

The future of the North Shore is a life-and-death struggle

BY JEROME IRWIN, NORTH SHORE NEWS APRIL 10, 2013

Dear Editor:

Profit-crazed property developers, with either the complacency or complicity of the North Shore's mayors and councils, are destroying the traditional culture and time-honoured way of life of the North Shore and its once iconic character.

Two different world views are in a life and death struggle. One only has to observe the rapid and dramatic, if not radical, changes that have already happened or are planned along every major traffic corridor in North and West Vancouver: Lonsdale Avenue, Marine Drive, Harbourside, Park Royal, Ambleside, British Properties/Upper Lands, Capilano Road, Lynn Valley, Seyllynn and Maplewood.

These sweeping changes are far beyond whatever alternative direction or control the majority of local citizenry would desire to exercise or profess.

Unique Mom & Pop enterprises are finding it progressively harder to survive ever-increasing rents and/or are being intentionally pushed out by developers who prefer to cater only to those big box/brand name/mega-corporations who can afford their exorbitant leases.

Onetime single-family communities are also being radically transformed. In some communities, speculating developers quietly approach home owners and offer to buy their homes for more than their market value if they will agree to sign confidential agreements to sell whenever it suits the speculator-developer's larger plans.

In the process, the North Shore is gradually morphing into the same bland concrete, glass and steel look of every other strip mall/traffic corridor/central business district/high-density/ highrise area in the world, occupied by the same string of fast food chains, doctor/dentist/veterinarian offices, banks, credit unions and mega-corporate commercial enterprises. What once made the North Shore iconic: the architecturally individualistic storefronts, human scaled Mom & Pop enterprises, urban forested rustic neighbourhoods are all already gone or going fast.

Some will no doubt call this the price of so-called progress, while others shudder at the thought of where this will ultimately lead and what kind of North Shore will be left to those who come after us.

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