

# Community Report

FALL 2015

## MESSAGE FROM THE MAYOR



Mayor Michael Smith  
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*After last fall's municipal vote, your Council set out seven key priorities for the four-year term. One year in, this report summarizes how we have moved forward.*

*All of us on Council encourage you to communicate with us your views on these priorities and any other District matter. Attend a community consultation meeting, speak to us at regular Monday meetings of Council, make your views known on the District website or simply write to or email us.*

*Citizen participation and discourse directly affect the decisions Council makes. Our commitment is to engage with you and listen to your views. District staff have updated our corporate policy clearly outlining our approach*

*to community consultation. Every planning process or development application will include, at some point in staff reports to Council, a copy of the policy and a copy of the draft community consultation plan, so that all citizens can see the steps we're taking to engage with you.*

*Growth and change in West Vancouver present new challenges, and Council's priorities reflect that. Meanwhile, residents continue to enjoy the best in parks and recreation services, police and fire protection, garbage and recycling services, transit, roads, water and sewers, environmental protection, library, culture and festivals.*

*It is a privilege to serve as your Mayor and to work with my colleagues on Council to deliver the excellent municipal services residents want and need.*

**Mayor Michael Smith**



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# Council's Seven Priorities:

## *Moving forward for a better community*



1



### **AMBLESIDE: WATERFRONT & TOWN CENTRE**

Ambleside's waterfront is a jewel, unique in the Lower Mainland for its scenic offering of ocean, mountains, forest and foreshore. It is a much-loved waterfront destination with a range of users and activities.

Since the 1970s, successive Councils have worked to acquire and open up more land on the waterfront, a forty-year history of research, study and consulting with the public. All of that allowed the District to complete many projects and initiatives for the community to enjoy: waterfront gathering spaces, playgrounds, the Seawalk and arts facilities.

Some of those facilities are aging and demand for expanded services of various kinds is increasing. Recognizing the Ambleside waterfront's untapped potential, in 2013 Council adopted 11 new guiding principles for the Ambleside waterfront and wrote them into the Official Community Plan.

Based on those guiding principles, this fall District staff have brought forward a concept plan for the waterfront. While keeping the essentials of what makes it special, the plan proposes upgrades to current facilities, creating new facilities, creating more public spaces and modifications to existing ones. It also proposes to leverage the waterfront's potential to attract people to businesses just steps away in Ambleside.

*A beautiful waterfront,  
a healthy business core.*

You'll be asked to provide comment and feedback about the plan's various pieces. A comprehensive public consultation will begin in 2016, and it will shape changes to the waterfront over the next three years of this Council's term.

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### **BUILT FORM, HOUSING & NEIGHBOURHOOD CHARACTER**

One of the most difficult that West Vancouver has ever faced, this issue defies simple solutions.

Last spring, District staff coordinated an extensive public consultation that included meetings with neighbourhood groups, meetings with builders, public open houses, and a moderated town hall forum. Online engagement was also an avenue for residents to share their opinions, which they did in record numbers.

As we move toward a solution, District staff and Council are doing their best to keep a balance between protecting neighbourhood character and allowing people to build the kind of homes they want.

*Working with you on  
neighbourhood solutions.*

Staff will make recommendations to Council about regulatory and bylaw changes this fall. Council will debate and vote on those recommendations. Residents will have another chance to comment.



## FISCAL SUSTAINABILITY & MUNICIPAL SERVICES

Municipal governments across Canada are dealing with the problem of aging facilities and infrastructure, much of it built during the 1950s, 60s and 70s, a period of unprecedented growth and construction of public buildings, roads, water mains and sewers across the country.

Fifty years or so later, much of it is at or near the end of its useful life. Although West Vancouver is in a better position than some municipalities (for example, our two community centres are just ten years old), we need consider the pending infrastructure funding gap.

Annual capital and operating budgets allow the District to offer high levels of service in the present, but there are no reserves in place to fund long-term maintenance requirements and to fund replacements, and it's critical that we create and fund reserves so that our kids and grandkids are able to enjoy the same services we're enjoying now.

To understand how big the gap is, and to allow us to move to a budget model for long-term fiscal sustainability, we've just completed the first phase: a detailed inventory, including the age and condition of every asset the District owns and a long-term renewal plan for them. The second phase, now underway, is a detailed inventory of our functions and services.

As we begin to develop the 2016 budget, we'll be looking for your input on a funding mechanism dedicated entirely to building up the reserves needed to fund the gap—an estimated average of \$14 million per year.

*Smart planning  
for the future.*



## NATURAL ENVIRONMENT & CLIMATE ACTION

More than ever, residents are experiencing the effects of a changing climate, such as king tides, tropical storms, and summer droughts, and these will likely continue. We are carrying forward the direction established by the previous Council and responding to residents who expect government to establish standards and best practices for reducing the environmental footprint of cities and finding ways for us to live more sustainably.

A citizens' working group is developing the Community Energy and Emissions Plan to assist the municipality in addressing greenhouse gas emissions, energy and transportation use, and energy security.

Projects in the Shoreline Preservation Plan are protecting the waterfront and enhancing environmental habitat, with volunteer contributions from West Vancouver citizens and expert direction from groups such as the West Vancouver Shoreline Preservation Society and the West Vancouver Streamkeepers.

Almost three years of research, policy review and community engagement by the citizen-led Upper Lands Working Group, Council approved the working group's final recommendations in October.

*A smaller footprint,  
living sustainably.*



## ARTS, CULTURE & HERITAGE

The District, working together with community stakeholders, is in the process of completing a high-level visual and performing arts strategy. This will form the backbone for development of a detailed five-year Arts and Culture Strategic Action Plan, with extensive public input and consultation with arts, culture and heritage organizations, groups and people in the community. This plan will be the basis for decision-making and priority-setting and will set the direction for the next five years of delivery of arts, culture and heritage activities.

The Arts and Culture Strategic Action Plan will be completed in 2016, in conjunction with the District's Ambleside waterfront plan, which will address the overall plan for arts facilities on the waterfront.

*Taking action  
on the arts.*



## OFFICIAL COMMUNITY PLAN REVIEW

We will launch, in 2016, a public consultation process that will guide us as we update the Official Community Plan (OCP), giving Council, staff and the community a vital planning tool for the next decade.

The new OCP will build upon the key principles and values embodied in the existing plan, but will provide a more robust policy framework for guiding future planning decisions. The review process will include a thorough consideration of the various strategic plans and working group reports completed since 2004. There will be various opportunities for community engagement throughout the review process.

*Sharpening a key planning tool.*



## POLICE SERVICES AND MUNICIPAL HALL PROJECT

After years of planning, construction has begun on this critical piece of community infrastructure. In January 2015, Council approved the plan and funding model for a new building which, when complete, will allow the West Vancouver Police Department to provide even better safety and security services to residents each and every day, but also to fulfill its key role as a first responder in a disaster situation—like an earthquake.



The West Vancouver Police Department's current building on Marine Drive and 13th Street was constructed decades ago and was not built to survive a major earthquake or operate in a post-disaster situation.

The project includes space connected to the current Municipal Hall to provide a one-stop counter for residents, giving you better access, services and support for any reason you may have to visit the hall.

We recognize that construction means inconvenience for residents nearby. We will do our best to reduce the impact on residents. While construction is underway, traffic flow and pedestrian access may be impacted between Fulton Avenue and Esquimalt Avenue, and between 16th Street and 17th Street.

The project will be complete in late 2017.

*Helping first responders be ready.*

### Stay updated on these priorities and important District news.

Receive future issues of this newsletter by email, as well as Council agendas and updates on significant initiatives. Visit [westvancouver.ca/enews](http://westvancouver.ca/enews) to sign up. It's easy to stay informed, and you can unsubscribe at any time.

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