



QUADRA CEDAR HILL COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION

February 28, 2021

RE: DRP00821; REZ00685; 1555 McKENZIE AVENUE

Dear Saanich Planning,

Thank you for the opportunity for QCHCA to comment on the above application to rezone from C2 zone to a site-specific zone to construct a 407-unit, six storey, mixed use residential and commercial project at 1555 McKenzie Avenue.

Community engagement

The proposed development falls within Mount Tolmie CA boundaries but abuts our neighbourhood. QCHCA Board members attended an in-person meeting with the proponents on July 7, 2020, a Zoom session on December 8 and both virtual open houses on February 4th and 9th of this year. Invitations to the virtual open house were sent to homes within a 200m radius, advertised in the Saanich News, promoted on the 1555 McKenzie website and QCHCA advised its members and friends in an email several weeks prior. The event included a presentation of the proposed development and moderated question and answer sessions. According to Niall, 29 people attended the event on the 4th and 26 on the 9th. The presentation was recorded and is available on the 1555 McKenzie website for those who weren't able to attend.

The proposal

The proposal is for a six-storey, 407-unit rental complex with retail/office space on the ground floor. The site is contained by McKenzie on the north, Shelbourne on the east and Garnet on the south. The Fairway Market property to the west of the proposed complex was approached but will not be part of the proposal. The plans show 14 townhouses fronting on Garnet at the ground level. The 407 units include 100 micro-units, 65 studio, 110 one-bedroom, 121 two-bedroom and 11 three-bedroom units. There will be a total of 19K sq. ft. of commercial space and 273 parking spaces, 214 of which will be residential for a .53 ratio of parking space per unit. The remaining 59 spaces will be for commercial. The location at the corner of two major road arteries is well served by public transit. Being a rental complex, there will be a third-party property manager on site.

Form and character

The building design seems thoughtful in terms of variation in massing, human scale, environmentally focused, enhancing the streetscape and maximizing opportunities for green

and communal gathering space including urban gardening on the roof deck. Although up to eight storeys are allowed in this area according to the Shelbourne Valley Action Plan, the plan is for a six-storey building due to “challenging site conditions” which also constrained the parkade to one level,

Concerns were raised about the parking variance being requested, with approximately one space for every two rental units. It is believed that greater numbers of spaces are/will be needed and that the overflow will be problematic for surrounding streets.

In addition, there is concern about the amount of traffic traveling on and entering and exiting Garnet, given the number of units and the single entry/exit point about midway on Garnet between Shelbourne and Cedar Hill Road. Heading west on Garnet and turning right onto Cedar Hill Road is already problematic at peak traffic periods. This is a concern given Cedar Hill Middle School pupils walking to and from school and parent/guardian traffic dropping them off and picking them up. Also of concern is the cumulative effect of traffic on McKenzie and on Shelbourne when the SVAP is fully implemented. The developer advised that their traffic study contemplated this.

Re Community Amenity Contributions (CACs), we understand the developer is offering “in-kind amenity contributions: traffic improvements, boulevard and streetscape enhancements, safety, public art and public realm enhancements”, plus cash contributions to the District’s Affordable Housing Program and London Plane Tree Memorial Fund. We are not clear on the approximate \$ value of these contributions but, if a contribution of \$5K a door were sought, that would come to just over \$2M.

Neighbours expressed concern over the loss of the medical building tenants and wondered if the developer had sought to attract such tenants and/or a clinic. Zoning would permit it and space can be adjusted. The developer said they’d approached VIHA re a clinic but without success. They have also approached all current tenants to see if they would like to rent space. However, given project timelines, they say it is early and much can change.

In conclusion, the application is in conformity with the Shelbourne Valley Action Plan. The applicant did a good job of neighbourhood consultation. The main concerns are to do with the impact of increased traffic from 407 rental units and commercial tenants, as well as a fear of overflow parking impacting adjacent streets.

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

Susan Haddon
President, QHCCA

