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District residents draw roadmap to 2030



More than 150 DNV residents turned out for a public hearing Monday regarding the municipality's OCP. Above, one resident examines a poster in the foyer outlining the plan's key goals.

Greg Hoekstra photo

By [Greg Hoekstra - North Shore Outlook](#)

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More than 150 concerned residents turned out to debate not only the District of North Vancouver's proposed Official Community Plan, but the very future of the community on Monday night.

The OCP public hearing, held May 16, lasted more than six hours before council decided to carry the meeting over to a second night of speakers on Tuesday.

A total of 56 residents – including business owners, teens, seniors, and representatives from the district’s various community associations – took turns at the microphone sharing their vision and priorities.

At least 100 others filled the auditorium at district hall, spilling down the back stairs and into the hallway.

Of those who spoke, the majority said they were in favour of the proposed plan, called “Identity 2030,” and the foundation it lays for the next 20 years.

But there were also some detractors who took issue with the OCP’s framework and, in particular, its calls for increased density.

Lynn Valley resident Ronald Niven got the ball rolling by telling council he felt the plan was “too big, too fast.”

He warned that adding density would alienate residents who moved to the North Shore for its neighbourhood feel. Seventy per cent of district residents live in single-family homes, he noted.

“We came here for a reason and we don’t want to see that reason destroyed,” said Niven.

But speaking on behalf of the Lynn Valley Community Association, Dan Ellis defended the OCP and said “the sky isn’t falling.”

“The fact is, change happens... and when change happens, you need to have a plan to address it,” Ellis said.

A number of teens addressed council saying that without affordable housing options, they worry they will not be able to stay in the district.

Those concerns were echoed by two youth outreach workers from Capilano Community Services, who said they cannot afford to live where they work.

“The OCP must make affordable housing a priority,” said Dan Monument, “to give those of us who do not earn six-figure salaries a chance to love and give back to this community.”

Don Peters of the Community Housing Action Committee said if the district doesn’t do more to lure younger people it risks becoming a “decimated community with a loss of vibrancy.”

He added that OCP roundtable members can be proud, because the proposed plan “gives hope for the younger generation.”

Lower Capilano resident Jerome Irwin was concerned about the type of developments the OCP might open the door to.

Irwin said some of the recent projects along the Marine Drive corridor suggest a “disconnect” between council and the community, and argued that new condos in the area are infringing on the rights of pre-existing homeowners.

Beverly Phillips agreed, saying the Marine Drive developments have created an increase in traffic congestion and vehicles “belching fumes into the atmosphere.”

She said the traffic poses health risks to those living nearby, and said it’s unfair to put four-storey condo developments in front of pre-existing homes.

“What happened to our humanity in treating citizens this way?” she asked.

A number of concerns were presented by residents of the Lower Cap and Lions Gate areas, specifically worried about the OCP’s goal of making that area a village centre over the next 20 years.

One woman warned such a move would doom the OCP to “come under fire” time and time again.

Another resident, however, said he would welcome changes if it meant benefits for the neighbourhood, such as increased walkability.

“I don’t want a West End at my doorstep, but I am willing to accept some density,” he said. “The OCP has snapped us out of a self-induced coma.”

A Maplewood resident told council she is very concerned with the district’s plan to add another 1,500 units in her neighbourhood.

The woman said she worries an earthquake could lead to a spill at a nearby chlorine facility, and urged the municipality to follow through with a societal risk assessment before approving any more developments in that area.

John Hunter, a North Vancouver-based energy consultant, agreed the district needs to start planning for the worst-case scenario. If a strong enough earthquake hit, there would be no telephone service and water shortages, he noted.

Despite a variety of concerns, nearly all who spoke commended district staff for their ongoing efforts to consult with the community. To date, its estimated 5,000 residents have contributed to the plan.

Duane O’Kane, a clinical counsellor, said he was “astounded with not just what was being presented, but how it was being presented,” noting staff had “legitimate curiosity” when meeting with him.

With the community input period now closed, council will have some time to review all comments received.

The OCP bylaw will then have a third reading, which will mark council’s last opportunity to debate the matter before it’s tabled for adoption.

The date for that meeting will be posted at www.identity.dnv.org as soon as it’s confirmed.