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Todd Gillis Photo

A dynamic city is one where developers and designers work collaboratively with government officials and the public is consulted on projects every step of the way.

Building an exceptional community

By donalee Moulton
Contributing Writer

Larry Beasley is a dreamer. The recently retired director of planning for Vancouver has visions of a dynamic city where developers and designers work collaboratively with government officials and the public is consulted on projects every step of the way.

The result: a thriving community that is profitable to do business in and is a pleasure to live in.

For Beasley, this is no dream. In Vancouver, it is reality in many respects, says the former city planning official.

"Smart growth is about seeing the whole picture. You start with a vision and you develop a plan to make it reality."

Such visionary planning is a cornerstone of leadership.

"Good leaders plan, and great leaders dream," says Stephen Dempsey, president and CEO of the Greater Halifax Partnership.

But dreaming, he notes, is just the first step.

"Once a community has a shared vision, leaders must work to ensure a process is in place that will lead to success."

It is critical, he adds, to learn from other leading communities and to identify best practices.

Dan Pappas, associate executive director of the Michigan Association of School Administrators, has worked to help his community dream — and deliver. One critical element, he notes, is that dreams — and leaders — unite people. "And whenever you can find something that unites people, you will move forward in significant and important ways."

That was certainly the experience in one New Brunswick community. For too long, says Steve Carson, CEO of Enterprise Saint John, there was a divide between members of the community over how to enhance economic development.

That divide has been breached thanks to a comprehensive, intensive — and inclusive — process that brought all sectors of the community together to build a brand for their city, a brand that is now being successfully shared with the world.

"There has been a tremendous transformation in our vision around true growth," says Mr. Carson. "We are moving forward with one unified voice. We recognize we can thrive because of our differences."

"Community," he adds, "is more about people than it is about the next big investment to come through the door."

Embracing our togetherness, and our differences, is a sign of leadership and a necessary attribute of a leader, says Mr. Pappas. He notes that it is imperative when aspiring to be the best community, the best organization, or the best business that input from everyone is essential.

"It is critical to have as many voices, as many sectors, as many people involved so that all elements of a dream



Todd Gillis Photo (Inset photo contributed)

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are explored — and a truly comprehensive plan can be put in place to attain shared goals."

That all-encompassing approach is at the heart of the HRM Economic Strategy, which is built on this collective vision: Our people are our community. We will improve and empower the lives of every citizen by building a prosperous, dynamic, globally competitive economy where creativity and risk-taking can flourish alongside a quality of life that is the envy of the world.

This is not pie in the sky. This vision, and the goals that bolster it, are attainable. But the path to success is not an easy one. First comes knowledge and understanding, and then comes concerted action.

"Leadership is critical," says Mr. Dempsey. "The kind of future we envision requires courage and the ability to make tough decisions."

"Only by dreaming about what is possible," he adds, "can we move forward and achieve the seemingly impossible."



Todd Gillis Photo

Greater Halifax will become 'greater' through visionary planning by leaders who are willing to dream.

One is the ideal number for organizations, businesses, communities

By donalee Moulton
Contributing Writer

One is not the loneliest number. Indeed, says internationally acclaimed writer, speaker, and leadership authority Lance Secretan, one is the ideal number — for organizations, for businesses and for communities.

"Separateness is uninspiring and demoralizing, and it doesn't make us great. We need to be cohesive to be

truly effective," says the author of ONE: The Art and Practice of Conscious Leadership.

Employees are looking for greatness from their companies' senior management; voters are looking for greatness from their leaders.

"All too often," says Mr. Secretan, "they are disappointed."

One of the main reasons for that disappointment — a lack of unity. "We get mired in pettiness. We need to rise

above this and focus on the big picture," says Secretan, who founded The Secretan Centre in Caledon, Ontario, to help leaders achieve success.

"My advice to every organization and to every community is to figure out what is the dream that will unite you," he adds.

"We didn't put a person on the moon by squabbling. Uniqueness sets us apart; we set aside our differences."

Finding that dream, and forging the

path to its realization, requires six key attributes. These are the CASTLE principles Secretan has developed. Those initials stand for courage, authenticity, service, truthfulness, love, and effectiveness.

Courage requires reaching beyond boundaries, those often deeply held, limitations, fears and beliefs while authenticity refers to committing oneself to show up and be fully present.

Service refers to focusing on the

needs of others by listening to them, identifying their needs, then meeting them. Listening openly to others and refusing to compromise integrity defines truthfulness; relating to, and inspiring captures the quality of love.

Finally, there is effectiveness, being capable of, and successful in, achieving goals.

"In the end," says Mr. Secretan, "this is about leadership at its most fundamental. This is about inspiration."