

DNV alters development charges

Changes will up the municipal infrastructure fees to developers

BY SAM SMITH, NORTH SHORE NEWS MARCH 29, 2013

THE District of North Vancouver is close to approving bylaw changes affecting development cost charges that should bring the municipality more money and greater freedom to spend it.

Council approved third reading of the changes Monday.

The basic principle of DCCs is to have new developments pay a share of the costs of major new infrastructure services needed to support the developments such as roads, utilities and parks. The proposed changes affect multiple bylaws involving DCCs, including one that would transfer dormant funds from the Northlands DCC reserve fund to the corresponding district-wide fund, allowing more flexibility in its spending.

Steven Ono, manager of engineering services for the district, presented the report to council.

"Yes, we will have more funds for areas with other needs such as roads, water and sewer drainage, as well as parks," he said.

Since the original, more restrictive bylaw was introduced in 1998, the district has accumulated \$15.4 million in DCCs, according to Ono.

"Under the proposed bylaw, assuming the future 20 year OCP (official community plan) targets are met, the DCCs recoverable in current dollars are estimated at \$89.6 million," Ono's report states.

Concerned resident Corrie Kost said the proposed DCC bylaw would hurt current residents, forcing them to pay for new residents by subsidizing existing parkland for their use.

But the district expects future development mostly in compact town centres, which require less linear infrastructure that benefits more residents, Ono said.

"Therefore, as was correctly noted at the last council meeting, most of the new growth will be more efficiently serviced than the preceding primarily single-family housing form," the report concludes.

Existing infrastructure also has the benefit of being renewed as new development occurs anyway, it added.

The district calculates it is still within its OCP guidelines for parks, open spaces and trails in growth centres: a minimum of two hectares of combined community and neighbourhood parkland space per 1,000 residents.

However, Ono did note a risk in his report: "The success of the DCC program depends on the strategic timing of DCC projects to ensure sufficient DCC funds and potential grants are secured before proceeding with the DCC projects, otherwise the district risks depleting reserves and increasing debt."

Council unanimously approved the bylaw amendments. The inspector of municipalities and the Ministry of Community, Sport and Cultural Development will now check whether:

- the charges are excessive in relation to the capital cost of prevailing standards of service;
- they will deter development;
- they will discourage the construction of reasonably priced housing, or the provision of reasonably priced service land;
- they will discourage development designed to result in low environmental impact.

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