



# Quadra Cedar Hill Community Association

May 12, 2023

Planning Department  
District of Saanich

RE: Rezoning and development permit application (REZ00733 and DPR01034 for 975, 981 and 985 McKenzie Avenue and 982, 986 and 988 Annie Street

Dear Saanich Planning,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on GIC Development Ltd's proposal to rezone from RS-10 single family dwelling zone to RA-11 apartment zone to construct 126 units in two apartment buildings at the above address; variances are requested.

## **Consultation:**

GIC Developments Ltd. met on the site with three members of the QCHCA Board's Land Use & Development Group on May 5, 2022. Representatives of GIC shared their initial ideas for the site, and invited comment on potential areas of concern. In late September of 2022, two Board members met via MS Teams to see a presentation by the proponent on their vision for the property and to discuss potential dates, sites and QCHCA's format for a community meeting.

On November 9, QCHCA co-hosted the community meeting with GIC at the Swan Lake Nature House from 7:30 to 9 pm. Two QCHCA Board members attended, along with 15 neighbours. The project architect, Joey Kardum, made the presentation and developer, John Bourcet, was there to answer questions.

Major concerns raised at the meeting by attendees included:

- **Traffic, safety and noise concerns during the construction period.** The neighbours on Annie Street were negatively affected by the adjacent Otto development, in particular blasting that continued for one and a half years, and construction vehicles parking on Annie and blocking driveways. They fear the street will be torn up again and remain torn up for a lengthy period. GIC agreed to consider sidewalks and improvements to slow down traffic as a community amenity contribution.
- There are ten single-family homes on the south side of Annie, and they experience constant issues with traffic and lack of parking. GIC said they will have a traffic study completed but the study results were not available at the time of the meeting.

- The loss of existing trees was also raised as a concern. GIC will replace trees that will be removed at a 2 to 1 ratio as per Saanich's requirements. GIC said they had purposely designed the space between the two buildings to enhance the green, outdoor areas rather than have one large building mass.
- The height of the buildings, particularly the one facing Annie, was expressed as a concern. Some of the neighbours said they will be requesting three storeys.
- Several neighbours expressed concern as to whether the storm water system would be adequate. GIC responded that this is up to Saanich engineering to assess and comment on.

### **Neighbourhood context:**

The area where the proposed development would be built is bounded by McKenzie Avenue on the north, Saanich Road on the west, Annie Street on the south and the Otto development at 991 McKenzie to the east. The Otto development is comprised of 59 condos, loft units and townhouses. St. Andrews High School is on the north side of McKenzie a short distance away. Annie Park, a small but beautiful natural area, is to the south of the proposed site and Swan Lake Nature Reserve and Rainbow Park are approximately a kilometer away.

Access and egress into and out of the proposed development would be on Annie, a short, narrow street accessed off Saanich Road. The nearest commercial area is at Quadra and McKenzie just over a half kilometer away. McKenzie is on the #51 bus route.

### **Site and building design:**

The proposal is to build 126 housing units on the site comprised of townhouses, market condos and rental condos. There would be 22 studio, 62 one-bedroom, 36 two-bedroom and six three-bedroom units in total. The two buildings will be separated by a courtyard green space with trees, a playground and rain garden. All 127 parking spaces will be underground and 100% EV-ready. There will be 11 visitor parking spaces. Storage and bike areas, including 123 long-term and 12 short-term bicycle storage spaces) will be provided.

Both buildings are planned to be six storeys in height. The sixth floor of the rental building fronting McKenzie Avenue will be set back from the road and landscaping and trees will be planted along McKenzie. The six-storey building comprised of strata condos and townhouses will face Annie Street. Due to differences in grade, the building facing Annie will be approximately 1.5M lower than the McKenzie building and the entry to the concrete parkade will be on Annie at the east end of the proposed development.

The design of the buildings will have angles and wood elements to compliment the new Otto building, and to allow for more private views for the residents in the new development. All units will have a balcony.

**A major concern expressed about site and building design is the height of the building on Annie.** At the session with Saanich Planning to learn about the Corridor, Centre and Village planning process for Quadra and North Quadra, it was suggested that there needs to be gradual stepping down from six-storey, multi-family buildings on major corridors to one- and two-storey residential homes on adjacent streets. The homes across from the Annie

building are single-family residential homes. A three- or, at most, four-storey building would seem to be more acceptable and in keeping in terms of neighbourhood 'fit'.

**Traffic and safety:**

**The other major issues for residents who attended the neighbourhood meeting are related to the increased traffic that will result on Annie, both during the construction period and after occupancy.**

Annie is a short, dead-end street, one block long, with the only access and egress from and onto Saanich Road. The road is narrow and without sidewalks. Parking is already a significant challenge for the neighbours, let alone following the addition of 126 new housing units and the amount of traffic and potential safety issues this will engender.

Additionally, significant concern has been expressed about traffic and safety during the construction period. The neighbours dealt with the extended construction period for the Otto building and are dreading a repeat of the same access/egress, safety, blasting and construction noise, construction vehicle parking on Annie and like challenges, especially so given that all access will be off Annie. If additional water or sewer work is needed for the new construction, this will be a further challenge for residents trying to access their homes, park and leave the neighbourhood for the extent of the construction period.

A question was raised as to whether renters in the McKenzie building would be paying for their parking spaces but, at the time of the community meeting, this hadn't been determined. This is an important question as, if renters choose not to pay for a space, they will potentially be looking for a space to park a car if they have one or choose to buy one at a later date.

**Environmental:**

The development would meet Step 3 code requirements, residents would have easy access to the McKenzie bus route, parking spaces will be EV-ready and there is at least 1 bicycle storage space per unit. A total of 21 trees are to be removed. The landscape plan shows 9 trees being retained and 42 new coniferous, deciduous and ornamental trees and shrubs along McKenzie, surrounding the buildings and between the two buildings as well as a rain garden.

A further issue raised at the meeting was the adequacy of the stormwater system. GIC responded that it would be up to Saanich Engineering to determine this. We ask that this issue be carefully studied as the area is subject to flooding given the slope of the land.

**Community contribution:**

A potential CAC would be a sidewalk on the south side of Annie. We are not aware of the total value of amenity contributions being offered by the proponent but would hope that it is reflective of projects of similar scale and make a reasonable contribution to the health and wellbeing of the immediate community.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment. Please let us know if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Susan Haddon  
President, QCHCA