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EDITORIAL: All things old

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If you build it, they will leave.

That's the message from roughly 200 people who face eviction from Mountain Court, an aged but affordable building of rental units in Lynn Valley now up for redevelopment.

It's the latest in a series of projects on the North Shore that replace older multi-family buildings with shiny new condos or rental apartments that are way out of the budgets of the displaced residents.

It's a problem. Unfortunately, absent from the debate over these projects has been the fact that most of these old, affordable buildings were only built thanks to incentives offered by senior levels of government in the 1960s and '70s.

When the feds and province stopped offering those incentives in the early '80s, guess what happened? Affordable rental housing stopped getting built. Now those two- and three-storey walk-ups are reaching end of life. Some are downright decrepit to the point even upgrading them would result in evictions and rents going up.

This is a huge piece of the puzzle in our current housing crisis — and yes, we are in a housing crisis.

Some argue the answer to the problem is simply saying no to these redevelopments. It's wishful thinking that these older buildings will last forever and it ignores the reality of a growing population. Others say adding more housing supply is the only way to make prices affordable again. That isn't working either.

We say it's time the federal and provincial governments stopped letting municipalities take the heat for their inaction. It's time for the return of federal and provincial incentives to build, and more importantly, maintain affordable housing stock.

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.

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