



May 21, 2021

Letter to Editor of the Tri-City News

Re: Port Moody wary of Anmore's urbanization plan, Tri-City News May 19, 2021

As the Council for the Village of Anmore and the representatives for our residents, we find it extremely disturbing that Mr. Vagramov, Mayor of Port Moody, is suggesting that he plans to sabotage our municipality's ability to be financially sustainable and offer more housing options beyond expensive homes on large properties. He talks about sustainable growth, but his comments indicate that he clearly does not understand what sustainable means. His comments also show that he does not know anything about our community or our challenges, and his past actions show that he does not respect our residents.

We would like to clear some things up for those who read the May 19, 2021 article about the future of Anmore South.

Mr. Vagramov says, "any urbanization of Anmore would be unsustainable." This ridiculous statement shows that he has not taken any time to learn about the challenges we face in our community and what Council is doing to mitigate risks and provide for a sustainable future. It appears that Mr. Vagramov believes Anmore should be a rich enclave with expensive homes – an interesting but clearly not well-conceived perspective on what makes a community sustainable. This perspective is also completely contrary to his campaign promise to play "hardball with builders to get more affordable housing, amenities, contributions and parkland" in Port Moody.

We base our assessments and planning on facts and expert advice. For example, financial studies for Anmore have highlighted that large, one-acre and half-acre lots like we have today are not sustainable for future development – not just from a financial standpoint but also not from a sustainable population standpoint as young families cannot afford to live here. As part of our review of opportunities for Anmore South, we are doing updated studies to see how the current financial implications compare to earlier financial assessments.

We want to emphasize that our future decisions about what happens on Anmore South lands will be based on continued research and what we hear from our residents. We have completed an initial round of community engagement to gain an understanding our residents' priorities and what they feel is important for us to be sustainable in the long term. As part of their input, our residents asked us to slow down, do more work to assess options for that area and continue to consult with them before making a decision – so that's what we are doing. To be clear, our community will guide our decisions – not Port Moody.

Mr. Vagramov also says opening the door to densification would contribute to “car-centric sprawl.” Right now, our biggest traffic issue in Anmore is from residents in neighbouring communities like Port Moody driving through the village to reach recreation areas – approximately 1,000,000 vehicles annually. That traffic is way beyond our residents’ road use, yet Anmore Council does not attempt to limit Port Moody residents from accessing their preferred recreation spots by closing off roads – nor would we attempt to do so. This is especially true for loco Road as it is part of the Major Road Network (MRN). The MRN was conceived to ensure unfettered transit of residents into and through neighbouring communities. It’s also worth noting that Anmore South is less than 6 km from the Inlet Centre Skytrain station, and the area already has a transit route that could easily be expanded.

But if Mr. Vagramov wants to talk about traffic, let’s look at Port Moody Council’s track record. Prior to Mr. Vagramov’s term in office, both Port Moody and Anmore Councils signed a Memorandum of Understanding to work collaboratively on developing the IOCO lands (which we now refer to as Anmore South in our community). Mr. Vagramov and the current Port Moody Council did not honour that agreement and proceeded to remove the David Avenue road right-of-way without consulting Anmore Council or our residents. That route was designated 30 years ago as a third traffic corridor to provide a key connection to Anmore and Belcarra, and Port Moody’s actions have resulted in focusing traffic on our remaining roads – affecting both Anmore residents and Port Moody residents along loco Road.

When Port Moody put forward “a traffic study” for alternate routes, their recommended route was to run down Strong Road in Anmore, which would result in the removal of all of the homes at the end of the street. So his Council felt that the best way to improve traffic flow was to remove a road right-of-way that had been in place for 30 years (so no homes affected) and replace it with an option that would have a severely detrimental impact on Anmore residents without actually improving traffic flow. We understand that the decision to remove the road right-of-way was beneficial to one Port Moody Council member and the residents who live near Bert Flinn Park, but it does not reflect responsible traffic management.

We noted that in addition to taking pride in removing the David Avenue road right-of-way (despite the fact that it has had such a negative impact on so many people), Mr. Vagramov also lists a number of developments his Council has halted. Port Moody Council has never asked our opinion about any of its land use decisions. Mr. Vagramov seems to believe that his Council should be able to make development decisions without interference from others, and Anmore expects to receive the same consideration.

In short, Mr. Vagramov is extremely misinformed. It is difficult to know whether he has done any research before throwing out inaccurate information. He is not an elected official for our community. He is not a resident of our community. And he has shown disdain and lack of consideration for our residents (and some of his own residents). We suggest that he use his energy to take care of his own community.

Village of Anmore Council