

## North Vancouver's Harbourside hearing heated

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Residents and business owners attend a public hearing in City of North Vancouver council chambers Tuesday to debate rezoning of 801 to 925 Harbourside Dr. for residential properties.

Photograph by: Mike Wakefield, North Shore News

A momentous decision that could impact the City of North Vancouver for years to come – was not made Tuesday.

[Concert Properties has spent the last four years pitching and refining a project](#) that would bring 800 strata and rental units and more than 300,000 square feet of commercial space to the strip of land south of the North Shore Automall and bordered by Bewicke Avenue.

Four of the project's buildings could stretch between 70 and 90 feet.

Council heard one last round of public comment from the project's champions, who consider the development a great use of the city's waterfront, and detractors, [one of whom objected to the use of the term waterfront](#).

"The city of North Vancouver has no jurisdiction and no governance . . . no authority to deal with the future of that site," said Dave Watt, pointing out the actual waterfront is under the control of Port Metro Vancouver.

The real estate agent questioned the need for the development. There are currently 454 apartment-style condominiums available for sale in the City and District of North Vancouver, not including townhouses, according to Watt.

Concert Properties president Brian McCauley said his company does not build without significant pre-sales. Also, while North Vancouver may have a seven month supply of condo stock, the Harbourside development would be built over 10 to 15 years.

The site currently allows a floor space ratio – which measures total floor space against the size of the lot – of 1.0. The project would boost that ratio to 2.2, which was good news for project supporter Ron Spence.

"High density is an indication of a successful city. Think about Manhattan, London, Paris, etc. If I think about low density, then Detroit comes to mind," he said.

Spence's only objection was the lack of a recreation centre embedded in the project.

The development's proximity to train tracks constitutes a tragedy waiting to happen, according to former mayoralty candidate Ron Polly.

Polly implored council to install a pedestrian overpass at Bewicke Avenue at the applicant's expense.

"I have seen what happens at railway crossings. I have seen it and people and trains do not mix," he said.

Coun. Guy Heywood asked how Concert would react if a pedestrian overpass was added to the project at this late date.

McCauley said he'd be disappointed but would work with city staff.

The project includes bike lanes, pedestrian walkways and a car share program, but [none of those measures can alleviate the gridlock choking Harbourside](#), according to Amanda Nichol.

The project also includes a 24-seat community shuttle bus, which would offer complimentary service from Harbourside to Lonsdale Quay. The shuttle would cease operations once TransLink beefs up service in the area.

If the project is approved, Concert Properties would shell out approximately \$28.5 million for parks improvements, an upgrade to the Spirit Trail, public art, and road work, as well as other improvements.

The project will add life and vibrancy to an area awash in potential, according to neighbourhood proprietor Louis Gervais.

Many speakers at Tuesday's meeting complimented the project but questioned its location.

"I think this is a really attractive proposal that's in the wrong place," said Fred Dawkins. "It's plopped down in the middle of industrial land where we need to generate jobs."

The project's second and third reading could be debated by council as early as April.

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