

north shore news

Future of Delbrook recreation centre site debated

[Brent Richter](#) / North Shore News

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Delbrook Community Recreation Centre will close when the replacement for William Griffin opens. photo Mike Wakefield

Let it be known: When you're recreating in the District of North Vancouver's new rec centre on Queens Road sometime in 2016, it will be the Delbrook Community Recreation Centre you are recreating in.

District council members opted for the name at Monday night's committee meeting after weeks of being unable to find a consensus.

But what will happen with the land where the old Delbrook Community Recreation Centre still stands is still very much up for debate.

Council voted July 20 to kick off a public consultation process for the 1.7 hectare site at Queens Road and Stanley Avenue that could see part of the land redeveloped into townhouses and condos.

Among the priorities that staff have laid out for the lands at the outset of the public process is that it should protect and enhance Mission Creek riparian corridor, retain a portion of the land for parks and open space, enhance pedestrian access and trails, retain space for childcare, include a diversity of housing types and generate revenue for the district.

More specifically, the district staff report mentions redeveloping 43 to 70 per cent of the site to generate between \$14 million and \$25 million.

The existing buildings are old, in poor condition and at the end of their useful lives, according to staff. The neighbourhood is suitable for infill development as it is on two arterial roads with bus service and within walking distance of the new rec centre and shopping at Westview and Edgemont, staff said.

That, however, was putting the cart ahead of the horse for members of the Delbrook community as well as some council who argued the public process should start with a clean slate and an option of no future development. Some

residents turned up to warn council against selling any of the land.

"What we have essentially in this report is a pre-determined position that the land be sold and we choose 43 per cent and 70 per cent. That's not consultation," said James Gill. "Once the land is sold, you'll never get it back. You're selling the birthright of future generations."

Coun Lisa Muri charged that council promised Delbrook residents that they would be involved in the consultation for the site from the start as they will be the most impacted by the decision, she added.

But, consolidating the Delbrook and William Griffin community centres and using money from the redevelopment of Delbrook was always part of the plan when council approved the William Griffin rebuild, Coun. Roger Bassam argued.

"The implications on this decision are community-wide. To be perfectly clear, the approval to spend \$50 million to build William Griffin always was related to decommissioning Delbrook. That was the justification for spending the money on that...and recognizing the potential equity transfer to help offset the cost and the tax burden that would be borne by the citizens of the District of North Vancouver. That has always been part of this program," he said.

Council still has \$28 million in debt for the new facility.

Mayor Richard Walton said the district will go to the public with an "open mind but also some economic understanding."

Staff plan to run consultation on the future of the old Delbrook site from the fall until the summer of 2016.

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