

## Onni makes concessions ahead of second hearing on North Vancouver development



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Onni, the developer behind the contentious 13th and Lonsdale development, will come with concessions to anti-development groups ahead of a storied second public hearing on the North Vancouver tower project Monday.

It will be the return of a lengthy two-and-a-half year application process that was last year poisoned by public comments and accusations of impropriety from both the developer and North Vancouver city hall.

But now after a three-month hiatus during which Onni agreed to return for another public hearing at the city's request after threatening to walk away from the project altogether before Christmas, the hope among both camps is that cooler heads will prevail.

That said, Monday's meeting promises to be a long, standing-room-only affair as many of the citizens' groups and petitioners who packed the first six-hour hearing back in November are this time expected to bring company.

But Onni vice-president of development Beau Jarvis told *The Outlook* Tuesday that he expects a lot of those residents who previously had gripes about the project will be pleased with the accommodations Onni has made.

The "Save 14th Street" campaigners, for instance, should be happy to learn that most of the car and truck traffic that had been planned for the 100-block of East 14th Street has now been moved one block south to the four-lane 13th Street.

City Mayor Darrell Mussatto said this concession alone has already shifted a lot of public opinion previously lined up against the project.

"Honestly, I was quite surprised at that change," Mussatto told *The Outlook* in a phone interview Tuesday. "I did not think that Onni was going to do something that significant,"

Mayor Mussatto was a city councillor in the late-1990s when the city transformed East 14th from a two-way street to a one-way pedestrian-friendly corridor. Then, as now, there was community resistance to the move, albeit back then residents were calling for more access for trucks and cars.

Mussatto said the fact that residents now “accept and desire” fewer cars on 14th Street is a vindication of that previous council’s decision and he’s happy Onni has accommodated it.

Aside from the traffic changes, the Onni project now also boasts a “green” or “living” wall comprised of plant life covering the north-facing side above Stella Jo Dean Plaza. The wall of the planned 70-foot office building has also been set back from the plaza 36 feet to alleviate concerns about shading.

Additionally, the taller of the two residential towers — standing 240 and 170 feet, respectively — has been set back about eight feet from 14th Street, while the office building has been set back from the Grande building by about nine feet, resulting in less separation between all three buildings.

The [project](#)’s grocery store has been reconfigured but retains the same overall floorspace. Onni is still in talks with two grocers interested in potentially leasing the space.

The building’s daycare amenity remains unchanged in the new plan.

As for the public hearing itself, neither Jarvis nor Mussatto had any predictions for how the debate would go, but Mussatto stressed that everybody who wants to speak will be allowed to, regardless of personal, political or corporate affiliation.

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