



URBAN DEVELOPMENT INSTITUTE – PACIFIC REGION

#1100 – 1050 West Pender Street
Vancouver, British Columbia V6E 3S7 Canada
T. 604.669.9585 F. 604.689.8691
www.udi.bc.ca



GREATER VANCOUVER HOME BUILDERS' ASSOCIATION

#1003, 7495 – 132 Street
Surrey, British Columbia V3W 1J8 Canada
T. 778-565-4288
www.gvhba.org

December 3, 2018

Mayor Mike Little and Council
District of North Vancouver
355 West Queens Road
North Vancouver, BC
V7N 4N5

Dear Mayor and Council:

RE: Rejection of Development Applications

At a time when residents desperately need more rental options, seniors are looking for age-appropriate accommodation, and young families are desperately seeking alternatives to the traditional single family home, it is disappointing to see the recent decisions of the District of North Vancouver Council. When it comes to home choice and affordability, North Shore residents are rightfully calling for solutions. And yet, when presented with opportunities to move forward with progress, instead your Council reversed course.

The Urban Development Institute's (UDI's) 850 plus members, and the 1,150 members of the Greater Vancouver Home Builders' Association, include thousands of individuals involved in all facets of planning and home building. Normally, we do not advocate on behalf of individual development applications. However, we cannot remain silent following the troubling decisions to reject both the Catalyst Community Development Society's project for the old Delbrook Community Centre parking lot and the Boffo Properties' Edgemont Walk project.

Together, these decisions run counter to the interests of our community, they will exacerbate existing issues regarding traffic and transit and will result in alarming economic uncertainty. We echo the recent comments from the chairman of North Shore Community Resource Society's Community Housing Action Committee who expressed concern about the "extraordinary tales of desperation" from too many residents seeking too few homes.

Residents deserve thoughtful solutions and the home building industry is helping to provide them. But home builders require certainty. These projects have engaged the local community in lengthy consultation processes, including multiple municipal reviews and public hearings. In both cases, the builders, one of whom is a not-for-profit society that builds and operates affordable rental housing, have made significant financial commitments and expended resources with the expectation that their projects would be considered in good faith.

The sudden unprecedented rejection of the Edgemont Walk project at fourth reading has created a climate of distrust with consequences that extend beyond housing development. This climate could discourage investment in the community, including significant investments for projects that council desires such as affordable housing and expanded transit and transportation networks.

In the case of the Catalyst Community Development Society's project, the cancellation of much-needed below-market rental homes and a seniors' respite centre will have an impact on the community as a whole. Increasing the number of affordable homes is important for North Vancouver residents as well as Council, which indicated it would prioritize more rental homes. Rental home builders require a stable regulatory framework to ensure their projects remain viable over time. If this requirement is not fulfilled by Council, it will ultimately discourage the types of investments, like affordable rental homes, that Council wants to encourage for the community.

We are concerned about even larger issues that may flow from these controversial decisions. Together, they represent a decidedly anti-growth tone at a time when the region desperately needs more homes, and more home choice, for our residents. Data from the [Metro Vancouver Databook](#) shows that the District of North Vancouver is not on pace to meet its housing targets set out in the [Regional Growth Strategy](#). Cancellations like these will further exacerbate the already severe traffic congestion, as commuters are required to travel to the North Shore for work. Without more housing to support regional growth, it may undermine public sector investments such as improved transit, hospitals and schools. In addition, the amenities and infrastructure directly contributed by builders will be lost.

The extraordinary decisions by the District of North Vancouver Council to reject both the Delbrook and Edgemont Walk projects has prompted our organizations to respond on behalf of the home building sector. Both projects were undertaken in good faith, they followed the rules, they adhered to policy and most importantly, they responded to community feedback. Unfortunately, their sudden rejection sets a dangerous and confusing precedent regarding this Council's vision for the future; a future that does not appear well-suited for partnerships to deliver the added housing options that our communities desperately need.

We encourage Council to reconsider these projects and move forward with these much-needed homes. If members of Council would like to further discuss the implications of these projects or home builders more broadly, please don't hesitate to contact us directly.

Yours truly,



Anne McMullin
President & CEO
Urban Development Institute



Bob de Wit
CEO
Greater Vancouver Home Builders' Association