

Subject: The Lynn Valley and Bicycle Master Plan hoax continues.

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CC: Mayor and Council - DNV <Council@dnv.org>, Directors Team <managecomm@dnv.org>

A MESSAGE FROM ERNIE CRIST:

The latest chapter in the ongoing saga of the Lynn Valley "Pedestrian Oriented Town Center" hoax is the bicycle lanes.

In the original Lynn Valley Core Plan, bicycle lanes were to be separated from the roads or "designated". This at least is what was shown on the glossy brochures when the plan was sold to the public. It was part and parcel of what was called the comprehensive redevelopment of the Lynn Valley Core into a "people place" complete with green spaces and tree lined streets. It is a concept which is gaining popularity throughout the world. Unlike (exclusive) car malls, in such areas much emphasis is placed on the use of bicycles. Such centers are places where people can do their shopping and other activities without having to fight their way in and out of a mall, finding a place to park or fear being hit by an automobile.

As it turned out, few if any of the promises made in the Lynn Valley Community Plan were kept even though everything was in place to do so.

Designated bicycle lanes give the riders much better protection than if they have to share the road with the regular traffic. For every accident in a designated lane there are ten if cyclists have to share the space with cars. What is more, if both lanes and sidewalks are lined with trees, a concept dangled before the eyes of the public, it gives the whole area a completely and far more esthetically pleasing appearance. All this was recognized in the Master Bicycle Plan adopted by the District as far back as 1994.

The set back of the now replaced single family homes on both Lynn Valley Road and Mountain Highway in most cases between 50 and 60 feet was more than adequate to accommodate both tree lined boulevards and designated bicycle lanes. But all these promises were scuttled for the benefit of developers and existing road setbacks reduced.


The public was told that to make up for this, streets would be made wider to accommodate "marked" bicycle lanes. And indeed both Lynn Valley Road and Mountain Highway got an additional 18" in width. The problem is that bicycle handles alone are much wider than 18" not to mention a necessary safety margin. Trying to befuddle everybody it was even claimed that in some places Lynn Valley Road had been widened not just by 18" but even up to 24" but not throughout it was admitted. Even 24" is a far cry from the 72" indicated as desirable in the Transportation Association of Canada ("TAC") recommended Bike Lane width for curbed streets which gives the absolute minimum as 1.2 meters or close to 48".

District staff also claimed that the North Shore "Joint Bicycle Advisory Committee", (JBAC), had agreed to the Bicycle Master Plan which was at the center of the debate during a recent Council meeting. That too turned out to be false and the Chair of JBAC even came before Council to say so. He asked that the item be deferred so that his committee could at least comment on the staff report. But when I made a motion to that effect, the CCA endorsed District Council turned it down with Councillor Harris, Denault, Dunsford and Mackay-Dunn voting against. Mayor Bell was absent but had voted in favor of the "shared lanes" previously.

The much touted "Pedestrian Oriented Town Center" along with the 1994 District Bicycle Master Plan itself were hijacked from day one when, with the assistance of the number one CCA endorsed chieftain and developer friend on Council, instead of helping to make the Lynn Valley Mall part of a comprehensive redevelopment of the Lynn Valley Core, the Mall owners were allowed to build two box stores in isolation of this plan. Council gave up it's one and only bargaining chip to create a truly Pedestrian Oriented Town Centre as promised to the people of Lynn Valley.

The stage was set NOT for a new, progressive and visionary redevelopment of Lynn Valley BUT for more of the same, that is more traffic, more pollution and more noise but without the community facilities that were supposed to be part of the complete redevelopment. There is a precedent for this fiasco. It happened some years ago when the then Seymour Plan was sacrificed to accommodate the wishes of a hazardous chemical plant in the Maplewood area. The main elected culprit was one and the same as in Lynn Valley.

But the CCA endorsed District Council to this very day denies that there is something awfully wrong in Lynn Valley. Instead they are virtually falling over themselves with enthusiasm over their own foresight and wisdom.

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