DNV questions Marine Drive plan

BY BRENT RICHTER, NORTH SHORE NEWS   APRIL 26, 2013

THE District of North Vancouver council is re-examining its Marine Drive corridor plan, to assess whether a vision of council in 2007 for a mixed commercial/residential neighbourhood is on track.

Council rezoned the lands along Marine Drive from Mackay Avenue to Capilano Road in 2007 to include residential buildings atop commercial storefronts, which has resulted in at least four redevelopments and four or five more in the offing, according to Brian Bydwell, the district's general manager of planning, properties and permits.

But the neighbourhood-oriented commercial tenants have been slow to fill those storefronts, and staff sought council's input Monday night at an informal workshop to suss out ideas.

"I think we have to recognize that it's a challenging area because we've got to move a lot of people through that corridor but we also, at the same time, are trying to build a neighbourhood down there," Bydwell said.

Some suggestions staff had for council include concentrating commercial zoning into another node at the east end of the planning area, similar to the one taking shape at the Capilano Road end, rather than along the entire strip, as well as encouraging parking in nearby lanes or establishing a parkade overseen by a new business improvement association.

But, simply because of the way it is laid out, the Marine Drive corridor might not ever be what the council of the day was aiming for, Coun. Alan Nixon posited. "I don't think the corridor itself is ever going to become the neighbourhood we sort of envision, like Edgemont village for example. I just don't think this is ever going to become a neighbourhood in the classic sense, so maybe we should alter our thinking in aspiring to be that. . . . It's a busy, busy corridor and who the hell would ever want to spend a lot of time out there on the sidewalk with all of the traffic?"

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