

Building to begin on Lions Gate towers

Development to include supply of rental apartments

Brent Richer / North Shore News

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An artist's rendering of what a new development planned for the area of Capilano Road and Marine Drive will look like.
image supplied

After spending almost a decade in various stages of consultation, construction is about to begin on a major new development at Capilano Road and Marine Drive.

District of North Vancouver council voted unanimously July 25 to issue building permits for Larco's 460-unit development on a vacant lot between Curling Road and Fullerton Avenue.

The project will include a new 26,850-square foot community centre, 26,000 square feet of commercial space, 18- and 12-storey towers, low-rise apartments and townhouses and a public plaza.

When it came up for rezoning in 2014, Larco had planned for 341 of the units to be sold, but the developer now plans to keep them as market rental "for the foreseeable future."

The remaining 119 (45 of which are in a building reserved for seniors) will be guaranteed to stay as rentals in perpetuity.

And, rather than bringing the entire project together in phases over eight years, Larco is now planning to get the whole shebang done in 30 months.

Both changes were warmly greeted by council.

"I'm glad to see this going forward. I'm glad to see that there will be more market rental in the community. I'm certainly pleased that we will have the community centre sooner rather than later and think that very much, this is going to be the heart of the Lions Gate community. I'm looking forward to it being completed in as timely a manner as possible," said Coun. Roger Bassam.

Coun. Doug MacKay-Dunn, who previously was opposed to the rezoning, also spoke highly of the project, particularly

the badly-needed extra rental units.

“For me the most important thing this brings to the table is 460 rental units in a beautiful facility because I want to attract young professionals to this community who don’t have the money for a down payment in this market – who does? – but would love to live in this beautiful community,” he said.

“This will give them that opportunity.”

And MacKay-Dunn added, he was pleased with the project’s traffic management plan, noting the nearby intersection is a “very, very, very, very busy area” of the community.

Although she was still not pleased with the density and potential for construction impacts, Coun. Lisa Muri was pleased with the design and the amount of support the project had from the surrounding neighbourhoods.

“I know some of those who have been very hard-nosed about this in the past have come around as well,” she said.

And Mayor Richard Walton added, the 460 units were just the beginning for the neighbourhood, which district council has dubbed Lions Gate. The official community plan foresees a total of 1,200 units in that neighbourhood in the next 20 years.

“The Lions Gate community is literally going to be 100 per cent rebuilt from the ground up over about a 10-year period,” he said.

Work on the project is expect to start in late August.