Secretan talks about his new theory of dreams for corporations and he said he is asking Canadians about their dream for Canada. He wants Canada to have a dream to which to aspire.

Herewith, our dream for Canada, which we offer to Mr. Secretan, Mr. Trudeau and anyone else who will listen to us.

This is a dream in which Canadians finally demand excellence rather than complacently accepting the mediocrity in which we are completely awash. The beginning of this revolution, this initiative for excellence is in two new cities, independent of the old: fresh, carefully planned, completely green and self-sustaining from the point of view of energy and constructed to last hundreds of years. As our existing cities cram in more people, and, in the ensuing race to keep up with the demand to house, feed and transport the rapidly increasing populations, developers erect buildings that will not last beyond 50 years (maybe, less) and build those on land where they have been allowed to tear down older, often better built edifices or, farther out of town, rip up farmland for the purpose, there is a real need for vision, control and reflective thought. Right now, development, it seems, is almost panic driven.

Two new cities.

You do know, I'm sure, that the ideas of sustainability, food and water that are safe, housing that is beautiful, practical and comfortable ? all these are never a matter of money but of mind-set. These new cities will finally set the bars for good mind set, good thinking, planning. Caring.

So, two cities for which the long term plan is a population of two to three million people. These are cities where anyone can go: people newly arrived; people here all their lives; people who are descended from those who have been here a thousand years. They might not be built so large in the first place, but there will be sensible, sustainable plans for more building, ready for the future of the cities.

They will be located on or near existing infrastructure, including a northern location but with a clear sight to the surrounding environment. They will be powered and heated with geothermics, solar, wind and technology that is currently under wraps because the oil companies don't want us to use them. Intelligent consultation will take place among investors, scientists, environmentalists, the surrounding population, engineers in line with the vision, wildlife experts ? in short, everyone who can contribute to avoiding the same old mistakes that come with construction and new infrastructure.

Whatever is built must be considered for its footprint, its appearance for beauty, its efficiency and its longevity, for nothing can be constructed except to last centuries, not just decades. It will be the end of the throw-away mentality.

They will be cities with little need for automobiles which will anyway be solely electric, or run with alternative, non polluting fuels, for the pathways for bicycles and the efficiency of the public transportation will mostly suffice the needs of everyone.

They will be places for artists, entertainment, conscientious industry, technological development and research, centres of education and medicine, where the whole contributes to the individual and vice-versa.

This is all perfectly possible with existing technology, including that which is suppressed, because gone are the days when only greed can rule, when the good of the very few outweighs the good of the many. These will be cities for people to live in, where buildings are not ridiculously tall so that they are unsafe and intimidating. Robots will not run the cities but people will, paid fair and reasonable wages, enough to live and to spend so that the economies of the cities excel, not founder.

On the outskirts, on the roofs in town, in back yards, there will be crops, grown, in keeping with the philosophy, organically, without the use of pesticides on plants nor the horrors we apply to our animals. This is done already far and wide, to great effect. In fact, it is increasing understood that organic farming is a far more efficient use of land than the alternatives, while obviously producing food that is better to eat and, by the bye, much more delicious.

Intelligent use of hydroponics (without the chemicals) and green houses will help lengthen our short growing season as they are already doing.

All this and more are established methods in northern Europe. Just check out the systems in use in Holland, Denmark and Sweden for clear examples of everything that has been suggested here.

Once our new cities have been started, people elsewhere will grow envious and demand the same standards for their own towns.

Thus, the call for excellence will start to take root.