

# What We Heard Summary:

## The Hub Virtual Information Session

PREPARED BY DELANEY  
FOR THE CITY OF NORTH VANCOUVER

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DELANEY  
*the engagement people*





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# Executive Summary

## Project Background + Context

The Hub: North Shore Neighbourhood House Site Redevelopment is a collaborative community-based project aimed to redevelop the North Shore Neighbourhood House Site (NSNH) located on City-owned land along St. Georges Ave between East 1<sup>st</sup> Street and East 2<sup>nd</sup> Street. The project's goal is to support an inclusive and welcoming community with expanded community services and affordable rentals in North Vancouver's Lower Lonsdale neighbourhood.

The project will include:

- Affordable rental housing
- Adult day and overnight respite care program
- A new North Shore Neighbourhood House that delivers:
  - Childcare and child development support programs
  - Youth and senior programs
  - Wellness and recreation activities
  - Food bank and food security programs
- Redesigned Derek Inman Park

The proposed project would require an Official Community Plan (OCP) amendment to allow for housing on the site. The OCP is not prescriptive about what height is permitted on the site. The current proposal is for up to 18 storeys in order to maximize the number of affordable rental units and community services which could be offered through community partners.

In addition, a zoning bylaw amendment and park boundary adjustment would be required. It is important to note that overall park space would not be reduced; rather, the orientation of the park would change from an east-west orientation to a north-south orientation.

A development information session was held to share information, answer questions and promote the engagement opportunities.

## A Vibrant Neighbourhood



### Neighbourhood context

The surrounding neighbourhood offers an abundance of amenities, including a variety of local businesses, nearby parks, access to Lonsdale Avenue and The Shipyards, as well as rapid transit and the SeaBus.



### About the existing site

The site currently includes an aging NSNH facility, Derek Inman Park, Lower Lonsdale Community Gardens, Charros Gardens, and a Heritage B building.

Each of the community partners introduced themselves, their role in the project and was available to answer questions. Working collaboratively, community partners have come together to plan the proposed project in order to meet and complement each other's program and service offerings. The community partners involved in the project include:



**Catalyst Community Developments Society (Catalyst)**  
Non-profit real estate developer  
[www.catalystcommdev.org](http://www.catalystcommdev.org)



**The Health & Home Care Society of BC (Care BC)**  
Non-profit health services provider  
[www.carebc.ca](http://www.carebc.ca)



**North Shore Neighbourhood House (NSNH)**  
Non-profit community service provider  
[www.nsnh.bc.ca](http://www.nsnh.bc.ca)



**Hollyburn Family Services Society (Hollyburn)**  
Non-profit real estate developer and community service provider  
[www.hollyburn-society.ca](http://www.hollyburn-society.ca)

# Session Purpose + Format

The purpose of the development information session was threefold. The first was to share information about the proposed project. The second was to answer questions from participants, and the third was to share information about how community members can engage on this project and share their thoughts with the project team in advance of submitting the project for Council consideration, via an OCP amendment.

The session was hosted via WebEx and pre-registration was required. The session was facilitated by Delaney, a neutral, third-party facilitator. The format of the session was:

- Opening and welcome by the facilitator
- Presentation on the project
- Introduction to all the partners
- Q&A via the chat

The session was 2 hours from 6 – 8 p.m. on Thursday, May 13, 2021.



# Engagement by the Numbers

The registration was open from April 26th until noon on May 13. During that time, 131 participants registered. During the session, the highest number of attendees was 98 with relatively stable participation throughout with 76 participants remaining by the end of the session.

## Session Promotion

The City promoted the development information session in a number of different ways:

	Channel	Frequency/Metrics
1	Let's Talk Page	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Highlighted on the main project page with a link to register</li></ul>
2	Facebook post	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ May 4 - Engagements: 146, Reach: 1036</li><li>▪ May 7 - Engagements: 70, Reach: 645</li><li>▪ May 10 - Engagements: 15, Reach: 420</li></ul>
3	Twitter tweets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ May 4 – Impressions: 954, Engagements: 42</li><li>▪ May 7 – Impressions: 702, Engagements: 12</li><li>▪ May 10 – Impressions: 930, Engagements: 25</li></ul>
4	City Newsletter	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Highlighted as the lead article in the May 6 issue</li></ul>
5	Direct mailouts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Notice to all residents and property owners within 40m of site</li></ul>
6	Site signage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Four signs posted in prominent locations on the site</li></ul>
7	North Shore News ads	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Advertisement posted on April 28<sup>th</sup> and May 5<sup>th</sup></li></ul>

\*Note: Engagements = post clicks, likes, comments and shares

# Themes of Questioning

Following the presentation on the proposed project, the session was opened to participant questions using the chat function. The highest number of participants at any time in the presentation was 98. From those participants, there were 231 comments, questions, and posts in the chat. There were 28 posts about technology, checking sound, and testing the chat. There were another eight posts related to thanking the host/facilitator for the session. The remaining posts were related to the content of the proposed project (195).

The remaining 195 comments or questions broadly align, in order of frequency, in the following categories.

## 1. Process and Density: Height/Official Community Plan/Economic Benefits

There were a number (approximately a third) of questions related to the following topics:

- Density / height of the proposed tower
- Process for OCP amendment
- Impact on property values/views of existing homes/shadows
- Overall economic benefits

A few examples of specific questions include:

- Why are 18 storeys required? What could be done with six?
- What precedent does this OCP amendment have on future sites where developers may want more density?
- Is it possible there could be two towers or an even higher tower?
- Has an economic impact study been done with respect to this proposal?

Within this theme, there is a fairly consistently expressed concern about the proposed height of the tower and the associated negative impacts of that height on existing homes, in particular, property values, views, shadows (loss of light), and potential wind tunnel effects. It should be noted that theme five relates to building form, however, height has been included here with OCP as the chief concern was about the height not being supported by the current OCP.

There were also a number of questions specific to the OCP and the direction of Council. This line of questioning was largely aligned with theme #3 around an alternative site.

## 2. Impact on Community Amenities

There were a significant number of comments and questions about community amenities, in particular the community gardens. Within this theme, the community gardens were the most referenced amenity. Questions related to the following topics:

- Community gardens
- Tennis courts
- Playgrounds / playground access
- Elementary school
- Heritage home
- Impact to mature trees

A few examples of specific questions include:

- What will happen to the current community gardens? Will they be wiped out and not replaced?
- Has future expansion size for the neighbourhood house been included in the design?
- Will there be public tennis courts to replace existing ones?
- How is the heritage home being dealt with?
- Is it feasible to think that NSNH is going to continue to function during the construction?
- Any chance of revegetation and tree planting along the entire length of the 200 block of East 1<sup>st</sup>?

## 3. Alternative Site

There were a number of comments and questions related to alternative sites that participants believe may be more suitable for the project. Specific sites included: East 1<sup>st</sup> Ave, repurposing the existing tower on 2<sup>nd</sup> and St. George, or East 3<sup>rd</sup> and Chesterfield.

Questions related to the following topics:

- Alternative sites
- Sites with existing zoning in place
- Sites not requiring an OCP amendment
- Sites with less impact on community amenities, such as the community gardens

A few examples of specific questions include:

- What about the lot on East 1<sup>st</sup> that City of North Vancouver (CNV) owns which is already zoned for high density?
- Why can't the proposal be moved to the City-owned, same-size property in the 100 block of East 1<sup>st</sup> that is already designated for high density?

## 4. Rental Access

There were a number of comments and questions from that chat which suggested both an interest and lack of concrete understanding of who would be eligible for below-market rental housing.

Questions related to the following topics:

- Below market rent
- Qualifications / eligibility requirements
- Application process
- Rental mix

A few examples of specific questions include:

- Who is eligible to apply for below-market rentals? When should you apply?
- Can you explain further about what type of affordable rentals will be provided? Who would specifically qualify for this type of housing?
- Why should I support and subsidize through my taxes to create below-market housing that will cost less for residents to live in, while I have to pay my mortgage, strata fees and taxation costs?
- We need places for people who work in our communities and are trying to be contributing members to the community, e.g. teachers/daycare workers/nurses/school EAs who cannot afford to live where they work. What is the criteria for working/low income individuals to get into a place like this? I have seen and still see people living in low-income places in the North Shore who take advantage. Who monitors low-income houses?

Amongst participants there was interest and general support for below-market rentals; however, there was also a lack of common understanding about who qualifies, what below-market means, and if North Shore residents would get priority access to units.

## 5. Building Form/Construction/Building and Land Ownership

There were comments and questions related to the building form (beyond height which is included in theme #1), questions about construction and timelines as well as land ownership.

Questions related to the following topics:

- Number of units per floor
- Underground parking
- Catalyst's role/ownership
- Amount of square footage per unit
- Building location within the proposed site
- In-building amenities (gym/pool)
- Land lease (term)

A few examples of specific questions include:

- Isn't 60 years for a concrete construction building short? What happens at the end of the lease?
- Has the developer built a tower completely to date with similar scope and cost?
- Who is occupying the 18-storey tower?
- What happens to the amount of below-market rental units if financing or construction costs increase significantly by the time the project begins?
- Is there a specific time frame for Catalyst ownership? Can they sell the building later?
- Will there be rooftop gardens?

There was an interest amongst participants to better understand the overall ownership of the site and the details of the lease. In addition, there is a desire to know more and engage on the topic of transportation, building access and transit. There were a few comments related to the number of allocated parking stalls (0.4 per unit) as being insufficient and that transit is also lacking. Some participants shared a concern about the lack of a traffic study being completed for the project (by May 13) and expressed a desire to further engage on the topic of transportation specifically to this proposed project.

The questions included in this report are not exhaustive, but do represent the majority of comments and questions posed during the development information session.

Following the information session, the City's project team developed updated FAQs which are available on the Let's Talk page.

## Next Steps and How Input Will Be Used

The project team will review this summary as well as the findings from the online survey, Let's Talk submissions, and emails to the project team. The information will be themed and consolidated to better understand where there are areas of common interest and will update the project submission before it goes to Council as part of the public hearing process for an Official Community Plan (OCP) amendment.

The community will have opportunities to engage in that process and information will be posted on the Let's Talk project page.