

June 15, 2020

Re: Proposed amendment to the Marine Drive Local Area Plan to allow for additional building heights and density at 707 & 723 Main St, previously known as 752 Marine Drive.

Mayor & Council,

Park Royal's "Gateway" development at Marine Drive & Taylor Way was one of the most bitterly contested projects ever approved by Council. This community-altering edifice will stand as a permanent, unignorable reminder of everything that is wrong with our development process: spot-zoning, forsaking an overall plan for the Park Royal neighbourhood, creating an "Area Plan" around a development, and dismissing at every step public opinion that rejected residential development at this location from the outset. The list of egregious actions doesn't end here. If not for brevity's sake, I could go on.

This wretched, exhausting process put residents through a hellishly trying ordeal, and to what end? With the shovel barely in the ground, the developer has come back to ask for more. Allowing this second "go-round" not only rubs salt in an open wound, it sets a dangerous precedent and throws our whole Official Community Plan (OCP) process into disrepute.

It's not a wonder so many residents refuse to get involved. Don't mistake lack of feedback as evidence that people are indifferent. If you're not hearing from the public it's because they have given up in disgust. It's all I could do to make myself write this letter. But I am so angered by this latest affront that I feel compelled to say something, even though I fully expect my efforts will be for naught.

To illustrate how skewed the process is in favour of the developer, consider that Park Royal is allowed to come back and ask for an increase in height and density but there is no provision for the community to consider whether a *reduction* in height or density might make this a better project. (Seeing this development rise, I am shocked by the lack of setback and how much it encroaches on Marine Drive.) If the developer "wins" they get additional height and density, if they "lose", they still have the nearly 5-fold, increase in density that was initially approved. The developer has nothing to lose by asking for more and residents must gird themselves for yet another round of tilting at windmills.

The lure of additional community amenity contributions (CACs) should not drive Council's decision. West Van's budget and infrastructure funding must not rely on selling density. The measure of a good development is that it stands on its own merits. If CACs were not offered, would this request still be viewed favourably? It is a mistake to be dazzled by dollars. As Mayor Booth recently said, "*the community's needs are more important than getting maximum dollars*". I agree with this principle, but fear it will amount to nothing more than selectively applied platitudes.

If money is not the driving force, then what is the compelling reason to approve this request? Does Council feel that CACs received in exchange for the previously approved, *massive* increase in density were insufficient? That the project could be improved? As appalling as this thought is – and I am certain the District critically failed to obtain adequate amenities, including a transit hub – do not make the mistake of attempting to right this by allowing the developer to buy more density at this site. Rather, learn from these mistakes and establish in advance (and with community input and approval), what amenities (or cash in lieu) are desired, and secure these as Park Royal moves ahead with their plan to become a "complete" neighbourhood.

Over and over we've asked for a neighbourhood plan for Park Royal. All we've been given are excuses. If we had an actual plan for the Park Royal neighbourhood and all that it aspires to, not just this one site; if we had a Housing Policy, and if we upheld these, we wouldn't be in this predicament. Without these essential, guiding documents, residents are compelled to rely on anecdotal evidence and the vagaries of Councillor's individual opinions to decide what is best on a case by case basis, without knowing what factors will ultimately prove influential and with goal posts that keep moving.

Rationalizing that this is as good a place as any for housing, or that more units will have negligible negative impact, does a disservice to the community. It ignores public opinion, once again allows a developer to lead planning, and eviscerates the very concept of a newly minted local area plan, which was supposed to provide some certainty as to the size of development we may expect. It is a lazy approach that puts individual opinion ahead of public sentiment and **caters to spot-zoning, which the community loathes and is at the very heart of these interminable conflicts.**

Surely, this one corner is not the only place to build housing. Aside from considering other possibilities within the greater Park Royal neighbourhood, including the north-east corner of Marine and Taylor Way, there are literally hundreds of units going up a stone's throw away at Capilano and Marine. How many other development projects are currently active or waiting in the wings? Can anyone answer that? Certainly, there are other options, but we never consider an overall, larger or long-term plan – only this one development that is before us.

We have still not answered the six important questions that were put forward by the Director of Planning in the summer of 2013. The District's top planning professional said ***"answering these questions should be a precursor to considering any OCP-altering development at this site"***. I have included them below as these excellent questions remain as relevant today as they were seven years ago.

Approving this amendment makes a mockery of our Local Area Plans, Official Community Plan and public engagement – there is no point in having any of these things if Council is willing to overturn them at a developer's request.

Sincerely,

Melinda Slater
1058 Keith Road
West Vancouver

Please do not redact any portion of this letter.

Excerpt from July 17, 2013 Council Report, File: 1010-20-12-085

From: Bob Sokol, Director of Planning, Land Development and Permits

Subject: Official Community Plan Amendment and Rezoning Application No. 12-085 for 752 Marine Drive.

Important questions for the community to consider prior to considering this proposal may include:

1. What is West Vancouver's vision for this major intersection and gateway to the community?
2. How do West Vancouverites want to be greeted by their community, and what first impression do they want to make to others as they approach our community?
3. What implications, both positive and negative, arise from the transition from a regional shopping centre to a mixed-use centre?
4. What is the future of the North mall and the remaining development entitlements of the leasehold lands at Park Royal South?
5. How does the further development of Park Royal help or hinder the District's land use goals and objectives, including that of a revitalized Ambleside?
6. What are the overall transportation impacts of the future level of development in this area? What role can alternative means of transportation play in addressing those impacts?

Defining this vision and answering these questions should be a precursor to considering any OCP-altering development at this site.