

May 4, 2018

Mayor & Council,

Please find attached a letter to the editor regarding an ad placed in the Friday, April 27 edition of the North Shore News with reference to the development proposal for 752 Marine Drive (former White Spot site). As the following letter indicates, I placed the ad as I felt it necessary to provide some balance to the one-sided, and sometimes incorrect information, that has been provided to the public on this proposal.

There are so many things wrong with this proposed development it's hard to know where to start and it won't be possible to cover everything in this letter. I'll begin with the six "important questions" put forward by the Director of Planning in the summer of 2013 that should be explored as a precursor to considering any OCP-altering development at this site, including: What is West Van's vision for this major intersection and gateway to the community? These excellent questions have never been answered. Rather than adjust the process to address this, we've just moved ahead.

We've moved ahead in spite of initial consultation that showed over half of respondents did not feel a high-rise tower was an appropriate gateway to our community. We've moved ahead in spite of a second round of consultation that confirmed a resounding majority of those who took the time to weigh in on this matter did NOT support amending the OCP to allow this development (58%), while only 36% supported this. Over half of those surveyed indicated traffic is an issue with many indicating Council should not consider this proposal further until traffic issues are resolved. Bear in mind, this consultation was billed as the most comprehensive to have ever take place in West Van.

The public were not the only ones who had concerns. Design Review Committee comments included:

- Why towers? Are they appropriate for the site?
- When West Royal went in 20 years ago they put in an enormous park that does not see any use whatsoever. (This comment was in reference to the proposed public plaza.)
- The 2 towers next door have no bearing on this (project).
- Just because there are towers next door is no reason for towers here.
- ...to tie this into a 20-year old unsuccessful project across the street is on the wrong track.
- the supportive housing is in such an undesirable area cannot imagine anyone else wanting to live there.

At one point there seemed to be consensus that a neighbourhood plan for the Park Royal area would be beneficial (an idea I whole-heartedly support, particularly given Park Royal's plan to become a "complete community"). Yet this also fell by the way-side and instead we received the Marine Drive Local Area Plan, which is not an area plan by any stretch, rather it was born out of a context study in response to three development applications in the immediate area. This "context study" has somehow become part of our Official Community Plan (OCP) in spite of the fact that a review of the OCP is currently underway. How this "area plan" could be approved and inserted in the OCP in advance of

establishing high-level objectives, including a vision for our community, is dumb-founding. Further indication we are moving in the wrong direction is feedback from the OCP review has revealed community support for “missing middle” housing (low rise, ground oriented development such as duplexes and townhouses), favoured by downsizing seniors and young families, of which this proposed development has none.

Rather than focus on a traffic strategy and an overall plan for future development of the Park Royal neighbourhood that reflects the community’s values, we are once again revisiting a high-rise, high-density development for this one small corner. What is the compelling reason? What is the overarching benefit to the community? The answer is housing – we’re told this development will meet a housing need. Yet it’s not a lack of housing that’s the problem, it’s lack of affordable housing that’s the real issue. West Van has no shortage of high-end condos, not to mention vacant houses.

Initially this development was supposed to provide housing for our service and retail workers, but it’s become apparent these units will be unattainable to this lower income demographic. So, the focus has shifted to rental units for higher income earners (according to Councillor Cameron) and young, single professionals who are prepared to share a 2-bedroom condo (according to Councillor Booth). Some believe providing supply at the high end of the rental spectrum reduces competition for lower end rental in spite of evidence to the contrary that disproves the idea that we can build our way out of this. Without a housing policy we jump around trying to find a need or rationale to fit a development. Such an approach is pure folly.

During the run-up to the last election, many on Council promised us a plan and a vision for West Van’s future; some also promised a long-term traffic management strategy. Now is the time to show these were not just empty promises. I urge you to reject this proposal and focus on a housing policy, a traffic management plan and an area plan for the Park Royal neighbourhood that will identify housing options in line with residents’ values.

Melinda Slater
1058 Keith Road
West Vancouver

(See attached letter to editor.)

Please do not redact my name or address.

May 2, 2018

Dear Editor,

With reference to the ad in the April 27 NS News regarding the development proposal for 752 Marine Drive (former White Spot site), I would like to clarify that after learning that many friends and neighbours shared my concerns with this proposal, I decided to run an ad. I paid for this on behalf of other concerned citizens who contributed their thoughts and wished to see some real information made public. I was surprised to learn that my name was erroneously omitted as I have never requested to have my name redacted from any correspondence or opinion piece.

The intent of the ad was to generate interest in the May 7 public hearing at West Van Municipal Hall and to provide some balance to the one-sided (and sometimes incorrect) information that has been provided to the public.

An example of misinformation is Bunt traffic engineer's overstatement of commercial space when estimating the amount of traffic that may be generated if this site was developed under existing C1 zoning. Bunt claimed C1 zoning allowed up to *70,000 sq. ft.* of commercial and could generate ~300 vehicle trips per hour. However, according to District Planning staff, C1 zoning at this site allows a maximum of *52,000 sq. ft.* of commercial space – an important difference particularly when a key argument in support of this proposal is that commercial generates more traffic than residential development. Further, it seems 52,000 sq. ft. may be an unrealistically high number as C1 zoning conditions such as height limit, parking requirements and setbacks would prevent building to the perimeter of the site's property lines, thus constraining building size.

It is also important for residents to understand that the 11 subsidized housing units for \$4.34 million and the \$6.16 million child care space will be paid for through community amenity contributions the developer is required to provide the district of West Van in exchange for increased density on this site. There's no such thing as a free lunch – the developer is not *giving* us these amenities out of the kindness of their heart – in return they will get a massive and precedent setting increase in density that will have little to no impact on affordable housing, jammed onto the most congested intersection on the North Shore with no traffic solution in sight – a steep price for residents to pay. (Especially as the valuation of these amenities, particularly the child care site, seems to be overly inflated.)

Previous exhaustive public consultation revealed a clear majority did not support rezoning this site to include residential development. Additionally, the public did not feel high-rise towers were an appropriate gateway to West Vancouver. It's disappointing as well as ironic that the developer has not only pursued this project in spite of public sentiment, they have named it the "Gateway Residences".

West Van citizens must once again let their elected officials know (by May 7) if this development proposal is an appropriate gateway to their community or if this is the wrong project at the wrong location.

Melinda Slater