

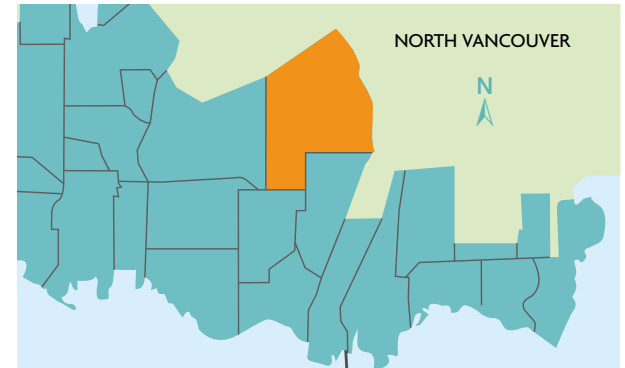
neighbourhoods



Check out more
neighbourhood
content online at
nsnews.com

A weekly profile of 12 neighbourhoods that help form the North Shore.

› Lynn Valley



ROSALIND DUANE

rduane@nsnews.com

It was Nov. 3 last year when about 20 millimetres of rain fell on the North Shore in just two hours.

The heavy rain caused mud and debris to clog culverts on Hastings and Kilmer creeks. Just before 10 p.m., the banks gave way and a torrent of water and debris flooded through Lynn Valley neighbourhoods causing more than \$1 million in damages. Up to 17 homes were evacuated and at least 20 suffered water damage. Mud and water from Hastings Creek also washed into Argyle secondary, damaging about eight classrooms and shutting the school for the day.

Neighbourhood resident Jane Creed was new to the area, having moved there with her family just that year. It was quite an introduction.

“I think with the floods last year we saw that the community really gets out and rallies for each other,” she says.

The sentiment supports her view that Lynn Valley has a friendly, community atmosphere.

neighbourhoods

from page 16

It was part of the reason she and her husband decided to move their family from the Canyon Heights area where they were living on a pleasant cul-de-sac. Although they liked the area, they wanted their kids to be able to walk to school and felt Lynn Valley offered that.

"I wanted more mobility for my kids and more independence for them," she notes. "I think Lynn Valley offers you the opportunity to get out of your car."

With amenities and outdoor recreation in close proximity, Creed says the neighbourhood is more accessible. "It's a really family-friendly environment," she notes. "There's a sense of neighbourhood." Kilmer Park in particular is a great place to join others from the area and watch community sports, especially in the summer, she adds. When asked if the neighbourhood has a distinct flavour, she pauses briefly before answering: "I guess it's kind of homey."

Traffic, however, seems to be getting worse in the area since the family moved there, and Creed says she would like to see more "mom-and-pop" stores run by locals and managed by locals. "They offer what the community needs then," she explains.

Living so close to popular hiking trails is definitely a perk for Creed's active family, but it does come with a small price: larger crowds during the peak of tourism season. This summer seemed particularly busy, and Creed says there were lineups for the Lynn Canyon Suspension Bridge, which she hasn't seen before. However, "I love to see it accessed," she notes.

Nestled between Mount Fromme and Mount Seymour, Lynn Valley boasts a bevy of forested playground including Lynn Headwaters Regional Park and the Lower Seymour Conservation Reserve.

Due to its heavily treed landscape, it's not surprising the neighbourhood grew up around the lumber industry. Originally the territory of the Coast Salish people and their descendants for many generations, European settlement of the area began in the early 1900s. The book *Early Days in Lynn Valley* by Walter Draycott notes that the neighbourhood was originally known as Shaketown, perhaps named after the shake-sided shacks used to house early settlers, or the cedar shakes (wooden shingles) produced by the lumber mill. The

name was eventually changed to Lynn Valley, and the book notes it was a misspelling of the pioneering "Linn" family name.

A bronze statue of Draycott sits on a bench in Pioneer Park as a tribute to the local historian and author. A longtime Lynn Valley resident, Draycott wrote many accounts of his life there, including history and details of local plants and animals. According to Draycott's book, Lynn Canyon Park was the first park in the area and hosted the first Lynn Valley Day in 1912. The community event continues, more than 100 years later.

It is one of many events in the neighbourhood that contribute a family-friendly feel.

Jim Lanctot is a local Realtor, who moved to Lynn Valley with his wife 20 years ago to raise a family. They now have three kids, and Lanctot describes the neighbourhood as safe and comfortable, featuring a multi-generational demographic. Lots of younger families have moved into the area, while older parents and grandparents remain after raising their own kids there. Lanctot describes Lynn Valley residents as "humble" and "happy to be there."

"I love it. If nothing was to change I'd be very happy to be here and raise my family and grow old," he adds.

But change has happened in the neighbourhood over the years. It was only about three decades ago when the area was considered "the wrong side of the tracks."

In keeping with the current housing trend, however, Lynn Valley is now as expensive as other areas on the North Shore, and although there aren't many "monster" homes going up, older homes are getting replaced with newer ones.

Lot sizes range from 33 to 70 feet, and the average full-size lot is about 50 by 130 feet, notes Lanctot.

"It's no big deal to have a 33-foot lot in Lynn Valley because you have access to so much outside of your own property to do," he adds.

The design of the neighbourhood lends itself to community-building, he says, noting the road system features lots of cul-de-sacs where residents can easily get to know one another. The geography also lends itself to funneling people down to the village and main square because it's in a valley, he adds.

"It's really in the last 10 years you've seen a big change with the development of the new library and that whole



see page 18

Lynn Canyon Suspension Bridge. FILE PHOTO CINDY GOODMAN

neighbourhoods

from page 17

town square really brought the community together,” says Lanctot, who is also a member of the community association and publisher of the community website *lynnvalleylife.com*. Evening concerts in the summer and

Christmas tree displays in the winter are just two of the events featured at the town square helping to bring people together, he adds.

When asked about the future of the neighbourhood, Lanctot says he doesn't foresee too much change in the next 10 years. There

is some redevelopment expected, though, including a redevelopment of the Lynn Valley mall. District council has issued a development permit for Lynn Valley Centre, which will eventually include a 50,000-square-foot commercial podium and 360 residential units in six towers between four and 12 storeys in height. Construction is expected to take place between 2016 and 2018.

Lanctot says he doesn't really have a position either for or against new development, and says the area could eventually take on a Whistler-like feel in the village core.

“There's some real mixed reviews, some people are pro and some people are very anti-buildings, but unfortunately I think there's nothing we can really do about that. It's going to be what it's going to be,” he notes.



Alison Hamilton serves ice cream at the End of the Line General Store at the top of Lynn Valley Road. PHOTO PAUL MCGRATH



A Day in Lynn Valley (from top left): Yuka and two-year-old Ikky Sato listen to a live band in Lynn Valley Village; Vincent Thompson and his grandson enjoy some ice cream; Dannille Baber walks along Lynn Canyon Trail; Anna Marchiafava and Nadia Cooper return from swimming in Lynn Valley headwaters; Aiyon Atwai, 2, crosses the suspension bridge; and Mahrokh Ghaffari and Ali Rezaei fuel up for their second hike of the day after exploring the Baden Powell Trail. PHOTOS KEVIN HILL