

School land sales not the answer

Allan Mcdonell / North Shore News

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North Vancouver - Dear Editor: I was disappointed by your Jan. 20 editorial Old vs. New School supporting the proposal to sell school lands to a developer in order to partially fund the rebuilding of Argyle school. I do agree with the position of the North Shore News, however, that the underlying problem is the lamentable underfunding of education by the provincial government. But selling off North Vancouver public lands is not the answer, in my view.

The fact that the school district is struggling to find funds to rebuild Argyle demonstrates that once public lands are sold off, comparable lands will never be purchased to replace them. Once public lands are sold to the private sector, they're gone forever. And the unfortunate precedent of selling public lands to meet budget shortfalls will only encourage future councils to sell capital assets to meet short-term budget problems.

In support of selling off the lands, the editorial states that the "land in question, after being purchased by the school district in the 1960s, had never been used as anything but a deciduous backdrop for the neighbours." Hurray for the visionary school district of a half century ago, which realized that future demands on public lands are unknowable; and a Bronx cheer for the News, which, apparently, can't imagine that future North Vancouverites might want the land for a good public purpose that we can't yet imagine.

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