



Why people oppose 15-minute cities

Description

The explosive growth of a new Facebook group on 15-minute cities provides a barometer for growing public backlash against the concept.

Rejecting The 15 Minute City (Global) was launched by a Canadian on February 2 and already has more than 8,100 members. The author of this article asked members what they believed the concept entailed and why it concerned them, prompting almost 300 comments.

The concept was unveiled at COP21 in 2015 as an urban design concept to make needed amenities available to anyone within a 15-minute walk or bike ride. Although the idea has caught on in Edmonton, Ottawa, Toronto, Vancouver, and other Canadian cities, many Canadians are leery.

Trish Perkins-Triebner of Woodstock, Ontario, says “15-minute cities isn’t a terrible idea in if itself. Having necessities of life closer to home is never a bad thing. The issue lies with the surveillance and data collecting. And of course restriction of movement to areas outside of the 15-minute zone. It’s [government] overreach at its finest. And it’s the end of freedom. Crucify 15-minute cities by simply saying NO.”

In Edmonton, Jill Whynot says “fines for freedom of movement” concern her. A precedent comes from Oxford, UK, which will divide the city into 15-minute districts in 2024. People with permits get 100 visits a year and fines equal to \$56 Canadian for each additional trip.

BC resident Carrie Godard has a similar assessment: “Total control, communism, dictatorship. Same thing Hitler did only this is on a global scale. They’ll become ghettos. History repeating itself on a much larger scale.”

Lorie Growth of Hay Lakes, Alberta agrees. “Except this time the wall will be built electronically and all

citizens will be captive, not just Jews. Always starts out as a nice idea...until it is not."

Darcy Atkinson of the Grande Prairie, Alberta, area calls 15-minute cities the "second step to total domination over the people. Covid was the first step to see how we would respond! And like the sheep...we followed ??."

Southeast Calgary resident Donna Anderson expects the worst.

"Control of our lives by power hungry fanatics, annoying constant having to comply or be penalized, having to watch in case we have overages or pay for them, not getting the food or supplies we need like Cuba or policed like China, no freedom of movement."

A 68-year-old living in Hythe, Alberta foresees the 15-minute concept intersecting with a digital ID and currency.

"I am wondering how store owners will feel about limited customer bases — and they will expect you to be biking and walking in these areas. Ever try to get a week's worth of groceries for a family on a bike? To me it seems the government wants more control over our lives. Add the digital passport to this and we are very controlled and your every movement is tracked," says Sharon Cudmore.

"Soon we will be playing Hunger Games for real. If we lose our cash system we lose many things. Just something simple like yard sales, maybe buying a few eggs from a farmer—being monitored and being told what to do."

Marc Bois from Blind River, Ontario, says, "the government will have total control of what you do and when you do it. There will be no such thing as freedom anymore."

Danelle Toner of Hamilton, Ontario, wrote, "They will sell it as being Green, better for the economy and environment (climate change) but basically it will be a 'Pretty Concentration Camp.' People will start being fined for leaving the 'zone', lose points for using too much energy, cell phone service, public parks etc., then when then happens they will be limited on what they can use from the bank accounts."

Further east, Cherie Jacobs of Kahnawake, Quebec says, "It's totalitarian which means an ultimate loss of all freedoms; if you don't fall in line, they will shut you down."

The scenarios leave Wendy McCarthy of New Glasgow, Nova Scotia thinking of future generations. "I am deeply concerned about the world our children will live in and their children...it breaks my heart."

by Lee Harding

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