

Subject: Lynn Valley Library and Civic Square project;

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A MESSAGE FROM ERNIE CRIST;

Mayor Don Bell, today, May 5, 2004, will announce that the Council of the District of North Vancouver, during last night's closed meeting, approved the construction of the Lynn Valley Library and Civic Square complex. The Library is one section of the project and the commercial building adjacent to it, the other. The civic square will be the heart of the new Lynn Valley Core.


The project has been debated for many years and has finally come to fruition. It is estimated that both preparation and construction will take roughly two years while completion date is 2006. The original time line for completion was 2003.

The cost of the project will be primarily financed from the District Heritage Fund. The Fund was set up in 1986. At that time it was planned to allow the Fund, fuelled by land sales, District leases and interest generated by these funds to accumulate to between \$150 and \$ 200 million dollars in 2006. However, the goal would have been reached by 2001 since land sales were higher than expected. It was planned to use only interest generated by this Fund and for capital projects only, while leaving the principle in tact. But this was never done - the District, on an ongoing basis, accessed this fund for non-capital projects, including for operational expenses, an exceptionally poor business practice and used by graduates of second class institutions of learning only.

The total size of the Library will be 40,000 square feet. However, a portion of the space will be leased out for commercial use. This, in my opinion is a serious mistake. The space should be put to community use instead. Modern Libraries are far more than a place to drop off and pick up books more or less. They are communication, information, social and community centers - they are and should be places of intellectual and artistic activities including concerts, plays, readings, lectures, debates and places for special artistic performances to stimulate and satisfy artistic needs and intellectual curiosity.

There is not a single place in the District of North Vancouver where activities of that nature can take place at present. On the other hand there is an abundance of homegrown artistic and intellectual talent.

If the space earmarked for commercial use is dedicated to such needs, it will, make the Lynn Valley core an important people hub - it will raise its economic level and attraction significantly. But without that dimension and those functions, the new Library will be nothing more than a replacement of the old Library, a concept, which despite its modern appearance, is as outdated as the horse and buggy.

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