

Finally some engagement on land value tax/land rents but just my luck, it was with a JV Howard Schultz..."wE cAn'T HaVe tHaT, tHe cOnStiTutiOn oF 1890, wRiTtEn bY wHiTe pRoPeRtY oWnErS, sAys sO..."

Sure, the state constitution might forbid a state income tax or be interpreted to mean land can't be taxed...but does it mention the 10% local sales tax? Or the B&O tax that everyone hates?

Do we care what the long-dead ancestors of the land owners whose names adorn our local streets would have accepted? Times have changed. And we don't know if their minds wouldn't have changed, if they could see what their city has become.

I wonder how many of Seattle business and political leadership have been to Newhalem and seen the tomb of J D Ross, founder of what became Seattle City Light? I see a parallel between someone who took a force of nature — the wild rivers of Washington — for the benefit of all.

That's how I see land value tax/ground rents in a place like Seattle or the Bay Area: harnessing a source of power to benefit the many. Taxing the use of land won't drive anyone away, at least not unless they are speculators. And in that case, good riddance...

Put a location fee on commercial land, just as we impose sales taxes or levies to support transit, education, libraries, and let the people who want to make something here get on with it. Any city that has as much disused/underused land as Seattle needs to figure out why.

But we know why. Land costs too much to acquire for development. The value (to speculators) keeps rising. A 1% property tax does nothing to discourage holding onto land. For how long? There was city block-sized empty hole in the ground across from City Hall for ten years.

Those rising values reflect the work and investment of everyone else but the owner that land. They reap where they never sowed. Why do we allow this city to be

stripmined by speculators?

How can anyone accept that, in addition to the tent cities and encampments that make Seattle look like a 21st C version of Dickens' works of social criticism?

Turning the parking lot of a closed restaurant on waterfront property into a car camping lot is a failure. That was an admission of incompetence, disguised as compassion. It didn't last long. So not that compassionate.

What seems to be missed in all the talk about how higher wages are driving business growth is that rents chase wages: as wages rise, so do rents, because there is no check on something so scarce and essential as housing.

Land rents/location fees can tip that balance by pushing down the cost to acquire land and driving density: in its most basic form, one only taxes the land, never the improvements. For once, landlords will have to worry about making the rent rather than just their tenants.

And if that increases development of condos/apts for sale, rather than rentals, that seems like a good outcome. Many cities around the world as well as back East offer that. Why not here on the West Coast?

They want to make their money back and turn it over to a mgmt company, right? Good for them. Since 20% of Seattle's single family homes are rentals, mgmt companies are easy to find.

The dynamic cities of the West Coast, and maybe a few back East, are struggling with inequality and the loss of what made them destinations. It all comes down to wealth accumulation, based on land.

Land values drive up rents which hurts working people and rewards the wealthy. It deprives the people who live and work here from investing in their community. And as a result people pay too much to live and work here. That needs to change.

Tax the land, make it work, let those who make it valuable benefit from it, lower

rents, cut into the wealth gap...but, you know, only if the people of 1890, to whom Henry George was a household name, are OK with it.