



Public comes out in support of Seylynn Village
Traffic concerns also voiced at public hearing

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A public hearing into the Seylynn Village development project drew strong support from the public on Tuesday, although many continued to voice their concerns about traffic delays along nearby roads.

District of North Vancouver Council chambers were packed with around 125 people, almost 30 of whom addressed council with their comments about the Seylynn Village rezoning and phased development bylaws.

The proposed changes would allow construction of the huge housing project on a five-acre parcel at the northeast end of the Lower Lynn neighbourhood, between Hwy 1 and Fern Street. The plan, put forward by Hynes Development Inc., would feature four-, six-, 10- and 25-storey buildings totalling 620 mixed-use and multi-family units, as well as 50,000 square feet of commercial space and shared underground parking. It calls for 70 affordable rental units.

Jane Osborne, a Seymour area resident and avid volunteer, said she has met many people through her volunteer work that are "on the verge of not being able to live in the North Shore" because of the high cost of housing for seniors, low-income individuals and young adults.

"I think it's time to move on and not look back . . . and get on with this development," she said.

Lower Lynn resident Warren Ireland said he and his family have few affordable options in the district and are excited about the opportunity a development like Seylynn could offer them.

"It is getting increasingly expensive (to live in the district), so eventually we're going to have to look for somewhere else." Ireland said he would like to relocate to Seylynn Village.

The plot is largely zoned for single-family residences at the moment. The Lynnmour

Grocery Store (638 Mountain Highway) is not part of the application.

The site is close to amenities such as Seylynn Park, the North Shore Winter Club, Lynn Creek trails, the Park and Tilford shopping centre and Phibbs Exchange. It is also not far from Capilano University, which would make it a target for students and employees wishing to live near the educational institution.

The affordable housing complex at the south-east end of the development site, near to Highway One, would provide 70 rental units to moderate-income individuals or "worker housing."

"We're trying to have a place so that people who need to work in businesses on the North Shore can actually live here," said Brian Bydwell, director of planning, permits and bylaw, in a telephone interview. The district has consulted with BC Housing about the possibility of partnering with a non-profit housing group to build the affordable rental suites.

Construction of the development is slated for completion within 10 years, at which point the phased development agreement would end.

The plan also involves adding lanes and extra land to both Mountain Highway and Fern Street. The part of Fern Street bordering the property will have two westbound lanes with an additional left-turn lane at Mountain Highway and two eastbound lanes with an additional left-turn lane at the Highway One interchange, according to district community planner Michael Hartford.

Changes to the Mountain Highway section include one northbound lane with a right-turn bay to access Seylynn at Bruce Street and three southbound lanes -- one for left turns at Bruce Street and two for left turns at Fern Street.

Bike lanes will also be added to both roads in a bid to reduce the dependency on the private automobile, according to Hartford.

Other measures to discourage driving include reduced parking spaces, one bike lock dock for every two dwellings and one car-share spot for every 120 dwellings.

Despite the reassurances from Hynes that more cars and people in the area won't be an issue because of the roadway improvements, many residents still raised concerns about long delays along Mountain Highway and Fern Street.

Seymour resident Catherine Fagerlund said traffic problems in the Seylynn area are already a "nightmare" that needs to be addressed before the district considers increasing housing density.

"How can it make sense to add 690 residences and lots of commercial space to the

(traffic) problem, especially located right at the heart of it?"

Patrick Golier, transportation planner with the district, said that if the traffic measures under the proposed development plan are not implemented, traffic volumes could increase.

"Delays and queuing by 2026 would be far worse than they are today," he said.

Members of district council debated the legal technicalities surrounding closing a public hearing before holding the Seylunn traffic information meeting that was scheduled to take place on June 22. In the end, council voted 6-1 to close the public hearing with Coun. Lisa Muri dissenting. The traffic information meeting is postponed. A date has not yet been set.

The three bylaws will return to council for second and third reading at the July 6 regular council meeting.

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