

**Subject: One more time - The lesson of Lynn Valley or why the Lynn Valle y Pedestrian Oriented Town Center is not and cannot be pedestrian oriente d.**

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**From:** Ernie Crist <CristE@district.north-van.bc.ca>

**To:** Ernie Crist <CristE@district.north-van.bc.ca>

**CC:** "FONVCA (E-mail)" <fonvca@fonvca.org>

A message from Ernie Crist:

Yes, it was Lincoln who said that you cannot fool all the people all the time. But if we take the Lynn Valley Plan it might be safe to say that most of the people got fooled most of the time and they are still getting fooled.

This came to my mind at a recent meeting of the Lynn Valley Community Association where District Planners, without blushing, explained the "progress" towards the creation of the "Pedestrian Oriented Town Center". Such a center, as you know, had been promised to the people of Lynn Valley at the time when the Lynn Valley Plan was drawn up. You may check out the veracity of this statement by getting hold of the Plan.

I feel obliged to speak out one more time and expose this hoax for what it was and still is today. Although I am the only elected Councillor from Lynn Valley, I did not have an opportunity to speak at that meeting. I had to sit there and bite my tongue while listening to a whole litany of falsehoods being repeated over and over again.

I remember during the time when the Lynn Valley Community Plan was drawn up, we had to call a member of District planning staff to account when I received numerous complaints from citizens that this staff person, in charge of organizing public meetings, contrary to instructions and contrary to District policies, stated that we would have to accept a higher residential housing density because we "had to accept our fair share" of regional population growth. He also told them that it was our duty to build "affordable" housing. As it turned out many of these "affordable" units, after being on the market for a long time are still empty.

This is of interest, because of late, I am hearing the same argument repeated by at least one member of District Council in regards to the Maplewood Plan.

The regional responsibility concept peddled by this District staff member was contrary to the official District Planning Policy. Even then the District had long since broken with this developer oriented planning method and had replaced it with one driven not by developers, enthusiastic planners, regional bureaucrats or Leaky Condo speculators but by genuine neighborhood needs and considerations.

But, to go back to my theme. There is an important lesson to be drawn as to how a "Pedestrian Oriented Town Center" turned into just another regional car mall. How a center where all the facilities are within a 5 minute walking distance complete with minibuses etc, turned into another extension of the concrete jungle with some little tokens for pedestrians here and there. I am obliged to expose this "pedestrian" hoax, if for no other reason than to warn the rest of the community about the District bringing gifts. But at the recent Lynn Valley Community Association meeting I had to listen to the falsehoods being repeated. District Staff had been invited to talk about the "progress" in creating a "Pedestrian Oriented Town Center". Although I am the only representative from Lynn Valley I had no opportunity to speak.

But allow me to proceed for there is an important lesson for people to learn lest they be hoodwinked again, albeit the next time in a different neighborhood.

My memory goes back almost 6 years ago when the Lynn Valley Community Plan was drawn up under the guise of a Pedestrian Oriented Town Center and sold

as such to the public.

The very first thing a professional planning staff would do, under such circumstances, would be to draw up a comprehensive plan and identify the sites for the major components such as the Library, the community center and other community facilities. It would be a comprehensive redevelopment rather than a piecemeal re-development. One of the first priorities would be, via rezoning, to close the gate to any potential box store or any other development which essentially relies on the regional automobile to function or otherwise is contrary to the proposed objective outlined in the plan. The Council has the power to do so within a 30 day plus 60 day time span.

This step was crucial and any statement now that we were hampered by the Mall owners not playing ball is simply to take the public for a fool. At the very moment when the Mall owners were allowed to build Box stores relying on the regional automobile, the pedestrian oriented Town Center was history. If I were a suspicious man, which I am not, of course, I would say it was a deliberate oversight to ensure failure of the pedestrian town center concept. It removed any incentive for the Mall owners to co-operate with the District. I venture to say that the mall owners knew they did not have to worry and no wonder they told the District, in so many words, to get lost. Can you imagine for a moment a planning staff overlooking such a vital step?

The second essential ingredient in building a pedestrian oriented town center is to start with a land assembly program. It requires a comprehensive planning approach.


The third vital ingredient is a comprehensive financial plan where community facilities are paid for from the proceeds of the higher land value as a result of the rezoning shared with the land owners.

Of course if the District had kept its Heritage Fund intact and used it as capital investment instead of squandering it, it would have made the land assembly a great deal easier. But, even without it, it was still possible to accomplish such an objective. The steps outlined above are fundamental to bring a large pedestrian oriented town center from the planning and conceptual stage to its actual fruition. They are outlined in the manuals of essential planning for beginners. As it is now, the opportunity is lost. The result will not be a pedestrian oriented town center, shown to the people during the Lynn Valley planning process, but another regional car mall and all the king's men and all the bafflegab cannot put Humpty Dumpty together again.

As for the library, it too is in jeopardy, statements by District Planners notwithstanding. Such decisions, after all, are not made by staff but by Council and from what I hear, the library is definitely on the skids. The "delay" was for a reason.

Here is a lesson for the rest of the community, including Maplewood - what you see is not necessarily what you get - at least not in the District of North Vancouver.

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