

October 18, 2023



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Town of View Royal
45 View Royal Avenue
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Attention: Mayor and Council
RE: 339-345 Island Highway Rezoning Application

Dear Mayor and Council:

Boardwalk and ICIC are pleased to present our amended rezoning application and proposal for the properties located at 339 - 345 Island Highway. Since initiating the redevelopment planning in the spring of 2022, and following the formal submission of our application in January of 2023, we have received a significant amount of community and Council feedback that has helped shape the plan into the comprehensive proposal before you now.

Redevelopment is Needed

Redevelopment of the former Cambridge Motel site has long been anticipated, with the existing buildings recognized as being past their usable economic life and their current use is non-conforming to the existing zoning. While the buildings have provided low end of market rental accommodations, they are not formalized affordable housing units and remain in very poor condition. As you are aware, the site has suffered two recent fires that could have caused detrimental impacts to the surrounding urban forest and neighbouring properties had they not been controlled as quickly as they were. We remain thankful for the site's proximity to the Town's Fire Hall and that no significant injuries were incurred.

Revitalization to Meet Community Needs

Our proposal offers new, purpose-built rental housing, which will contribute to the Town of View Royal's housing supply. New rental housing offers more affordable alternatives to home ownership and contributes to diversifying the housing choice and mix in View Royal, welcoming individuals, families and seniors to move to, or remain in, View Royal as their needs change. With 238 apartments, the proposal introduces new studio, 1-bedroom, 2-bedroom and family-friendly 3-bedroom homes.



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The View Royal Official Community Plan (OCP) includes this site within the Harbour Neighbourhood. This designation prescribes mixed residential development, which includes a range of new housing formats from small lot detached houses and townhouses to low-rise apartments. This parcel borders on the future Town Centre node to the north-east and the Island Highway Community Corridor extending to Helmcken, making it ideally located for residential densification, locating greater housing density in proximity to existing and future services. The site is also within 400 m, a comfortable walking distance, of the commercial node at the corner of Helmcken and Island Highway.

This redevelopment site is designated and uniquely situated to allow for growth with minimal impact to residential neighbours. The RV Park across the road is intended to similarly densify into the new town centre. The Fire Hall flanks the eastern side. The south neighbours are separated from the site by the wooded Heddle Park right-of-way running the length of the property, and these houses sit much higher than the proposed new buildings with views across the peninsula uninterrupted by the proposed new construction.

The new construction will meet Step 2 or higher of the BC Energy Step Code, and benefit from the low life-cycle cost and carbon footprint of wood frame construction. The location on a major transit corridor provides a wide range of employment and family housing close to services and transit, reducing reliance on private automobiles.

Consistent with Official Community Plan and Zoning Bylaw

The site is designated for mixed residential development in the OCP, which envisions density up to 1.6 Floor Space Ratio (FSR) for residential buildings with underground parking. The proposed development is fully compliant with the Official Community Plan and the standard RM-3 zone, with the exception of building height. Where planning policy identifies a four-storey maximum height, the proposed six-storey buildings achieve the same target density but with 33% less footprint. And because of strategic building placement, this permits the retention of almost three times as many existing trees as a four-storey development of the same density.

Where many new developments in similar contexts seek densities of 2.0 to 3.0 FSR, in excess of planning policy, this application has a density of 1.5 FSR plus 0.1 bonus density for underground parking, compliant with both the OCP and proposed RM-3 zone. The additional height proposed is significantly mitigated by:

- Setbacks that substantially exceed RM-3 minimums
- Maintaining dense wooded area at the rear of the site
- Substantial stepping of the buildings down to five storeys and four storeys at building ends.

Through comprehensive site analysis and in response to community feedback, the site plan has been shaped to minimize the underground parking structure and building footprints, allowing for retention of a significant number of existing trees. The proposed buildings have been designed to fit into the site's topography to not impact any neighbour's sight lines, views, privacy or natural light.



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Building and Landscape Character

While the detailed design will be advanced at the future Development Permit (DP) stage, the rezoning application has been informed by significant design considerations to balance site access, tree preservation, building form and siting, and open space planning. The proposal includes two terraced and stepped buildings that frame adjacent open spaces, which will include outdoor gathering areas, a children's play area and naturalized trails within the treed areas. Indoor resident amenity spaces could include social gathering areas, meeting rooms or a fitness space. The buildings include ground-oriented units with individual townhouse-style walk-up entries, creating a strong pedestrian streetscape and character. Upper storeys are stepped at the building ends. All of the parking is located underground, including visitor parking, and will be accessed from a single driveway off of Prince Robert Drive.

Planning Staff has requested perpetual covenants for the indicated outdoor amenity areas including the outdoor BBQ and children's play area. The Applicant understands the desire to provide amenity area at this project into the future, and is willing to provide a covenant to provide 275 Square Meters of outdoor amenity area for the benefit of the residents of the project into the future.

Consideration of including a potential trail connection for resident access to the adjacent Heddle Park trail can be addressed in detail in the landscape plan at the DP stage, taking into account inputs with respect to limiting public access onto the site and managing maintenance. Staff and Council will be able to provide direction as to whether there is a connection from the site to the View Royal Heddle Park during the DP process, and support whatever solution is considered best.

Planning Staff has indicated that it intends to seek a perpetual covenant for connections from the site to Heddle Park Trail. As the park is not currently developed or maintained, it is difficult to solidify the plans, however the Applicant is willing to provide access for residents to the park as the Town determines the plans for the park through a covenant agreement.

Public Benefits

The proposal offers View Royal a number of public benefits, most notably it will implement the OCP's envisioned mixed residential designation of the site. Further, it will en-

able the transformation of a property that has long been recognized as being in need of redevelopment and will offer new housing choice to the Harbour Neighbourhood. The purpose-built rental homes will be suited to families, single professionals and seniors looking to downsize in the community and are located in close proximity to existing and planned neighbourhood commercial.



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Preservation of a significant number of trees on the site through careful site planning maintains the neighbourhood's unique character and provides a naturalized open space setting for resident use. In addition to constraints of the new zone preventing any further development and expansion on this property, planning staff have strongly suggested registering legal protection of this green space. The developer is prepared to covenant this as a condition of redevelopment.

Community Amenities

We have been working with Staff to develop a comprehensive community amenity package to complement the proposal for Council consideration. As you are aware, the Local Government Act allows local governments to obtain community amenity contributions during the rezoning process through a variety of ways, including negotiating Community Amenity Contributions or using density bonusing. Density bonusing provides voluntary options for a developer to build either to the base density or to a higher level of density, if certain amenities or affordable housing are provided. The Town of View Royal does not have a community amenity density bonus policy beyond that offered for providing underground parking, and the proposal is not exceeding the targeted OCP density. Instead, the View Royal Community Amenity Contribution (CAC) Policy provides guidance during the rezoning process to consider how new development can help meet the needs of the community through voluntary, negotiated amenity contributions. However, no CACs are required under the Local Government Act, as no incentives have been provided by View Royal.

To inform the negotiation process and in accordance with the View Royal CAC Policy, a Land Lift Analysis was completed by an independent economist and determined that there was no residual land value associated with the proposal. The CAC Policy states that where a lift in land value is determined, the Town would seek 50% of that lift value as an amenity contribution. Where there is no lift in land value, the policy states that alternative community amenities may be negotiated.

Despite the findings of the Land Lift Analysis demonstrating that there is no lift in land value, we have heard Council and community interest in ensuring new development contributes positively to the Town of View Royal and have worked with View Royal Staff to prepare a Community Amenity Package. Although we have not received any incentives or bonus density, Staff and Council have been clear they desire a CAC contribution.

The package includes a proposed voluntary amenity contribution of \$4000 per unit, which is in keeping with the CAC Policy's target rates for Cash Amenities. With 238 units, the Community Amenity Contribution for this proposal is calculated as \$952,000, of which we understand a portion is to go to the Capital Regional District Housing Trust Fund. In addition, Boardwalk is committed to offering below market rent to all first responders and veterans.

Further to the Cash Amenities, the proposal is also contributing to the Town's infrastructure assets with a new signalized intersection at Prince Robert Drive and Island Highway to be paid for entirely by the applicant. The inclusion of a Tangible Amenity that offers enhanced traffic movement for all community members utilizing or benefitting from the movement of goods and services along the Island Highway corridor, is part of the amenity package offered by the applicant. The development is also providing the Town of View Royal with land to legalize the road way that currently encroaches onto the site.

Both the Cash and Tangible Amenities will be secured through a legal covenant.

In addition to the Cash and Tangible Amenities, the proposal would result in over \$1.55 million in Development Cost Charges, over \$900,000 in Building Permit Fees and ongoing increase in annual property tax revenue to the Town of approximately \$400,000. These economic factors contribute to the Town's vitality and provide benefits to the community as a whole, and may help meet demands for services (such as RCMP) associated with growth and population increases.

Tenant Support Package

ICIC and Boardwalk are committed to building quality, sustainable residential rental buildings and we recognize that new development will replace the existing buildings that have been providing 31 units of non-conforming, market rental housing - down from 36 following the loss of 5 units which were destroyed by fire. Of the 31 remaining units, only 29 are rentable now, with two being in such poor condition that they are not occupied.

As noted previously, due to the age and poor condition of the buildings, they have offered low end of market rents, but they are market units and are not subsidized housing. They have been more affordable because of the condition they are in, but not because of any regulation or government subsidy. To support the existing tenants, we have created a robust Tenant Relocation Plan to assist the tenants in finding new homes. This plan provides four times more financial support than what is required by the Provincial Government's Residential Tenancy Act, and proposes to provide:

- Tenants renting for up to 5 years will receive four months' rent compensation;
- Tenants renting for 5 to 10 years will receive five month's rent compensation;

- Tenants renting for 10 to 20 years will receive six month's rent compensation; and,
- Tenants who have been renting for more than 20 years will receive eight month's rent compensation.

Moving expenses are also covered providing \$1000 for studio and one-bedroom units and \$1250 for two or more bedroom units. In addition, a Tenant Relocation Coordinator has been hired to assist tenants in finding alternative accommodation.

Fire Access

We have been working with Planning and the Fire Department to make refinements that substantially exceed BC Building Code minimum fire access requirements for this site; ensuring that best possible response areas are provided to both fully-sprinklered buildings. This includes:

- Widening the entry plaza zone for use by emergency vehicles;
- Providing additional width for mobilization of View Royal's specific ladder truck, and the dimensions of its outriggers;
- Extending the emergency access route into the central courtyard and adjusting tree locations to suit;
- Ensuring fire access grades do not exceed 7%;
- Providing additional pedestrian pathways from lobbies to the sidewalk separate from the main entry plaza;
- Relocating the children's play area;
- With all required resident and visitor parking provided underground trucks will never be obstructed on site by other vehicles; and,
- The suspended slab will be reinforced substantially to support fire truck loads.

Community Engagement

Since the outset of the planning process, the development team has been working to shape the proposal through a series of iterative community engagement meetings. Four neighbourhood information sessions have been held, starting with the introduction of the initial development concept in April of 2022 and culminating in the presentation of the final plans in August 2023.

At each step, the plans have been refined based on community, Staff and stakeholder input, with significant changes now reflected in the final plans to increase tree preservation, increase open space, reduce building footprints, reduce paved surface site coverage and reduce building heights. The key issues and topics of discussion from our latest meeting in August reflect the community conversation throughout our engagement events and are summarized below:

Redevelopment of the Site is Needed

Neighbours continue to support redevelopment of the site and understand that the site is in need of change. Most in attendance commented on the quality character of the proposed buildings as a positive change for the site. Some asked about how the existing tenants would be supported in finding alternate accommodations by the development team and learned about the tenant support plans.

Preferred Plan

Most in attendance preferred the new plan and liked the reduced number of buildings, the increase in tree retention and open space and the removal of the central driveway and parking area that was included in the previous plans. Most also appreciated the reduced building heights, achieved by lowering the underground parking and buildings further into the natural grade of the site.

Tree Retention and Open Spaces

There was positive support for the expanded open spaces and retention of more of the existing trees. Many commented favourably about the inclusion of a children's play space on site and enhanced connection to neighbourhood trails and parks.

Transportation and Intersection Improvements

Many supported and welcomed the idea of a new traffic light at the intersection of Prince Royal and Island Highway. There were positive comments about the planned underground parking and some questions about parking for loading and deliveries and drop-off/pick-up areas.

Traffic Short-Cutting through Neighbourhood

Some neighbours noted concerns about traffic short-cutting through the residential neighbourhood to avoid congestion on Island Highway and hoped for traffic calming measures along Prince Robert Drive. The short cutting problem has been ongoing and some neighbours are concerned about the development contributing to this existing problem.

Infrastructure and Transportation

With respect to neighbourhood concerns about traffic short-cutting through the Harbour Neighbourhood, we continue to support View Royal Staff review of potential traffic calming measures that could be implemented by the Town beyond the frontages of our site. We understand Staff and Council are further investigating these issues, which are beyond our control.

We are working with McElhanney and Watt Consulting Group are collaborating with Staff to ensure that all affected public services and infrastructure will be maintained or upgraded to suit this new development and the overall neighbourhood. The off-site improvements included with the redevelopment will provide a proper bike lane, curb, gutter, side-

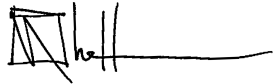
walk, boulevard, street trees, bus stop pull-out, and bus stop shelter. With all vehicle traffic accessing the site of Prince Robert Drive, all five existing driveways on Island Highway will be removed, creating a continuous upgraded and beautified streetscape, with improved safety for all modes of transit. Prince Robert Drive will also be substantially upgraded, with a widening of the roadway, establishment of proper building setbacks, and installation of proper curb, gutter, and sidewalk.

Conclusion

We have valued the time and input from Staff, neighbours, community members and Council to help shape the plan to arrive at the final proposal for Council consideration. We look forward to an opportunity to present the proposal and welcome further community input at a Public Hearing.

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Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Rob Whetter', followed by a horizontal line.

Rob Whetter architect AIBC LEED™ AP
de Hoog & Kierulf architects