

**Subject: Seniors protest in District Council Chambers;**

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**From:** "Ernie Crist" <ernie\_crist@dnv.org>

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

A MESSAGE FROM ERNIE CRIST

On Monday Jan 20th, the North Vancouver District Council Chambers became the scene of a demonstration by Seniors from the Kiwanis Lynn Manor Senior Center in Lynn Valley protesting against the death of one of their dear friends killed in a crosswalk on 27th Street at Whitely Court in Lynn Valley. Their spokespersons were Mrs. Margaret Gibbons and Mr. Ron Hughes.

The elderly gentleman, who lived at Kiwanis Lynn Manor, was on his way to the Lynn Valley Shopping Mall when he was struck by a car. The press reported that it was dark and he wore dark clothing, but according to Mrs. Gibbons this was not the case. Indeed he wore light coloured clothing, she said. The stretch of road adjacent to the Mall has been a danger site for many years but nothing was ever done by the District to alleviate the situation, ostensibly for lack of money.


But is this true? Is it really true that the District has no money? No, it is not true. The District has the second highest taxes of all the municipalities in the region. On top of that, the District is using millions of dollars each and every year from its Heritage Fund to cover operating expenses. While other municipalities save their Heritage Fund and use its generated interest only, the District is using not only the interest but the principle as well. And on top of that, the District has siphoned off millions of dollars from its infrastructure reserve funds. This Funds has been reduced from \$ 1,200 per capita a few years ago to \$ 300 per capita today.

So where did all this money go? Has it gone to build facilities? No. Has it gone to improve safety in the streets such as a pedestrian activated light on 27th in Lynn Valley as promised for the last 25 years? No. If not, where then? In a \$ 30,000 Study by a consulting firm (KPMG) it was determined that the District is poorly managed. The VAT report (Value Analysis Task Force) found the same and so did numerous other studies and reports. The Federation of North Vancouver Community Associations, FONVCA, too had pointed to this malaise repeatedly. Millions of dollars are being wasted each and every year.

When the Lynn Valley Core was re - developed, it was done with the promise of creating a "Pedestrian Oriented Town Center" which would have enabled people to walk to and from the Mall without having to risk their lives, but the "Pedestrian Town Center", including meaningful senior facilities, turned out to be a hoax. Instead of getting a people friendly center with grassy areas and tree lined boulevards as was shown on the glossy brochures, the people got more noise, more pollution, more traffic and more parking problems. Instead of lessening the risks to pedestrians accessing the Mall the risk is even greater now. Instead of making the developers, who made millions from the redevelopment of the Lynn Valley Core, pay for improved pedestrian safety, it is the people who are paying for it, including with their lives.

But enough is enough, said the Seniors to the District Council on Monday night. We have had enough, they said - we want some action and we want it now, so get with it, they said. I venture to say they will get the action they want but not because Mayor Bell said he would make good on a 25 year promise now but because the Seniors meant business.

Ernie Crist

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