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West Vancouver delays Park Royal towers decision

[Brent Richter](#) / North Shore News

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Park Royal's proposed development for the former White Spot site at Marine Drive and Taylor Way includes a 27-storey east tower and 12-storey west tower that together will hold roughly 251 units. Graphics supplied

District of West Vancouver council has punted making a decision on Park Royal's plan for two mixed use commercial/residential towers on the old White Spot site for another two weeks.

Council spent part of Monday evening being briefed on what the last round of public consultation netted.

The site has long been zoned for mixed use including commercial and residential, but not at the density Park Royal was asking for. An online survey conducted by the district found 58 per cent of respondents were not in favour of adding more residential use to the mall.

Together, the proposed 27-storey east tower and 12-storey west tower will hold roughly 251 units, 10 of which would be sold to the Vancouver Resource Society "at cost" to provide non-profit housing for people with disabilities. Beyond that, at least 40 of the units would be rental units for a minimum of 10 years, according to Rick Amantea, Park Royal's vice-president overseeing the project.

Though it wasn't a public hearing, council spent most of the meeting listening to residents who waited their turn for three minutes at the mic to sound off about the plan — roughly three-quarters of whom urged council to halt the proposal from going any further.

The plan presented Monday is slightly scaled back from the last iteration before council, though the reduction did

little to assuage residents who are outright opposed to adding any more density to the area. To the surprise of no one, traffic in the area was the stickiest issue.

The infamous bottleneck at Taylor Way and Marine Drive is one of the worst choke points for traffic in the Lower Mainland, though Amantea said the project is being targeted at people who will take advantage of the walkability of the neighbourhood and frequent bus service along Marine Drive, or seek other modes of transportation. The project, if approved in its current form, would include a permanent bicycle valet, car share parking spaces and a limit of one parking space per unit.

Other traffic-fighting measures included in the plan are building a right-hand turn lane to take vehicles over the Wardance Bridge and a channelized right-turn lane from Taylor Way onto westbound Marine Drive. The developer is also promising to pay for West Vancouver Police Department to assign an officer for traffic control at the intersection during the evening weekday rush hour from the time construction begins until two years after it is done.

"We believe that will go a long way to helping control traffic and behaviour," Amantea said. "There's no silver bullet there. We all know it so it's going to take a lot of different approaches to help clear up some of that congestion," Amantea said.

Though a handful of residents urged council to approve the project because of its social housing, walkability and proximity to transit, others pushed council to hold off on making any decision until West Vancouver had updated its OCP, a long process just now beginning.

But there was little to be said from those at the council table about the amended version or whether they'd support it advancing to the next stage where staff would begin drawing up bylaws to give the project first reading.

As the meeting neared 10 p.m. Mayor Smith suggested council defer their official debate and decision until a later date. Coun. Christine Cassidy retorted that residents and the proponents had waited long enough for council and that another two week delay was not appropriate.

A motion from Coun. Craig Cameron to press on and hold the debate was voted down, with only Cassidy and Coun. Nora Gambioli supporting it.

West Vancouver council is now expected to address the matter at its April 13 meeting.

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