

EDITORIAL: Self-improvement

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Yes means yes. Silence – in the case of the Lower Lonsdale Business Improvement Area – also means yes.

The City of North Vancouver will likely use a counter-petition for a proposed Lower Lonsdale BIA later this year, a process that has been the province's system for establishing more than 70 BIAs around B.C.

BIAs charge all the businesses in their area a levy and an elected board decides how the cash will be spent in the interests of the business community.

What is particularly unjust about using a counter-petition is that it barely affords the “no” side a fighting chance.

Unless a majority of business owners vote against the BIA, the city may set one up. And it's the landlord who is asked to vote on the counter-petition, not the tenant businesses. Landlords can happily pass the bill to their tenants through triple-net leases.

But while the methodology is counter-democratic, the BIA itself could still be a boon to Lower Lonsdale, particularly as the waterfront community readies for a sea change.

The Shipyards may soon boast a plaza alongside a skating rink/splash pool. Neighbouring Moodyville's population is set to quadruple.

Capitalists often attribute their success to outworking their opponents, but this may be an instance when LoLo's shopkeepers could benefit more from collaboration than competition.

However, when it comes to those second-storey white collar offices, for whom street beautification and marketing isn't particularly helpful, and another monthly levy is nothing but a burden, silence isn't golden – it's time to be heard.

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