

## Jenna Kay

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**From:** Monica Zazueta <zazueta0813@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, July 5, 2024 4:27 AM  
**To:** Jenna Kay; Amy Koski; Ben Duncan; Sylvia Ciborowski; Dana Hellman; tlunsford@parametrix.com; Nicole Metildi; Harrison Husting  
**Subject:** The new enlightenment and behavioral economics and policy ideas

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Ashley Hodgson: "The New Enlightenment and Behavioral Economics" | The Great Simplification  
<https://youtu.be/IEUhSSL83-Y?si=xK4vk8ixUqO6B2ny>

1. Behavioral Economics - Hodgson explains that behavioral economics integrates insights from psychology into economic models. It looks at how real human behaviors, biases, and irrationalities play out in economic systems, rather than assuming purely rational actors.
2. The Superorganism Analogy - Hodgson sees the economy, governance, and knowledge systems as a "Superorganism" with interconnected layers. The incentive structures, resource flows, and information flows within this Superorganism need to be "re-jiggered" to address systemic problems.
3. Collective Action Challenges - Hodgson notes the difficulty of individual action to change the system, as people's livelihoods and relationships are embedded within the current structures. She sees the need for collective action solutions, akin to a "multiplayer prisoner's dilemma."
4. The New Enlightenment - Hodgson's "New Enlightenment" YouTube channel aims to rethink knowledge systems, salience of information, and the role of digital tools/networks in facilitating systems change. She sees a need to bridge the digital and relational/community spheres.
5. Intergenerational Collaboration - Hodgson believes younger generations, with their digital fluency, can contribute critical skills and perspectives to reshaping the Superorganism, in collaboration with older generations.

Policy ideas:

- Examine how current economic incentives and resource flows may be driving unsustainable growth patterns. Explore ways to "re-jigger" these incentives.
- Consider how digital tools and networks could be leveraged to enhance community engagement, information sharing, and collective decision-making around growth management.
- Facilitate intergenerational collaboration and knowledge exchange to develop holistic, systems-oriented approaches to sustainable urban planning.

- Focus on building trust, relationships, and "moral communities" that can help overcome collective action challenges around growth management.

The overall theme is the need for a systemic, behavioral economics-informed perspective that goes beyond traditional policy siloes.

The need to address systemic racism and expand creative flow within policy frameworks is crucial.

1. Challenging Groupthink and Power Dynamics within Knowledge Systems:

Hodgson noted how academic and professional communities can develop their own biases and power dynamics that can skew knowledge and policy development. Actively disrupting these insular knowledge bubbles could help surface more diverse perspectives and creative solutions.

2. Fostering Cross-Boundary Collaboration and Understanding:

Hodgson emphasized the importance of "mimetic tribe diplomats" who can bridge different ideological and disciplinary silos. Facilitating this kind of cross-pollination of ideas and mutual understanding could lead to more inclusive, holistic policymaking.

3. Prioritizing Community Relationships and Trust-Building:

Hodgson suggested the value of people having multiple tight-knit community groups to draw upon, rather than relying on a single community. This could enhance resilience, risk-taking, and the ability to challenge entrenched power structures.

Applying these principles could help Vancouver's Growth Management Act move beyond traditional policy silos and address systemic barriers, including those rooted in racism. The key seems to be cultivating the relational infrastructure and cognitive diversity needed to rethink outdated approaches.