



Ambleside & Dundarave Residents Association

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Ambleside & Dundarave Residents Association
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The Honourable Christine Boyle
Minister of Housing and Municipal Affairs
Province of British Columbia

Dear Minister Boyle,

Re: Objection to Provincial Enforcement of the Draft Ambleside Centre Local Area Plan (LAP)

On behalf of the Ambleside and Dundarave Residents Association (ADRA), we write to formally and unequivocally object to the Province enforcing the current draft Ambleside Centre Local Area Plan (LAP).

ADRA has been a committed and constructive stakeholder throughout the LAP process. However, despite sustained engagement and repeated submissions, our core concerns—and those of the broader community—remain unaddressed. As such, we cannot support the imposition of this plan in its current form.

At the heart of our objection is a fundamental misalignment between the draft LAP and the long-standing, consistently expressed vision of Ambleside residents. For decades, community studies and consultations have established the importance of preserving and enhancing Ambleside's defining qualities: its small-scale, seaside village charm and its vibrant mix of independent, local businesses. This is not anecdotal—it is supported by years of planning work and reinforced by extensive public engagement, including the Imagine Ambleside initiative, which identified "Charm," "Locality," and preservation of a "Village Atmosphere" as central community priorities. Residents have been unequivocal: growth must enhance, not erase, these defining qualities.

The draft LAP, however, moves in the opposite direction. It introduces excessive height and density along the waterfront and within the commercial village—changes that risk permanently eroding the very character that defines Ambleside. The proposed scale of development threatens sunlight access, public views, and the human-scale streetscape that residents value. Height and density must be reduced to levels that are demonstrably "village appropriate."

Equally concerning is the shift in focus. The primary objective of the Ambleside Centre LAP should be the revitalization and enhancement of the commercial village – not the provision of housing. While housing has a role to play, it must remain secondary in this context, supporting—not driving—village renewal. Instead, **the current plan is disproportionately shaped by previously**

embedded housing targets that were neither appropriately scrutinized nor supported by the community, resulting in a plan that prioritizes residential yield over the community's vision for a charming, small, retail-focused waterfront village.

This emphasis is particularly unjustified given that significant residential growth is already accommodated within Ambleside's designated high-density apartment area and is also anticipated for Ambleside's single-family neighbourhoods, not to mention the high-density residential development expected for the Park Royal/Taylor Way corridor. Ambleside's commercial village should not be distorted to absorb residential growth more appropriately located elsewhere.

Compounding these concerns is a **lack of transparency and meaningful public understanding**. Despite repeated requests for information necessary to understand the implications of the plan, residents have been asked to evaluate abstract policies without a clear picture of their real-world impacts. **This undermines informed participation and renders the consultation process fundamentally flawed**. Residents must be able to clearly understand and evaluate what is being proposed, including how it compares to development potential under existing zoning.

In addition to these overarching concerns, ADRA reiterates the following specific issues that must be addressed before any plan can be considered acceptable:

- Comprehensive 3D imaging that illustrates the impact of proposed height and density.
- Building heights must be expressed in absolute measurements (feet or metres), not merely storeys.
- Erosion of future public input – the integration of LAP provisions into the Official Community Plan raises serious concerns about the potential elimination of future public hearings on major developments (e.g., the Fresh Street site). This is unacceptable.
- The role and intent of Community Amenity Contributions require far greater transparency, particularly regarding whether increased density is being used to fund public infrastructure.
- The 1800 block should be returned to a Commercial Zone designation rather than Apartment Zone.
- The former Masonic Hall site should remain zoned for community use, especially in light of anticipated population increases.
- Formal recognition and protection of village character from 13th to 19th Street as a guiding planning principle.

We are also deeply concerned by the process itself. A central issue for ADRA is not only the content of the draft LAP, but the integrity of the process that produced it. Despite extensive engagement activities, the process has too often lacked the transparency, clarity, and responsiveness required for meaningful public participation:

Process Concerns – DISTRICT OF WEST VANCOUVER

Difficulty Accessing Core Materials

The draft LAP itself has been difficult to locate on the District's website and, at times, effectively impossible to find using the site's search function. For a document of this significance, this lack of accessibility is unacceptable. Residents should not have to rely on indirect links or prior knowledge to find and review a plan that will shape their community for decades.

Inadequate Visualization and Information

Residents have repeatedly requested basic tools necessary to understand the implications of the plan—most notably 3D imaging and clear height measurements in feet or metres. These have never been provided. Reviewing abstract policies and storey counts on paper does not allow residents to grasp the real impact on scale, shadowing, and views. Without this, consultation cannot be considered informed.

Failure to Incorporate Feedback

While engagement opportunities were offered, there is a widespread perception that input was not meaningfully incorporated. Core community priorities—preserving village character, limiting building height, and prioritizing small-scale commercial vitality—have remained largely unchanged in successive drafts.

Shifting Scope and Predetermined Outcomes

The process has been constrained by housing targets previously embedded in the Official Community Plan. As a result, the LAP has evolved not as a community-driven vision, but as a mechanism to accommodate those targets. This undermines the credibility of the process and suggests that key outcomes were predetermined.

Uncertainty and Delay Impacts

The draft LAP was presented to the public in May 2025 but failed to achieve broad community support, resulting in a Council stalemate. Since that time Council has provided no direction and the process has effectively stalled. This prolonged uncertainty has left residents, businesses, and property owners in limbo—discouraging investment, delaying improvements, and allowing the future of Ambleside to drift without transparency or accountability.

Process Concerns – PROVINCIAL ROLE

ADRA has serious concerns regarding the Province’s role, particularly as it relates to both process integrity and reliance on flawed inputs:

Reliance on a Flawed Provincial Advisor’s Report

The Province’s actions appear to have been influenced by a Provincial Advisor’s report that contains deeply troubling and demonstrably unfounded assertions. The report singles out ADRA—a volunteer, non-profit residents’ association—as a primary cause of housing challenges in West Vancouver, including claims that ADRA has contributed to a severe lack of affordable housing, unsustainable population trends, and increased traffic.

Critically, this report was prepared without any engagement with ADRA. At no point were ADRA representatives contacted, interviewed, or given an opportunity to respond to or correct these allegations. Instead, the report relies on unnamed and redacted sources, offering no transparency or accountability for the claims being made. This absence of basic procedural fairness is unacceptable. Assertions of this nature—unsupported, unattributed, and unverified—do not meet any reasonable standard of evidence. They undermine the credibility of the report and call into serious question the rigour, objectivity, and good faith of the process that produced it.

Use of Generalized Narratives to Justify Intervention

The framing of “NIMBY influence preventing growth” reduces complex planning realities to a simplistic and misleading narrative that is being used to justify top-down intervention. It dismisses legitimate concerns about scale, livability, and community character, and reframes good-faith civic

participation as obstruction. This framing reflects either a wilful disregard for local realities or a fundamental misunderstanding of them – and has been used to advance predetermined, ill-suited policy responses rather than evidence-based solutions.

Override of Local Planning and Erosion of Public Trust

Provincial enforcement of the LAP would override both municipal authority and years of community engagement, setting a troubling precedent. Decisions based on flawed reports and imposed despite sustained public opposition would severely undermine confidence in both provincial and municipal planning processes. Residents have invested significant time and effort in consultations with the expectation that their input would matter; imposing the LAP in its current form would signal that this participation is ultimately inconsequential, eroding trust not only in this process, but in future planning initiatives.

One-Size-Fits-All Policy Application

Ambleside is a unique waterfront village with a distinct history, scale, and identity. Applying broad provincial housing objectives without regard for local context risks irreparable harm. Planning must be responsive to place, not dictated by uniform metrics.

Compression of Due Process

Mandating or accelerating the LAP would bypass the careful review and public deliberation such a consequential plan demands.

Undue Influence and the Assumption that Density Equals Affordability

There is ample evidence that shows increasing density does not, on its own, deliver affordable housing. Instead, increased density often drives up land values, fuels speculation, and results primarily in market-rate or luxury units. The outcome has been rising housing costs alongside declining livability—through congestion, loss of green space, reduced sunlight and views, and added strain on infrastructure.

There is also concern that this direction has been unduly influenced by development industry interests and advocacy groups such as the Urban Development Institute and the Century Initiative, whose objectives do not necessarily align with those of local communities.

Affordability requires targeted, evidence-based solutions—not a singular reliance on density that risks undermining both housing outcomes and quality of life.

Infrastructure and Fiscal Disconnect

The Province is mandating significant increases in residential density without providing the funding or tools needed to support the resulting strain on infrastructure and services (including first responders). Municipal planning is tied to financial capacity, yet local governments have limited taxation powers to meet these demands.

By effectively decoupling development from financial planning, the Province is creating foreseeable harms: overburdened infrastructure, erosion of public safety and community services, and serious financial strain on municipalities—raising concerns about long-term fiscal sustainability. This approach reflects a fundamental failure of coordinated governance and good faith.

In closing, ADRA strongly opposes Provincial enforcement of the current draft LAP. To proceed in this manner would not only entrench a flawed plan but would also legitimize a process built on inaccessible information, inadequate consultation, and reliance on a report that lacks transparency,

fairness, and credibility. We urge the Province to step back, reassess both the plan and the process, and engage in a transparent, evidence-based approach that respects the community and its elected representatives. Anything less would represent a serious failure of process and a profound disservice to Ambleside's residents and businesses.

Yours truly,

Melinda Slater, Vice President
Ambleside and Dundarave Residents Association (ADRA)