

## LETTER: Success of Ambleside important to all

North Shore News

August 16, 2015 12:00 AM

Dear Editor:

Re: [West Vancouver Considers BIA \(http://www.nsnews.com/news/west-vancouver-considers-business-improvement-area-1.2011113\)](http://www.nsnews.com/news/west-vancouver-considers-business-improvement-area-1.2011113), July 24.

A BIA (Business Improvement Area) for the Ambleside, Hollyburn, Dundarave area may be good in theory — if the purpose is in fact to improve actual business.

However, if the organization becomes a proponent for increased density and bigger development, the advocates will risk alienating their customer base.

The needs of a small business are often quite opposite of the wants of a commercial property owner. I note that several of the BIA proponents are commercial property owners who would stand to make large financial gains if they achieve “up-zoning” of their properties.

I have spoken to a local business manager who told me that the BIA proponents she spoke to were promoting the Masonic Hall development proposal (approximately four times larger than currently zoned and a third larger than what OCP says may be considered) because they view increased density as a means to save failing businesses.

However, there is no evidence that increased density will guarantee business success or attract new ones.

Large new developments do not necessarily help current businesses and often rent to chains rather than independent start-ups.

Ambleside already has a higher density than many other successful business areas. It is also a fact that Canada has an aging demographic. This demographic has always been evident in West Vancouver and is likely to continue.

As well, there are many successful businesses in this area of West Vancouver. What they seem to all have in common is that they recognize and cater to the existing and emerging demographic rather than trying to influence demographic change.

There is still much residual animosity in the community related to the size of the Grosvenor development. While this development is supported by some (most from outside of Ambleside) who touted it as necessary “to save” Ambleside, there are a vast majority of Ambleside residents who clearly wanted a smaller “village-scale” development and view this as a death knell for small, independent business alternatives.

It would be a shame if that animosity is to be provoked by a BIA supporting further development outside of current zoning or the Official Community Plan.

If a BIA is realized (or even if it is not) I hope that the focus will be on initiatives that will be wholeheartedly supported by businesses and residents alike.

Some inexpensive and easily achievable initiatives could include:

- Cleaning up the garbage on the sidewalks.
- Displaying consistent signage to advertise off-street parking spots.
- Safer crosswalks with interesting designs/paint.
- Consistent and even sidewalks free of tripping hazards.
- More plants and greenery (maybe a continuation of the Dundarave median).
- Consistent traffic enforcement.
- Attractive and consistent lighting.
- Alternatives to staff parking in prime customer spaces.
- The enforced sprucing up of vacant or shabby premises.

I would also like to see local businesses collaborate with their local neighbourhood associations. The Ambleside Dundarave Ratepayer's Association represents hundreds of local and loyal customers and would welcome additional business members.

After all, the success, sustainability and beauty of our villages is of vital importance to all ratepayers, whether business or residential.

**Scenery Slater**  
**West Vancouver**

What are your thoughts? Send us a letter via email by clicking [here \(http://www.nsnews.com/opinion/send-us-a-letter\)](http://www.nsnews.com/opinion/send-us-a-letter) or post a comment below.

© 2015 North Shore News

[Sign up for the North Shore News FREE digital newsletter to receive top headlines from each issue in your Inbox. \(http://www.nsnews.com/newsletter/subscribe\)](http://www.nsnews.com/newsletter/subscribe)