

Dear Mayor and Council,

I am writing to express my profound disappointment with the recent decision made by the Municipality of North Cowichan (MNC) council on March 6, 2024, to deny the application to amend their Official Community Plan (OCP) for the West Vista Terrace development project. This decision is a grave mistake that directly undermines the interests of our community and the potential for progress in our region.

The West Vista Development, previously outlined in an Award-winning Local Area Plan, holds immense promise for our community. Not only does it align with the province's investment of 1.4 billion dollars in the area for a state-of-the-art hospital, but it also addresses the pressing need for housing and economic growth in North Cowichan.

This project isn't merely a hope; the developers are ready to commence construction immediately, bringing over 850 living units and significant revenue through property taxes and permit fees. Moreover, the proposed development would alleviate future property tax increases and contribute to our community's financial stability.

Additionally, it's crucial to consider the potential repercussions of the council's decision beyond the immediate term. Should the West Vista Terrace development not proceed under MNC's jurisdiction, there exists a very real possibility of the developer selling the land to Cowichan Tribes or Malahat Nation. In such a scenario, MNC stands to lose not only the revenue generated from permit fees and future property taxes but also the ability to dictate the terms of development on these lands. This outcome would necessitate MNC's acquisition of land for extended roadways and new services, placing an undue financial burden on taxpayers. Moreover, it would relinquish MNC's authority over land use decisions, leaving our community at the mercy of external forces. It's imperative for the council to recognize the true cost of their decision and act responsibly in the best interests of North Cowichan residents. Time is of the essence in ensuring that MNC secures the benefits of development rather than ceding control to external entities.

I urge you to reconsider your decision, taking into account the significant benefits this development would bring to our community. Upholding the public interest and making decisions in the best interests of the community is paramount, as outlined in the council's Standard of Conduct under Integrity.

Failure to approve this development not only hampers economic growth but also disregards the needs of North Cowichan residents. As elected officials, it is your duty to prioritize the well-being of our community above personal beliefs or bureaucratic processes.

I implore you to revisit this matter promptly and approve the West Vista Terrace development project for the betterment of North Cowichan.

Sincerely,

Travis Berthiaume