

New uses debated for Lynn Creek industrial area

District to seek public input on rezoning in Main Street area

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Lynn Creek's light industrial sector north of Main Street may be rezoned for garden supply shops and other retail businesses, pending a May 17 public hearing. photo Mike Wakefield, North Shore News

The industrial area in the Lynn Creek neighbourhood may find itself home to some new types of businesses if District of North Vancouver council follows through on a plan now up for debate.

District staff have been consulting with business owners north of Main Street between Mountain Highway and Charlotte Road, on how the area can evolve as a residential town centre grows up to the immediate east.

The area is currently home to about 100 businesses on 39 properties, many of them auto mechanic shops, blue collar trades businesses and fabricators.

Although light industrial jobs would still be priority, the district is considering more flexible uses including auctioneering, and retail sales of building supplies, equipment and garden supplies, as well as the sale of products that are made or assembled on the site. The new zoning would also allow for one residential suite for a caretaker at each property.

Council unanimously supported taking the matter to a public hearing – but not without some serious concerns being aired first.

Coun. Roger Bassam cautioned it may be a case of, 'If it ain't broke, don't fix it.'

"Typically government responds to conditions and is looking for solutions to a problem," he said. "Of course, there wasn't really a definition of what the problem is down there. As a matter of fact, things are functioning quite well. There's near 100-per cent occupancy of all of the buildings down there that provide a wide range of services."

Changing the zoning could have the unintended consequence of pushing up rents and displacing existing business, who may be replaced by lower-paying retail employers, he warned.

Coun. Lisa Muri too supported sending the proposed changes to a public hearing but also expressed great trepidation.

The district has already lost light industrial land thanks to the construction of the Canadian Tire in the neighbourhood, and more businesses south of Main Street will be lost if G3's proposal for a new grain terminal at Lynnterm West Gate goes ahead.

"We continue to degrade, in my opinion, the amount of light industrial land that is existent in the District of North Vancouver. I remember how very vocal we were when the City of North Vancouver rezoned a piece of light industrial land on Brooksbank at Cotton for the Mountain Equipment Co-op store. I remember we were very concerned about that and indeed, it's coming east to the district, that same feeling," she said.

The public hearing is scheduled for Tuesday May 17 at 7 p.m. at district hall.