

Vancouver council agrees to protect view corridors

BY NEAL HALL, VANCOUVER SUN JANUARY 26, 2010



The city skyline in downtown Vancouver is washed in light on January 15, 2010.

Photograph by: Arlen Redekop, PNG

VANCOUVER - A majority of council approved Tuesday protecting the city's world-renowned views.

But at the same time the motion approved by council would allow city staff to "assess and report back to council detailing available higher building opportunities" as long as they don't intrude on existing view corridors.

During a special council meeting Tuesday to consider the issue, Coun. David Cadman said the city shouldn't allow developers to build taller residential towers that will block existing views.

"They want to build condominiums higher so their tenants can get the views," he said.

Cadman said Vancouver residents feel strongly about protecting view corridors, which should not be sacrificed for the sake of rich condo owners.

Council was told by city planner Brent Toderian that more than half of residents say they want to retain view corridors of the mountains.

In recent years, council has allowed building height limits to rise 45 metres to a maximum of 646 feet (197 metres or 62 storeys).

City view corridors, established by city staff 20 years ago. protect three features of city views - the

water, mountains and skyline.

"Once it's gone, it's gone forever," Coun. Geoff Meggs told council during debate over the issue.

He supported the motion brought forward by Coun. Raymond Louie to affirm and strengthen view corridors.

"Council listened to the people, who gave us a clear message they want to retain view corridors," Louie said after the vote.

Coun. Suzanne, the lone Non-partisan Association member on council, said she was disappointed with the vote because it imposes height restrictions on development in northwest False Creek.

She also is concerned the existing limits will prevent St. Paul's Hospital from building higher on its current site.

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