

# north shore news

## Lynn Valley United redevelopment gets council's blessing

[Jeremy Shepherd](#) / North Shore News

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An artist's rendering of how the new Lynn Valley United Church will look after it is rebuilt and paid for by the surrounding development.  
Photo supplied, North Shore News

And council said, "Let there be redevelopment."

Lynn Valley United Church won the right to finance a new, smaller church through the construction of a neighbouring four-storey apartment building Monday.

The 75-unit complex will sit next to a cosier version of the house of worship.

While Monday's vote was decisive, several councillors had qualms about the development.

Referring to the project as "one of those ones that's sent to try us," Coun. Alan Nixon discussed the traffic and parking concerns raised by neighbours.

"I'm not altogether certain that all of those comments have been taken into account by the developer," he said.

The apartment would include a 94-stall underground garage, despite the district setting a minimum of 124 parking spaces.

While Nixon ultimately cited the need to rejuvenate the 54-year-old church, he asked the developer to mitigate any shadows the apartment may cast on its neighbours.

Coun. Lisa Muri was also concerned about leaving neighbours in the dark.

"We have sent single-family homes back to be redrawn because of a window peering into a backyard or a deck being too close to a neighbour," she said. "I don't want there to be ill will between neighbours."

Muri pushed for a deferral of the vote in the hopes of examining the impacts the development may have on the neighbourhood.

The deferral was defeated.

Coun. Doug MacKay-Dunn joined Muri in opposing the project.

"The design is great. Another place, another time, I would be supporting this. This is the wrong place, the wrong time," MacKay-Dunn said.

MacKay-Dunn noted an increase in traffic and a lack of collaboration with neighbours.

As church congregations dwindle amid demographic shifts, more churches may apply for a similar redevelopment, said Mayor Richard Walton.

"You are going to see an erosion of public space," he said.

While redevelopment is not always the answer, Walton said he was swayed by the project's proximity to Lynn Valley town centre. The nearness of shops may allow residents to cut down on car trips, according to Walton.

"We're changing a healthy place of worship to a healthy place of worship with a lot of additional housing on it," he said.

While ultimately supportive of the project, Coun. Mike Little had similar concerns.

"We are creating, distinctly, a net loss of public assembly space," he said.

While Little addressed the need to limit shadowing on the building to the north of the development, he suggested some of the comments may have been overstated.

"The property to the north casts a very long shadow on the smaller buildings to the north of it," he said.

Discussing the plan last December, Doug Purdy said the project could ensure the viability of a church with an aging building and an aging congregation.

"An easy course would've been to fold the tent, so to speak, and disappear from Lynn Valley landscape into the annals of history, selling the land and building to the highest bidder," he said.

The church plans to shrink from its current footprint of 8,471 square feet to approximately 6,200 square feet.

The project, which is a joint effort between the church and Marcon Developments, also includes four apartment units to be sold for \$135,000 in order to provide affordable apartments for people with disabilities. The units are slated to be operated by the North Shore Disability Resource Centre.

Several councillors expressed concerns about the loss of the church as a daycare space. The project includes a community amenity contribution of \$455,000. Of that sum, \$300,000 will go towards a new daycare, which will likely be located at Lynn Valley Recreation Centre.

Coun. Roger Bassam did not attend the meeting.

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