

Subject: Fwd: Fwd: Re: Lynn Valley Town Center
From: Brian Platts <bplatts@shaw.ca>
Date: 28/06/2013 6:54 PM
To: Corrie Kost <corrie@kost.ca>

----- Original Message -----

Subject:Fwd: Re: Lynn Valley Town Center
Date:Fri, 28 Jun 2013 13:44:50 -0700
From:Douglas Curran <dougcurran@shaw.ca>
To:Corrie Kost <corrie@kost.ca>, FONVCA <fonvca@fonvca.org>

Begin forwarded message:

From: Douglas Curran <dougcurran@shaw.ca>
Date: June 28, 2013 1:41:24 PM PDT (CA)
To: Hazen Colbert <hazencolbert@hotmail.com>
Cc: DNV Council, editor@nsnews.com
Subject: Re: Lynn Valley Town Center

Hello Hazen,

Thank you for your email. I will review the links in your earlier presentation to DNV Council (below).

It will take me a couple of days to respond fully, but from the outset, I don't believe that anyone (certainly not myself) has promoted the idea that density would in itself lower municipal taxes. It does present a number of options in terms of resident servicing economies of scale, as well as the opportunity for a degree of infrastructure renewal through Development Cost Charges (DCCs) and CACs - amenities residents desire but are reluctant to pay for themselves through increases in property taxes.

I can agree with you that we live in a time of austerity, although one wouldn't know it from looking at the ranks of newish upper-end cars that have proliferated on DNV streets. This "austerity" needs to be seen within the wider scope of burgeoning health care costs, and downloading of federal and provincial responsibilities. But the idea of austerity does not itself qualify as the basis on which to re-write or eliminate the OCP. The OCP is a measure framed to answer many of the concerns about austerity, the future costs of living in the DNV and how these costs will fall increasingly on those with the fewest resources (both financial and physical) to counter the external forces impacting them.

It would be helpful to know which projections you feel are no longer valid, or are untenable going forward.

Certainly a number of key points of the OCP, including:

- lack of housing accessible to younger people ("affordable" being a highly subjective and relative term)
- the rapid increase of median age/seniors within the DNV
- deterioration of existing infrastructure with very high cost of replacement
- need to address climate change coupled with increased global energy costs

I have grown disappointed and scornful of many of the arguments put forward for defeating the OCP, not to mention the Lynn Valley project itself. The allegations of global conspiracy against car ownership, without reference to the global consequences of unrestricted automobile use does not merit credence, but generated solid applause at the June 18th Stop Highrises meeting.

Many other arguments put forward amount to little more than refusal to consider needs other than one's own, that there might be a moral and compassionate basis on which to accept that a single-family home does not meet everyone's physical needs or financial abilities. The higher levels of government would begin to pay more attention to creative solutions to public service needs if the crowd on the 18th had been rallying against what amounts to mandatory automobile use, with its implicit consequence of waging economic war on those not wanting to spend >25% (average \$9,500) of their [after tax salary on their private car.](#)

I can not comment on the Denna homes cost forecasts, but having reviewed a number of development 'pro formas' I can tell you that a quality concrete building can not be offered on average for much below \$575/sq. ft., once all hard and soft costs and land are factored along with a 15% Return-on-investment. Most of us would not assume the level of risk required against the uncertainty of the market, the economy and the cost of money.

How, Hazen, would you propose lowering the cost of housing? Lower pay rates for workers? Cheaper land costs (currently \$100-110/sq. ft.)? Eliminate community amenity contributions so that taxpayers fully pay for what they say they want? The one certainty we do know is that builders exceed the market's will and ability to pay at their own risk.

There does need to be clear rational perspectives on the matter of where the DNV is going. At the end of the 2030 OCP, left without modest adaptation, my fear is that the DNV will be caught in a systemic financial crunch, economically stagnant, unable to fully provide the services demanded by the expanded ranks of seniors - many of them now demanding no change. They will complain about the high taxes, the broken streets, the lack of affordable home-care workers and there being no suitable housing alternatives north of Burrard Inlet .

All actions have unintended consequences and must be considered and balanced. We need to get out of our own backyard, to see how many of the conditions we will increasingly face are impacting or are being effectively countered by other countries and cities more accepting of change and adaptation.

I have copied this initial reply to others, with the hope that a wider perspective begins to inform the public discourse.

Doug

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Begin forwarded message:

From: Hazen Colbert <hazencolbert@hotmail.com>
Date: June 27, 2013 8:39:19 PM PDT (CA)
To: "dougcurran@shaw.ca" <dougcurran@shaw.ca>
Subject: Lynn Valley Town Center

Sir

I have read some of your submissions to the North Shore News which may, or may not, have been published.

I like some of your arguments. But we differ on the credibility and projections you reference from the District of North Vancouver's OCP. You wrote, "*The OCP frames itself within a range of credible facts, science and projections.*" That was the case from 2009-2011 when the OCP was written, but some of those "facts" we now know are not facts, and some of the projections simply have not happened.

We now live in an age of austerity and the investments promised in transportation and the funding for infrastructure improvement from senior levels of government simply are not there any longer.

There is a debate in Lynn Valley about density & height. I think the debate is a bit of wild goose chase. We need to revisit the OCP.

Some comments below from recent public input to District Council.

Regards,

Hazen Colbert

Your Worship, Council, Staff & Guests

Ten days ago, community consultation engaged Lynn Valley Town Center residents.

Regrettably there were assumptions provided, drawn from the OCP, which are now outdated given that the OCP process started some years ago, prior to the age of austerity in which we now live.

First, 5,000 people are not being added to Lynn Valley. It is 10,000 people being added to the combination of Lynn Valley Town Center and Lower Lynn.

Second, claims were made that higher density leads to affordable housing. Higher density absolutely does not lead to more affordable housing. The research results are clear.

<http://www.demographia.com/dhi.pdf>

I have a recent, local example. SeylInn proposed prices starting in the mid-200,000s for a one bedroom. It's in this Denna Homes document dated April 2013. I also have the Denna Homes price range sheet dated June 2. Prices actually start at \$309M + GST for a one-bedroom. The laudable goal of affordable housing vanished.

http://www.seylynn.ca/images/uploads/NSNWED20130410_Seylynn.pdf

Third is a claim that higher density will result in lower municipal property taxes. Not true. The research is again unequivocal. High density is not associated with lower municipal expenditures per capita.

<http://pfr.sagepub.com/content/36/3/359.short>

Fourth are claims that Translink will improve transportation. False. Translink is focussed only on the Evergreen Line and Skytrain station upgrades. This information has been published by Translink: there will be no improvements to Lonsdale Quay; no Seabus expansion; no additional service to accommodate population growth; and no funding for road upgrades such as the Second Narrows Bridge.

<http://www.translink.ca/baseplan>

A small window of consultation remains in Lynn Valley. The results have been consistent since the doors opened. Residents are firmly opposed to taller buildings.

So how do we meet all the goals of the OCP, and get consensus among people who want tall buildings in the District with people who

support lower heights, particularly in light of outdated assumptions underlying the OCP process.

I suggest we amend the OCP by merging the draft Lynn Valley Town Center implementation plan into the already approved Lower Lynn implementation plan. We add only 6,000 people to all of Lynn Valley rather than 10,000. We allocate high-density and taller buildings to Lower Lynn and make it a hub for economic development and high-value added job creation. We allocate medium-density, but lower height options to the Town Center in support of a village based, mixed-use lifestyle center. And we reduce dependency on Translink by creating our own transportation spine along Mountain Highway, connecting Main Street & Phibbs Exchange in Lower Lynn to the Town Center.

It is time to move forward relying on community consultation, evidence based decision making and our own resources to effect change.