

Subject:**Date:** Tue, 7 Dec 2004 18:23:13 -0800**From:** "Ernie Crist" <ernie_crist@dnv.org>**To:** <fonvca@fonvca.org>

A MESSAGE FROM ERNIE CRIST

The Lynn Valley Town Center project is dead. And so is the new Lynn Valley Library, at least for the time being. The announcement to that effect at Monday night's Council meeting was a reckoning. Following the closed door meeting, the Manager announced that the plan had to be abandoned because the finances were no longer valid. Rapid inflation, he said, had made the plan obsolete.

To understand what happened is to go back to the days when the Lynn Valley Community Plan was drawn up. It was sold to the public as a pedestrian oriented redevelopment of the Lynn Valley Core. Instead it turned out to be a densification of the area along run of the mill North American car malls. All Lynn Valley got is more traffic, more noise, more parking problems and more cars. No tree lined boulevards, no grassy areas with benches for people to rest and no designated bicycle lanes, as had been shown on the glossy brochures.

In the absence of any kind of vision other than densification and a relocation of the library, there were no plans for a truly liveable environment, including community amenities.

Modern large scale Community Planning is comprehensive planning. It includes a financial plan for infrastructure, transportation as well as cultural, social, and recreational amenities. But none of this was accomplished. The result was predictable, after rezoning to higher density, the developers came, they built and left, while the public was left to pay.

The Lynn Valley Community Association, which was to be a guardian turned out to be an apologist. Clearly its leadership had no idea on the difference between densification and liveability.

The project went off the rails if it ever was on. The original plan called for a 5 story 70, 000 square foot building, 40,000 for the Library, 15,000, square feet for the Museum and Archives space and a further 15,000 square feet for community use. The total cost was in the neighbourhood of \$ 21 million and included 1.5 million for the Museum and Archives component. But "Museum and Archives" was moved to the Lynn Valley School while the price for it jumped from \$ 1.5 million to \$ 4.2 million.

Some committee suggested that the height of the building should be reduced from 5 stories to 3 stories. This meant that a potential private developer, interested in building the commercial building adjacent to the Library, walked away since it was no longer profitable. This was another blow. The District subsequently incorporated the commercial building in the total civic square concept, while the price went from 21 million dollar to 34 million dollars. That is provided we would pay back to the Heritage Fund the proceeds from the sale of the old library, which might be \$ 4 million or more depending on the rezoning.

Last Monday night the manager stated that inflation had pushed the project another \$ 8 million above the accepted figure which will make it untenable. It means it is dead. At least for the time being. The Heritage Fund chickens have come home to roost.

The project which was to be ready in 2003 at a cost of \$ 21 million turned into a \$ 41 million monster. The question is where do we go from here? As I see it there is only one way to go and that is back to the drawing board and start from square one.

Ernie Crist,

	winmail.dat	Name: winmail.dat Type: application/ms-tnef Encoding: base64
---	-----------------------------	---