



QUADRA CEDAR HILL COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION

January 20, 2021

Saanich Planning

RE: DPR00823; REZ00687; 3907/3909 Cedar Hill Road

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the above application.

GS2 Developments Limited (Seba Construction) sent letters to all neighbours within a 180-metre radius of the proposed project but only received one response to date. They have also reached out to Cedar Hill Middle School across the street but have not yet had a reply. The community can submit comments on the Seba website. They hope to offer an in-person community meeting by the end of 2021 or when it is deemed safe to do so.

These comments reflect only the impressions of members of our Development and Land Use group. We will likely comment further after the proposed neighbourhood meeting.

Our impressions of this proposal are mainly positive. It conforms to the Shelbourne Valley Action Plan in terms of increasing housing options, complying with building height allowances, and being pedestrian friendly. It is also supportive of the Active Transportation Plan given it is a walkable neighbourhood and close to the middle school, library, grocery stores and two shopping centers. There will be one parking space in a garage for each unit, and three visitor parking spaces for the complex as well as bike storage and an EV charging station for each unit. Additionally, heat pumps will provide heating and cooling, there will be on demand gas, and the buildings will meet Step 3 of the energy code.

The building design is attractive and the colour palette neutral. They will be in an Arts and Crafts style, with a board and batten exterior, in a light to dark grey palette. Each unit will be approximately 1460 to 1,560 square feet. Although the neighbourhood is comprised of mainly 1950's-era bungalows, it is transitioning as the area densifies. This section of Cedar Hill Road is lacking in trees, although the boulevard and large open playground space in front of the school provides visual relief.

The density will probably be an issue for some. Twelve townhouses will replace the two current homes. Six of them will be built along a 139-foot frontage, with a driveway in the middle. The other six will be built behind these. The land slopes down at the back towards Stockton Crescent. Fortunately, the three properties directly behind the proposed development seem to have large backyards so the new buildings won't be too close to their

homes. We understand that Seba is interested in acquiring either of the lots next door and wonder what effect would have on the project's overall density. We are also interested in the envisioned density for this area under the Shelbourne Valley plan.

There is evidently inadequate storm drainage, so Seba will be required to build a new storm drain that will connect with Mortimer Street at an estimated cost of about \$150,000 to \$160,000. We understand that the developer considers the new storm drain system as a community amenity given its cost. According to a document on DCCs on Saanich's website from February 2020, a developer would be required to contribute \$704.00 per unit in a townhouse development for drainage. That is only about \$8,500.00 (12 x \$704.) Mr. Gill estimated the cost to fix the storm drainage system to be \$150,000 to \$160,000. If the new drainage system also helps other properties in the neighbourhood as well it does seem to me to be a community amenity. Seba expressed interest in learning what the neighbourhood might consider a worthy CAC initiative.

We also wondered about Saanich's 'latecomer' policy that allows the original developer to claim back a pro rata portion of the cost when subsequent developers tie into the new system. We think there is a time limit on collecting latecomer fees, maybe a 10 - 15-year window. So, if Seba is able to apply the CAC to the storm drain, who gets the latecomer rebate – Seba or the CAC program. If the CAC program, who would monitor the future developments to ensure the fee was applied for?

More trees and/or being able to retain the current trees would help soften the look of the townhouses, but there is very limited space on the property. We understand an arborist will be looking at the current trees. We also note that Cedar Hill Road has a 30km speed limit at this point as it is a school zone.

Seba built a similar townhouse complex on Cloverdale near Cook within QCHCA's boundaries. Although there was some opposition to the degree of density, it seems to be accepted by the neighbourhood, and based on how quickly it sold out, it was well received by the market as well. This development will be denser, with average size of home being 140 as opposed to 180 square meters in the Cloverdale project.

Thanks again for the opportunity to comment. Please let me know if you have any questions.
Sincerely,

Susan Haddon
President, QHCCA