



James Bay Neighbourhood Association

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Victoria, B.C., Canada

www.jbna.org

July 21st, 2022

Mayor and Council,
City of Victoria

Dear Mayor Helps and Councillors,

Re: CALUC – 131/135/139 Menzies

The 131/135/139 Menzies proposal was considered at the July 13th, 2022, JBNA ZOOM Discussion Forum. 114 people participated.

On June 14, Tim VanAlstine and Marg Gardiner met with Mike Geric Construction Ltd representatives, Greg Gillespie (VP Development), Christine Gleed (VP Marketing and Communications), and Deana Brown (Manager Community Relations) and Continuum Architecture representatives Tony James, Jeremy Beintemy, and Avi Gilad to discuss the readiness for the presentation to come forward for discussion. Suggestions of additions to slides to be shown at the July 13th CALUC meeting were made to better show the project relationship to, and impact on, homes on Medana.

JBNA invited Don Elliott, Senior Manager, CRHC, to the July 13 CALUC to hear residents speak on the project as the proponent had stated that CRHC was directing the development to its needs.

Present and speaking at the July 13th CALUC meeting were Greg Gillespie, VP Development, Mike Geric Construction, Avi Gilad and Wil Wiens, Continuum Architecture, Brad Forth, 4-Site Landscape. Don Elliott and Sharon Grigg, CRHC Operations Manager, were respondents to questions in the section of the meeting concerning CRD-CRHC intentions.

The City community notice for the redevelopment of 131/135/139 Menzies was completed and distributed by the City to those within 100 meters of the proposal.

Attached please find (i) an excerpt of Minutes taken at the meeting, and (ii) a document with edited “chat” input. Of those present who made comment during the meeting, either speaking or via the chat, 2 were supportive while all others opposed the project for several reasons. JBNA has also been copied on correspondence to Mayor and/or Council from the following residents: Kevin Youck and Emily Schudel, Nikitas Dimopoulos, David Helm, Victoria Adams, Barb Wilson. One letter being supportive, the others opposed. Should each of you not have received any of these submissions, we would be pleased to provide.

Although the CALUC meeting was held specifically for the 131/135/139 project, the intention is not to have it considered on its own merits, rather it has been proposed as an amenity for a larger project on a site zoned R-K. The proponent has referred to the projects as “joined at the hip” while Mayor Helps has referred to them as “married”

...2

The most prevalent thoughts expressed at the community meeting and with others, were:

- The Menzies proposal, while appealing for CRHC purposes somewhere, is not a project suitable for this location. It is a project looking for a site rather than a project created for a specific site, responding to its surrounding conditions.
- The proposal, with reduced and inadequate setbacks (10 ft) and 6 storeys in height towers over, and most inappropriately impacts, housing on Medana, most of which is 100+yr old housing.
- While the proponent referenced an OCP height of 6 storeys, 6-storeys is not an entitlement as other planning principles must be taken into consideration.
- The Menzies proposal itself does not offer an amenity, nor does it provide an amenity for the 'Primary project' on Montreal/Kingston/Quebec. It is being built for CRHC on a "cost-recovery" basis, not as an amenity contribution to any project.
- The plan does not satisfy the housing needs for the neighbourhood, namely family ground-oriented family housing.
- The proposal would remove a significant portion of lands designated as Large Urban Village, pre-empting community discussion of the LAP process and the Menzies village centre. In the absence of a village plan, it will impact the form of future development and the potential character of the village.

JBNA, in addition to facilitating the CALUC process, also has an obligation to forward interests of the community as they relate to the James Bay Neighbourhood Plan, the relevancy of policies and whether the application fits with the intent of the OCP. This project does not.

Within the OCP, the Local Area Plan process suggested that James Bay be one of the early neighbourhoods reviewed. For political reasons, other neighbourhoods were placed before James Bay. JBNA did not object at that time as the Capital Park development was underway, and its impact on Menzies needed to be felt before further planning proceeded. In 2019, JBNA began the Pre-LAP process, striking a steering committee and holding one visioning meeting. The pandemic side-lined the project. (see Appendix "A" *The James Bay Neighbourhood within the Official Community Plan*)

We believe that given the overall community feedback, that the CALUC community consultation obligations have now been met, and the project has not received community support.

For your consideration,



President, JBNA
Marg Gardiner

Cc: Greg Gillespie, Mike Geric Construction
Alec Johnson, CoV Planner
Don Elliott, CRHC

Attach: (i) Excerpt of Minutes
(ii) Meeting Chat
Appendix "A" *The James Bay Neighbourhood within the Official Community Plan*

Appendix 'A'

The James Bay Neighbourhood within the Official Community Plan

James Bay, several decades ago, became densified beyond levels of any comparable area in the City of Victoria. Since then, it has densified further. The 2021 Census shows the population at 12,771 residents, providing a residential density of about 10,000/km² within the area of James Bay between Douglas, Kingston and Dallas Road (excluding tourist, industrial and legislative areas and Beacon Hill Park).

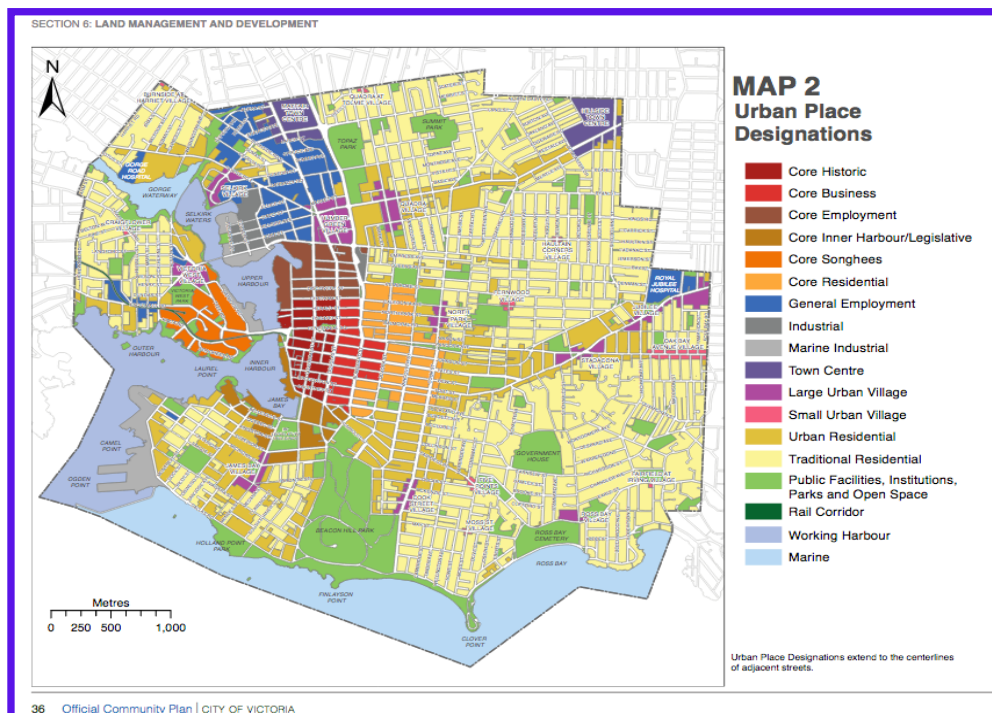
Traditional Residential in James Bay has been eroded since 2010. However, the traditional was mainly R-2. Many heritage-aged homes occupy the existing traditional areas, and are R-2; many have been flatted and provide rental or strata housing units.

The December 2010 CoV **James Bay Zoning Map**, displaying zoning, is a companion map to the OCP. In James Bay Urban Residential Zoning areas (light yellow) are not generally R-1 areas as they are in other neighbourhoods. **Most residential housing in James Bay is within and beyond the density being proposed in the Missing Middle Initiative:**

- R-K Medium Density attached homes
- R3-H high density
- R3-L Low density multiple dwelling
- R3-2 Multiple Dwelling
- R3-B Bonus multiple dwelling

The one R-1 property which stands out in the CoV 2010 Zoning Map is R1-B for MacDonald Park.

The James Bay Large Urban Village area is itself, not that large, especially given the dense population base of the neighbourhood. The Geric/CRD Menzies proposal, if approved, would remove the opportunity for the realization of the James Bay large urban village as envisioned in the JB Neighbourhood Plan and the OCP.



July 13th, 2022, 7:00 pm, JBNA ZOOM Discussion: Excerpt 131-139 Menzies CALUC

Meeting called to order: 7:00pm CALUC began

Attendance: 103 as Menzies presentation began

114 attended at points throughout meeting

Chair: Marg Gardiner (MG), President, JBNA

Minutes: Trevor Moat and Joanne Thibault

131-139 Menzies Development proposal

Proponent: Greg Gillespie (GG), VP Development, Mike Geric Construction

Avi Gilad (AG), Continuum Architecture

Wil Wiens (WW), Continuum Architecture

Brad Forth (BF), 4-Site Landscape

Capital Region Housing Corporation

Don Elliott (DE), Senior Manager

Sharon Grigg (SG), Operations Manager

GG: Overview and introduction

GG: “Primary Project” is at Quebec/Montreal/Kingston

It became clear in discussions with the city that there was a need in James Bay for “inclusionary housing”. This primary site we felt was unsuitable. We had an opportunity to purchase 3 lots on Menzies in the JB Village and this seems like a better site for inclusionary housing.

GG: The CRD is not “directing” the developer; we are working collaboratively.

Presentation

AG: Led presentation. Five storeys proposed, FSR 2.11:1, **72%** site coverage (**40%** is the current R2 limit), 38% open space ratio, 20 parking spaces, 67 bike spaces. Front setback 0.67m; rear 3.28m (presenter said ten metres)

AG: Shadow study, to 4pm at summer solstice (summer early evening not shown)

AG: Ground floor units – 5x1BR, 4xStudio, 1x3BR. (Upper floors similar on stack)

AG: Trees on neighbouring lots not surveyed and trees shown are not finalized.

Q/A for those within 100meter notification area:

Resident at 140 Medana (142 on drawing): Directly behind the project. The trees on the side and on my property are being ignored. 4 trees 50’ tall on the property line would be killed by this project. I would also lose a large cedar tree that is not shown. You are maximizing the development, there will be no soil for the trees given the size of underground parking. . .

BF: Trees are to be independent of the parking structure; will be in square boxes. These will be columnar trees for privacy, although that’s not what shown on the drawing. The boulevard trees meet city standards. The boulevard trees are planted in the earth. It was noted that the actual trees are tall and slender providing some privacy up to the 3rd level. 4th and 5th levels overlook yards/roofs of neighboring homes. We are still to have an arborist review the trees on the adjoining lots. Menzies sidewalk width is about 2m.

MG: Can you provide opaque glass on the upper floors to promote privacy for neighbours?

GG: We hadn't thought of that – we will consider it. Juliet balconies are provided on the rear of the building.

Trevor Moat: There were discrepancies between setbacks shown in the tables and what was said in the presentation. *(Clarification required review of the slide and discussion. The slide showed the distance between the proposed project building and neighboring houses. It did not provide setbacks from the property lines. A setback slide will be added to the JBNA package.)*

Q: Need for retail/commercial space on main floor, given urban village location.

GG: The building will be owned by Capital Regional Housing Corp. They were not interested in providing retail space – they provide housing. We explored options for small commercial spaces, but we would have had to exclude a number of homes. On balance, we made the decision to provide homes for people rather than more commercial/retail.

Q-Reply: If CRD doesn't want urban village amenities then they should build elsewhere.

Resident at 136 Medana: Ours is the closest building to the structure. Our main bedroom balcony faces the 3-storey portion of the building. I believe this should be urban village – services walkable distances from homes. I oppose a building of this height, and I strongly support the notion of commercial/retail on the ground floor. I understand the CRD's concern to not want commercial property, but that suggests that the CRD might not be looking at the right location for a project of this type.

We have much social housing in James Bay already and there are other locations where such housing could be located. We are looking for an amenity for the community, not the region. In terms of privacy and shadowing, I am very concerned. There is an implication that this is a secondary project and not much consideration has been given to the needs of the local community. I am curious about mechanical services on the rooftops, and what sorts of noise those will emit.

In terms of design, you mentioned colours were in keeping with heritage, but we are losing three heritage buildings, and paint colours won't address the contrast in form that this proposal presents to neighbouring buildings.

GG: I want to clarify a few things. Commercial/retail have larger parking requirements than residential homes do. Parking is often a design constraint. Regarding it being a secondary project, the other is "prime" in the sense that there is already an application underway. I don't mean to diminish this project or location. Heating and cooling equipment has not yet been designed. We work with skilled engineers. The houses being demolished are not registered or designated heritage.

MG: Was a parking study done, or did you just do the calculations?

GG: We referred to Schedule C. We engaged Watt Consulting Group for traffic demand questions, and they provided parking and traffic impact assessments. We are short one stall right now and are looking for ways to make up the shortfall, which we do by over-supplying bike parking.

AG: Other nearby developments have more generous parking allowances, but the City does not require these numbers of spaces anymore. We have 46 units, and 21 is the number the City wants to see.

Resident at 149 Medana: This development is massive – it replaces 3 SFDs with 46 residential units, and is 17.12m tall above grade in a neighbourhood of 1-2 storey buildings. It is not family-oriented; only 3 units are 3BR, the rest are 1BR or studio. It is an inappropriate development. The setbacks are way too narrow; 2 feet on the front and 10 feet on the rear. That is far less than is required for a single-family home. The proposal violates many City guidelines for multi-unit buildings in residential areas. I strongly oppose this development – it does not fit, does not provide family housing, it is massive and does not meet community needs.

GG: We will update the shadow study to show extended times. I disagree on the term “massive”. Two of the lots call for six storeys. We could propose a taller building with increased setbacks. Any development coming here given the Large Urban Development designation, six storeys would likely be proposed.

MG-Chat: Concerns over garage venting and noise implications are real. Do not forget this.

Resident at 135 Medana: I agree with the previous comments. We are opposed to this development. It is a giant building that is not in keeping with the neighbourhood. How will this affect property values? I think it is well-intentioned, but I don't see this as respecting the neighbourhood. It's convenient; and it concerns me that it is tied to a lucrative development opportunity elsewhere, and I want to understand what is meant by a “*Cost recovery building*”. This is the first I have heard of these lots as being Large Urban Village. Is that the case?

GG: The Large Urban Village designation is current; it is an existing OCP bylaw that is in place. The City might revisit that in future, but we are working off the existing OCP. Regarding property values, we have not seen any evidence of property values being adversely affected by developments like these.

GG: I am doing my best to respect this community. We expect a certain level of civility – there is a suggestion that I am lying. I take great offense to that.

MG-Chat: Parking – accessibility – there is only one accessible space shown.

AG: There is a requirement for one accessible parking spot and we are providing that.

Resident at 158 Medana: First, what protection do existing tenants and renters have? Second, how can this development be aligned with DPA guidelines? Neighbour listed a number of clashes. Third, regarding this as being an amenity for the tower development, each has to stand on its own merits. Fourth, studies show a need for families in this neighbourhood. Finally, there is a lot of rock underneath these lots and I suspect much blasting will be required.

Son speaking for Resident at 162 Medana: My mum lives at 162 Medana and is 96 years old. This is a huge building, almost in her back yard. I came down from Tofino to speak on her behalf. Her house will be my house in future. We love this neighbourhood. House is heritage-designated, and we had trouble even getting a gas line approved due to heritage concerns, and rock under the surface. I am very concerned about this proposal. I could see its value if it were lower and had commercial storefronts and were more in keeping, but the high will cast a long shadow over Medana properties because it is very close.

GG: Regarding tenants – we are committed to following the RTA requirements for displacement. The City's Tenant Assistance Policy will also be followed. The Capital Regional Housing Corp will have priority application for tenancy in the new building, and we own a variety of other rental projects in the city. Tenant care is a priority with CRHC. We have spoken with several tenants already. We are optimistic we can facilitate relocation.

Q/A for those outside 100meter notification area:

Note: Many chat comments are from residents outside the 100m area who did not speak.

Pamela Madoff: (Note: Resident is identified by name due to nature of comments. She speaks to separate issues raised earlier in the meeting and comments are separated here by topic)

The suggestion that the OCP identifies six storeys for this location is not an entitlement – it is “up to six storeys”, and one of the mitigating factors is neighbourliness. It seems to me that that aspect has not been considered in this application. Limiting it to 5 storeys is not being generous to those on Medana.

Regarding decreased property values, there is a building of similar height under construction elsewhere in the City and that builder is approaching nearby owners to acquire their properties on the basis that their properties have now been devalued by the building next door.

My central point on this proposal is that it looks like a development project that is looking for a site, rather than having a site and figuring out what is appropriate for that site.

A development of this scale in the JB village is an enormous responsibility. We need to ask ourselves if this is the vision we would like for the James Bay Village, Victoria’s oldest residential neighbourhood, one that has not been well-served in the past.

The four above-ground floors will have privacy impacts on adjoining properties.

Developments should become assets to the neighbourhood and assets to the people who live in them. I think this is a brutal design; it could be built anywhere.

In summary, this was a project looking for a location. This urban village does not yet have a clear vision for what it wants, and this seems like the wrong project.

I would like to find some positive aspects to it, and to be clear James Bay was the first community to embrace non-market housing. The CRD is aware of Pinehurst on Battery, and the one on Michigan has turned out to be a good fit for the neighbourhood. This one isn’t though.

GG: Thanks for the clarification regarding entitlement and vision; we do think we have a good case for extra height and density given the tenure of below market housing. I didn’t appreciate the comment on our design.

Pam Madoff: I am not questioning professionalism; I am speaking to the project. I have much experience and history with architecture being a member of the City’s Design Panel.

Resident near “primary” project: This isn’t just a Menzies project – it affects Medana and the whole community too. I live near your primary site. I will lose trees and canopy; I will lose neighbourhood green space that the whole block enjoys. I am worried about the thought of children living on the fourth floor and higher. I fear them falling. Kids need grass space. Green spaces are where people join together.

Medana residents will lose refreshing winds, dinnertime/evening sun, large trees, and privacy.

JB Resident: What is the definition of an urban village? Looking at Cook Street vs. Menzies, we are seeing a second large housing development on this block and we losing our chance to get more commercial space on this street. I also want to know how garbage collection will work, how buses will work, and how trucks will navigate into Thrifty’s. There are already strong complaints over truck noise at Thrifty’s. How does the CRD feel about putting tenants into this situation? The shadowing should not be dismissed so easily. The afternoon and evening sun is one of the best parts of the day. It is the time I enjoy the most in my house and yard.

Capital Region Housing Corporation

JBNA invited Don Elliott, Senior Manager, CRHC to hear residents speak on the project as the proponent had stated that the CRD was directing the development as to CRD needs. Don and Sharon Grigg, Operations Manager were respondents to questions in this section of the meeting.

DE: I am a member of the Cowichan Tribe, renting in Victoria since 2001. I am the Senior Manager of Regional Housing. The CRHC is a wholly-owned subsidiary of the CRD – we report to the same board, but we can pursue our own projects. We opened 402 units in Langford/View Royal. We are looking at redeveloping 50 buildings of existing stock, 1893 units, for homes for 4000 people. We also support 114 units on behalf of three other non-profits. We take a regional approach.

SG: I have worked at CHRC for 15 years, and worked in social housing since 1990's, fifth-generation here.

MG: The most urgently needed housing in James Bay is family housing. How much social housing have other neighbourhoods close to downtown aside from Burnside Gorge core areas close to downtown hosted?

DE: The Regional Housing First Programme provides 20% of units at highly subsidized rates; the balance of 80% are "market affordable". We try to provide a mix of units to suit community needs. We offer 34 2BR and 37 3BR units in James Bay. In Michigan Square, we will bring 47 2BR and 18 3BR units. People asked how many units are non-market. The answer is 100% as noted above. We offer a range of subsidies within that.

For this project we aim for 20% shelter rate, 80% non-market, and this will be outlined in the agreements we make if the project is approved. Ten of the studio apartments are intended for social assistance rates. We don't like to see tenant turnover; we try to build communities.

MG: James Bay density is 10,000/sqkm. Aside from Burnside-Gorge, is there any other area in Victoria which is your region that has as much social housing per sqkm as James Bay?

DE: We like to create a FAQ when a project starts. I don't have the calculations you are asking for. Affordability affects all regions. We have two projects moving forward in Sooke.

MG: James Bay has suffered heavily as a result of homelessness and shelter populations in Beacon Hill Park. How will CRD tenants access supports so they can live independently?

DE: We emphasize community-building within the property first, and then within the community. When we have instability, we try to support them and find an alternate home or support services if needed.

SG: People would rather live closer to their workplace than Langford. All residents who come in have support networks in place – they are all independent-living units. We don't offer supportive housing – these are people who have been successful for at least two years. We will evict if need be.

Resident: What is the size of the studio units? I don't think the rooftops will be used as outside space – it's very windy here in James Bay. I think the building is too large for Menzies Street, we have not articulated a vision for our urban village, and I understand CRHC is having a strong hand in design and will buy it for \$15M once built, I understand.

GG: We offer a range – from about 350sqft, 1BR 550sqft, 3BR are over 900sqft. The rooftop space was suggested by the CRHC to make sure there are outdoor spaces for residents. These are standard inclusions in our offerings. CRHC did have much say in the design, particularly with regards to accessibility. The massing, form, colours, etc. were ours. The price agreement is being negotiated, but you're close.

Resident: What is the process to select property for social housing? Does the corporation purchase land? It seems that the over-development of the "primary" lot is being secured by social housing tradeoffs at this location.

DE: In this case, it was through an application that Geric Construction made for this property. We have a project selection committee. This proposal is for a purchase at the end of construction. We were not aware that these properties were available until Geric acquired them. This proposal scored very high in our process. We are open to purchasing land, yes, but that's not what we're doing here. We are looking for available land, yes, but we don't have resources to speculate on land. We try to lever existing opportunities to achieve

Resident near Primary Project: Harbour House on Kingston Street is well-done; away from liquor stores, etc. and close to green spaces. My concern is that we are reaching a saturation point, and social housing must be done in the right area.

Resident within 100m: Normally the developer would answer questions, but were not allowed to defend comments made by the community. There are many people in this community who are offended by this proposal.

MG: CALUC meeting closed @ 9:45pm

July 13th, 2022, 7:00 pm, JBNA Discussion Forum Edited Chat

114 Participants throughout CALUC discussion with over 90 towards end at 9:45pm

Edits: Original chat 220 entries: Removed chat entries such as *Agreed, Hello, Good Night, thank you*. For ease of reading chats have been grouped by subject matter and some deleted when several comments on a subject. Typos corrected where intent clear. A few rude comments deleted.

Note 1) the first initial is used in summary below, hence the letter D could refer to a Don, a Denise, a . . .

2) all but one of the respondents appear to be from James Bay.

(Edits/re-structure takes document from 19 pages to 9.)

Appropriateness of proposal and co-mingling of projects:

From S : I strongly agree with this direct quote from Councillor Geoff Young at the last council meeting: *"One question is whether in fact the housing is in fact [sic] an amenity to the community at large as opposed to more typical kinds of amenities such as public open spaces or even attractive structures or the kind of thing that people look at as amenities as opposed to housing which is an amenity for the region as a whole but not necessarily for the receiving neighbourhood. . . Building in a special process very much sends a message that council has already made up its mind about these projects. . . We can say all we want, but once we say we are tying them together, we agree they should be tied together and we are developing a special process for one of them, I think people will, and perhaps correctly, simply assume this is a done deal."*

From P : This is not the right location for this project.

From C : **The location of the current proposed project is not appropriate. The issues are: loss of retail space in the core area of James Bay, the proposed building has too many storeys and impacts the surrounding residential houses, architecture doesn't fit with the character of James Bay housing. This project would be better suited in a different location away from an urban village. It will look OK in a different area.**

From I : *I could not agree more with Pam Madoff's astute comment that this seems to be a development program (the RHFP, run by the CRD) "looking for a site", rather than looking at a site and developing it to the best use for that specific site. In this case, it is in a key position in our neighbourhood's retail core.*

From M : . . . This is one of few opportunities for members of the community to ask questions and share concerns without excessive effort to protect the feelings of the developer.

From L : I want to say that I really wanted to support this project, but I cannot in its size and scale and location. The combination of the two projects is totally inappropriate as a process for land use decisions.

From D : #2 another fundamental structural dichotomy at play here is that the James Bay community is being asked to view/review both "The Tower" dev and the "Menzie's St" Dev as separate projects - each on their own merit to so to speak - in spite of the fact that both projects are absolutely linked and bound together as one interdependent whole that can't be dealt with separately a fundamental contradiction

From S : *I feel strongly that the "co-mingling" of the Menzie's and the Quebec/Montreal proposals should never have happened. They need to be de-coupled. These are for profit projects, just like any other and we, as a neighbourhood, should not be shamed into accepting an inappropriate proposal on either site.*

From G : Thank you Don! Developers need to start looking somewhere else and NOT in James Bay! This proposed project clearly does not fit with our community on any level. Enough is enough!

From S : Thank you Pat for pointing out that the Kingston lot was already zoned for a project more like what is proposed on Menzie's - medium density.**From D :** The project at hand is a 'co-mingle' with the Montreal & Quebec building. The discussion must include both, as one depends upon the other and vice versa.

From C : I believe that the current Quebec/Montreal/Kingston 'tower' proposal is for "17" storeys!

From D : sorry but "it's not our style to push the limits" and "could have gone to 6 storeys vs current/proposed 5 storeys"... then why is your org proposing to build a 17 story condo tower in the middle of a residential neighbourhood isn't that "pushing the limits"???

From E : Greg, not true that your company does not push the height limit. On the Quebec and Montreal corner you are pushing for 15-17 storey where 6 to 8 are allowed.

From V : Are 46 units required as an offset to the 16-story tower? How was the decision to make 46 small units instead of fewer 3-bedroom (family) units? Or is all the family housing going to be concentrated in market-rate \$1000/sq foot housing in the for-profit tower on Quebec?

From B : **This project is an unwanted amenity (on Menzies) for an inappropriate project (Quebec and Montreal). Some proposals are win-win. This two project proposal is a lose-lose.**

From I : Why did the developer say 'inclusionary housing' is "not suitable" for the proposed development on Montreal/Quebec/Kingston , but it is 'suitable' for the core Urban Village? Why?

Proposed Density and absence of Neighbourhood Amenity:

From P : The roof is not open space to the general neighbourhood.

From K : Bachelor apartments and one bedroom apartments in old small apartments on Simcoe on this block have one to two cars per unit consistently. How has the consultant magically changed the typical block need for parking?

From L : What are the environmental aspects considering the underground parking below sea level?... sump pumps required? More pressure on storm drains?

From K : Are there any seismic concerns for the adjacent homes to dig/blast out the underground parkade?

From E : The parking study?

From J : Three accessible suites; one accessible parking space --- is this correct?

From E : There doesn't seem to be any units for families. How is this building going to address young families, single mother, etc.?

From K : I think the mass of the building would be minimised if there were commercial shops on the ground floor. Otherwise, it takes up a significant amount of space with no relief. Shops would be more 'user friendly'. level

From Y : The affordable nature of this structure is not an issue, the issue is that this is a giant structure, on a small plot of land that will change the nature of the neighborhood - this is a well-intentioned project, but it is being proposed to be built at the wrong location — neighbourhood development needs to be managed with care and attention to enhance, and not adversely alter the character of the neighborhood.

From D : I think what looks appropriate and fair for this neighbourhood is the 3 storey section of the proposal. We can still get quite a bit of housing even at 3 storeys

From S : Do three old run down houses respect the neighbourhood? If these homes had been valued and cared for more over the years, I would be upset by their demolition. But I have sensed for years that these properties were just waiting for redevelopment. And along Menzies, why wouldn't you be putting more density? Would it be better to place this on Medana? I think not... I look at the design of this building and the design of the one that our library is in and they are very similar. I think it fits. But I know change is hard...

From H : You should have equivalent parking stalls to the number of units, plus space for visitor parking, given the limits of parking already in this area.

From S : Where is the green space for the residence who will live there?

Impact of Proposal on Medana Residents:

From K : Setbacks proposed are misleading as balconies are prominent and five storeys high. Real setback is only 3m

From T : Setbacks mentioned by the presenter were not consistent with those shown in the drawings.

From P : The highest part of the proposed building is adjacent to the residential/character properties on Medana with a minimum rear yard setback.

From K : proponent states "A good balance with the neighbourhood", yet totally out of balance with regard to height and setbacks

From K : shadow studies are misleading and are shown to minimize effects on Medana St homes - no evening shadow plots to show the impact on Medana

From K : we use our gardens in the summer evenings but this time is discounted as irrelevant

From K : Where are the trees existing on site. What about the trees on neighbouring 140 Medana that will be killed? Why are you hiding these trees in all drawings?

From C : Privacy planting 6 cm caliper trees - maybe privacy in 10 years

From D : I think the city should allow and pay for the home owners on Medana to move their houses right to the back of their properties. Snuggle right up to the building and increase their front yard space seeing as they will completely lose their back yards

From P : What will this type of building do to surrounding property values, safety, etc?

From C : No design imagination And way too high in comparison to height of the neighbours on Medana

From S : Thank you, DL, for your description of the importance of evening sunlight.

From K : James Bay is cool most evenings and this building blocks sun warmth from our yards.

From D : Can we address the elephant in the room. The Thrifty plaza is clearly where a building of this size is appropriate. The impact on these neighbours is unconscionable

From K : Wind issues are not addressed. This will create a wind dead zone in my back yard, filled with tobacco smoke, yet it will amplify winds on Menzies and along Medana St perhaps to levels we see at Menzies and Dallas where we can almost be blown off of our feet.

From K : Gillespie "The OCP calls for six storeys" This has not been approved and likely will not be on this 80' deep lot. High buildings need deeper lots. My home on Medana is also part of the urban village. Can I build a six storey building 3 m away from the lot line making but a light shaft between buildings? This is unfair to neighbouring properties and diminishes our property values greatly. What compensation is the developer offering!? The developer offered to buy my home, through an agent . . . after threat of a high building to overshadow my home [at low property value]. Not cool.

From E : Massive in context considering this whole block on Menzies and Medana is 2 storeys.

From Y : I would like to agree and thank N for his comments and as a neighbour I would also like to go the record to oppose this structure based on the size and impact it will have on our neighbourhood.

From K : I am sitting in my rear kitchen now and see exactly how the building will hide all of my evening sun, though filtered through trees. it is 8 pm

From K : proponent says that "takes community input very seriously" yet he has never consulted the immediate neighbours

From D : what about ventilation equipment for the garage, speaking of noise complaint

From Y : 1) Can you please comment on the property value impact that this project will have on the adjacent homes? . . .

From K : Existing trees are being hidden on the plans, contrary to developer comments. They are important

From B : Have you researched the property line? My fence (146) is 6-10 inches in from property line.

From K : *Drawings showing setbacks are . . . misleading. They do not even show our decks.*

From K : To decrease setbacks from those required should require approval from neighbours especially on lots that are only 80' deep, some of the shallower lots in the city

From K : *What is to be done with the Paul Medana House on this site. This is one of the older homes in Victoria and it is intact?*

From B : The blasting to dig down for the parkade will also affect out homes.

From K : Conclusion. Existing trees have not been given any consideration and new rear trees are in flowerpots requiring irrigation which need maintenance. Trees have no canopy

From P : The fencing is not 5 storey high - no privacy for those houses on Medana

From Y : Seems to me the developer is downplaying the impact of this structure on the Medana street neighbours. Exclusion of the adjacent homes in a significant omission

From P : The rear view of the building is minus the neighbouring houses because they are so close that we would not be able to view the lower portion of the building.

Large Urban Village:

From S : The comparison to Cook St is excellent. So far Cook St village is very successful model as far as I can see

From D : *There is a fundamental structural dichotomy at play here: the proposed development necessarily requires the expanded density/height etc permitted the Large Urban Village "designation" (whether formal/presumed) but on the other hand the project does not adhere to many of the other required component elements required by LUV's such as commercial space, integration into the specific Neighbourhood Village Plan (as none has yet been formalized for JB) and other elements deemed important/desirable by those who currently live in the neighbourhood...sounds quite a bit like "having your cake and eating it too"...but significantly to the detriment of the existing James Bay community....*

From K : The large urban village is not yet approved. Neighbours have not been consulted at all.

From W : Is there retail on the main floor?

From D : There are a lot of studio suites. Parking is a real concern in this area. Thrifty's parking lot is already overburdened. The real shadowing on Medana Street will be at night. Why can't this project be located with the main project at Montreal/Quebec?

From W : We were told that there was a plan for commercial/retail in the original plan. Has that changed?

From V : This plan does not address critically needed family housing. It also ignores that there is a once-in-a-century opportunity to add ground floor retail to the heart of James Bay Village.

From P : It is worthy of note that the depth of the block between Menzies and Medana is particularly shallow, as is obvious by casual observation of a map. This exacerbates the challenge of squeezing this massive 5 story, 48 unit building onto what was previously 3 shallow house lots on one half of the block. It forces the design to minimize setbacks which increases its negative impact on the neighbourhood. This supports the argument that the OCP limit of 6 storeys should not be approached.

From J : There is as yet no specific plan for James Bay Village. As I understand it, current zoning regulations are with respect to urban villages generally and ignore specific neighbourhood characteristics and needs.

From W : Building an apartment building without retail space on Menzies which is the main commercial street of our urban village, is short cited urban planning.

From B : If it wasn't as tall with five storeys you wouldn't need as many parking spaces and could accommodate retail frontage. None of the other retail shops on Menzies have parking.

From D : Large Urban Village consists of low to mid-rise mixed-use buildings that accommodate ground-level commercial, offices, community services, visitor accommodation, and multi-unit residential apartments, with a public realm characterized by wide sidewalks, regularly spaced street tree planting and buildings set close to the street frontage, anchored by a full service grocery store or equivalent combination of food retail uses, serving either as a local, rapid or frequent transit service hub.

https://www.victoria.ca/assets/Departments/Planning~Development/Community~Planning/OCP/Up~to~date~OCP~and~Design~Guidelines/OCP_Section6.pdf

From I : . . . James Bay does not have its "Urban Village Plan" There is no overall plan for the 5-Corners yet, is my understanding. Building this significant building in a very central part of James Bay Village is thoughtless without such an overall plan for the Village The proposal, to not include retail at ground level, is misguided (it will be a dead zone in the middle of the commercial zone). It should be ground floor retail, and engaging/activated. This is our commercial/retail 'centre'. Also, more consideration of the interface to the traditional housing that it backs onto (Medana St traditional housing) . . .

CRD Complex:

From K : We have social housing on this block currently, across the street. Is there a need to concentrate social housing all together, however without support services?

From D : *I am a previous tenant of CRD Housing and I support the model, but this is not the right project for the location.*

From D : If this building is destined for any family living I am not sure where exactly kids are supposed to play outside as there is no areas for that

From L : Roof top amenities would not be suitable for young children so what is your target tenants - No families???

From C : Change is hard. Where are all the affordable housing developments in other neighbourhoods in Victoria?

From L : Affordable housing should be built in areas like Langford etc where land is more affordable and will help workers that need affordable housing

From W : *To CRHC - I completely support your efforts to provide housing for families of limited income. This project as proposed is completely wrong in design, function, and location. Please cancel your plan for this project.*

From C : What makes it "a Good mix?"

From S : Change in any neighbourhood is challenging but at the end of the day we are desperate for rental housing of any size in all areas of the CRD. Thank you Greg for your patience navigating through this tumultuous discussion.

From P : How much of what has been proposed driven by the CRD wants?

From S : Thank you Kelly, for re-iterating that we are not opposed to all CRD housing.

From S : Is there any possibility that the CDHR will later hand the project over to supported housing operators if the project does not go as smoothly as planned?

From S : <https://www.crd.bc.ca/crhc/applying-for-housing/information-about-properties>

From A : What is the square footage of each of the suites? can we get this please -- families cannot adequately live in the small suites offered this building. Getting the density numbers for all areas of Victoria, including Vic west and Gorge -- just as Marg G asked of Don Elliott.

From S : Thank you for your question re the density of social housing in James Bay vs other neighbourhoods such as Fernwood and Vic West. I think James Bay has met about 30% of the goal whereas the other neighbourhoods mentioned will be found to be much lower.

From L : James Bay is already a community

From P : Why put this building in the middle of the most dense housing in Victoria? Why not Fernwood, Vic West. or Saanich?

From B : “Supporting success” of those being housed but no consideration for the neighbourhood is not a desired outcome.

From T : @Don, @Sharon— is there a map of all the CRHC properties & projects? Looking on CRHC website, can't find anything like that.

From D : Are we not experiencing shortages of professionals to deal with these people who have a certain level of need

From I : If the mandate is to provide/maximize housing only, not commercial/retail, then this is the wrong site for you. Also, why are you not proposing this on land that is not in one of the most expensive land per sq/ft in the CRD? Wouldn't you help more people if you could build higher, wider, denser, if it was on less expensive land? Our tax dollars would go further, and have a better outcome

From K : Harbour house is a great affordable development currently well in co operated into Kingston st. lots of green space, parents don't have to worry about the kids falling 4 storeys, kids having water fights and playing tag etc. for now - but the Montreal Quebec will DESTROY that neighbourhood as well.

From T : *Does CRHC have any other housing projects that were built right in the heart of an urban village, on its prime retail strip?*

From W : The problem is not this project but the location. CRHC has only seems to be interested in their own goals and no interest in the good of the communities they come into.

From Y : Again, no issue with the development, but it would be more appropriate a few blocks north on Menzies adjacent to other apartment developments and not impose a giant structure on a residential neighborhood.

From L : Langford and Saanich is where you should build this. *(Note; CRD referenced that Langford residents wanted housing closer to employment)*

From K : Most of the area north of downtown is underdeveloped and not five storeys. Developments there will not adversely affect families in multigenerational homes on Medana St. in James Bay. Why not rather build in the city core, or just north of the core. The core is easier to access than James Bay as James Bay is cut off from vehicles with only limited road access.

From R : Question to Greg and Don: Based on Don's comment, can this project be decreased significantly in scale and still receive the CRD grant and be part of this program if 20% are “shelter rate” and the remaining units “affordable”. Is that correct? If so, then please decrease the scale and transition more gently to the neighbouring houses.

From N : how many of the 2000 units of affordable houses are in James Bay?

From S : Land was much cheaper when those earlier social housing projects were built. They are beautiful and I wish we could build more of the same, but those days are probably gone...

From C : I agree with Willem. There was a great deal of confusion about this project at the last JBNA meeting. At that time, I felt that this project was being crammed down our throats to the benefit of whom? This presentation has done nothing to make me feel better about this ... process. I would like to respect our government and the developer in their efforts to provide affordable housing. This whole project just does not do that. I feel like there has been no respect for us, the people living in James Bay.

From S : I rather suspect that even if the proposal had businesses in the lower level with the parking spots that requires, neighbours would still not be happy. We need more affordable housing in James Bay. I wish that this building was a storey shorter and set back more, but then it would be very likely there'd be more studio suites which would not be suitable for families. Younger families come in all kinds of configurations and in my building there have been families living in one bedroom suites. I am happy to see 3 bedroom suites included in this plan because if you have an older parent who needs housing, that might make that possible. Hard for people living in larger homes to imagine, but that is the reality for many. We need to think about privilege- who has it and who doesn't...

From I : From my notes from the last zoom meeting: This Regional Housing First Program (RHFP)-funded proposal (as others like it) will be:

20% of units will be 'shelter rate' (homeless - - see below)

31% of units will be 'below market' rental rates (i.e. 'affordable' units)

49% of units will be 'near-market' rental rates

According to the Greater Victoria Coalition To End Homelessness website, re: RHFP): "The Housing First model provides housing and supports for people experiencing chronic homelessness with no housing readiness requirements." Yet there will not be on-site supports here.

From B : I agree there should be a family focus for James Bay with significantly more units with 3 and 4 bedrooms.

From K : It is too much building for too small a lot.

From S : Will there be a charging options for the parking stalls

From C : Are we going to discuss the potential renters of this building? Will they be available to low-barrier occupants?

From E : With regards to parking the tenants may very well not want to pay for a spot in the building because they are low income people. As a result, Thrifty's lot and surrounding streets will be where the residents will try to park. At The James on Quebec Street, for example, the tenants park all around on the surrounding streets, plugging up available street parking.

From D : CRD...please confirm that this project is being proposed and will be built and operated according to the Regional Housing First Program where "The mix of rent levels will be: 20% provincial income assistance units ("offered to individuals who are experiencing homelessness"), 31% affordable units and 49% near-market units." as per the following description:

<https://www.crd.bc.ca/project/regional-housing-first-program/how-it-works>

From K : CRD: given there are a significant number of studio apartments are any or all of them being designated as low barrier?

From D : Does the CRD grant depend on a certain number of units to be built? If so, that may be why they are going for such high density. As a result, it seems that the purpose for this project is not to build something that is right for the site, considerate of neighbours on Medana, or fitting for the neighbourhood, but to meet an objective for their **primary project**.

From E : Why are there no 2 bedroom suites

From B : Numerous CRD/BC housing projects in James Bay already - the one thing missing is homes for families - couldn't this be the focus of this project? All units of your project are 1 bedroom or studio with only 2 3 bedrooms.

From B : A couple questions - realistically, how many people would live in this building? If three buildings, each three storeys high, with a total of nine three bedroom units, how many people could live here?

From D : I think this is a pretty poor example of how to build the needed housing. The building is simple and not well thought out as to the impact it will have on the neighbours and the city in general. I would expect a much better plan.

Current Proposals in James Bay and General Comments:

From C : James Bay already has the most density of any of them.

From J : On the development tracker for the City, there are more development proposals for James Bay than for any other neighbourhood. Why don't these developers look at other areas of the city?

From B : It's sad that this Menzies development is to satisfy development of another more lucrative development. What our city needs is more wealthy and poor people living in close proximity to each other, interacting in small and/or large ways, maybe even getting to know the other, and building community, together.

From M : I agree with all concerns raised about this project. This is yet another proposal being imposed on our community. It is out of character with our neighbourhood and the current and adjacent buildings in terms of height, density, number of units . . . the trend to seriously reduce setbacks from the street and increase overall footprint results in loss of green space, impacts mature trees and blocks access to sun for the community. . . . I am listening but fail to see the benefits to the community . . . very disturbed by City Council's wanting to fast track this and not hear from the community. . .

From D : There is a huge power imbalance here. The community in general are not experts in the development process. The developers are experts and know how to play this application and approval game. The community is on the bottom side of the coin, and the developers who already have relationships with city staff and council are on the top side of the coin. The community lives here and is understandably passionate about this.

From D : . . . I wish the applicants/developers in general would start with the site in mind and the James Bay Neighbourhood Plan. If so, there would be a much smaller building being proposed. Instead, this application, (like other applications . . . , are asking for variances way beyond current zoning (setbacks, site coverage, height) in order to maximize profit or meet some other objective.

From B : **It would be ideal to have a building built in our urban village to be focused on the village and neighbours rather than being a project based on needs of a separate development's success.**

From G : I agree with S: everything thing starts with respect for the neighbourhood.

From G : . . . the developers need to look elsewhere in the CRD so that James Bay, and downtown core, aren't the focus of a "dumping ground" for increased densification as a solution for missing middle.

From S : . . . integrity of the developer; I would ask that he be patient with any "attitude". The community is feeling at a great disadvantage. The Zoning is currently R2 and there seems to be absolutely no consideration to keeping it that way.

From D : It has not been well thought out . . . If you approach the community and see what is important to people here you may have been able to design with more attention to detail and absolute need.

From B : Brutalism is an architecture style, I would describe the design closer to Brutalism than anywhere close to the Period Design of the neighbourhood.

From J : All the buildings going up on 118 Menzies at the Village Green are also 4-6 storeys too - these new buildings are all big and casting shadow in this part of James Bay. They are ... going to destroy all the beautiful sunshine in the neighborhood the noise and privacy is gone for all the small homes.

From S : I agree that it is premature and inappropriate to change the zoning for a large apartment block in that the "local area planning process" for James Bay has not been completed . . .

From K : Gillespie "Urban Village is a current bylaw" NO! the zoning is not approved - is still R2. . . .

From L : . . . Definitely feeling there is bullying going on. Not all clear and above board



June 29, 2023

**Mayor and Council
City of Victoria**

Re: JBNA CALUC Hearing for 131-135-139 Menzies Street

Dear Mayor Alto and Members of City Council:

The proponents for the development planned for 131-139 Menzies Street presented their proposal to members of the James Bay community at a public hearing held on June 14. The presenters were Niall Paltiel of Mike Geric Construction, Tony James of Continuum Architecture, and Nadine King of Watt Traffic Consultants. Approximately 120 residents attended this zoom meeting.

Declaration regarding Conflicting of Interest

This letter is issued by the JBNA Board, and was reviewed by all Board members per standard practice of the JBNA. Trevor Moat, an elected member of the Board of the JBNA, is the beneficial owner of property within 100m of the subject property. Mr. Moat recused himself from discussions between JBNA and the developer concerning the property. Mr. Moat chaired the CALUC hearing on June 14 in the absence of JBNA's regular Chair and Treasurer. The Proponent was agreeable to this change, and Mr. Moat provided no opinion during the hearing.

Meeting Context

The Proponents met several times with the JBNA Development Review Committee, and on different occasions with immediate neighbours to the project. This was the second CALUC hearing for this developer concerning this site. This proposal differs from the previous proposal in the following ways:

- A modest amount of ground-floor commercial space is provided
- The rear yard setback has been increased
- The underground parking area is smaller, and excavation no longer reaches the rear lot line
- The mix of units was changed to include four 3BR dwellings
- Roof-top deck space was removed, rooftop gables were added, and facades were changed

Other less significant changes were alluded to in the meeting and should be documented in the Proponent's cover letter to Mayor and Council.

Minutes, video, and the chat comments recorded during the meeting will be posted to:
<https://jbna.org/for-information/monthly-meetings/#>.

Site Context

The site is located just South of the "Five Corners" where Menzies, Simcoe, and Toronto Streets intersect. The proposal is to amalgamate three small R2 lots into a single rectangular parcel with 82.5 feet (25.15m) depth and 180 feet (54.86m) of frontage along the East side of Menzies Street, and to create a site-specific commercial/residential zone for this new parcel.

The two Northerly lots are within the “Large Urban Village” area of the OCP, and the third in the “Traditional Residential” area. If approved, the proposal would result in the removal or demolition of three century-old original homes on Menzies Street, none of which is on the heritage register, and all of which have been neglected for some time and are in various states of disrepair.

The neighbouring building to the North is a century-old single-story commercial structure with contiguous connection to other century-old buildings along Menzies Street to the street corner with Simcoe. To the south is a sequence of larger original 2- and 3-storey homes that have each been converted into multiple family dwellings over the years. Immediately behind the subject site is a set of century-old homes with frontage on Medana Street. The Medana Street homes are very well preserved, that block of Medana being one of the best and few remaining blocks with all original buildings still in existence on both sides of the street over the entire length of the block. Across Menzies Street from the site is a parking lot which serves a large neighbourhood grocery store.

Proposal Summary

The proposal is to construct a five-storey building on the northerly 2/3 of the combined lot with ground-floor commercial space and 4 storeys of residential space above. Adjoining that would be a three-storey, three-unit townhouse complex on the Southerly 1/3 of the lot.

The combined structure would provide a total of 43 rental apartments, including 8 studio units, 17 one-bedroom units, 14 two-bedroom units, and 4 three-bedroom units. The three-bedroom units would all have ground-level entrances. All units would be designated rental in perpetuity under covenant with the City of Victoria for 60 years. All units would be rented at market rates.

The proposed FSR's in the Large Urban Village lots and the Traditional Residential lot are 2.91 and 1.37 respectively, resulting in a weighted FSR of 2.39 for the proposed amalgamated lot.

Neighbour Feedback

Those who spoke at the CALUC hearing were almost unanimously opposed to this development proposal. The immediate neighbours to the East (rear) of the project (residents of Medana Street) expressed particularly strong opposition, as the proposed building will have major impacts on their privacy, views, gardens, and sunlight. While most of the community believe this site is a good candidate for appropriate re-development, neighbours and residents provided consistent feedback that this proposal is unsuitable and undesirable for this location, the proposed building being “too big, too tall”.

Comments provided by the community during the hearing included the following:

Building height is too great for the depth of the lot

- Lot depth is 25.15m (82.5 feet) depth, less City frontage right-of-way of 2.04m
- Neighbouring lots to Medana Street are also only 82.5 feet deep
- Proposed setback is significantly smaller than specified in other multi-storey zones
- Lot appears to be too shallow even for missing middle housing let alone a 5-storey complex
- Height and overlook are and always have been the main issues, but the developer has come back with a building that is even taller than the previous proposal.

Building footprint is too large for the area of the lot

- FSR of 2.91 and 2.39 is well over what is specified in OCP and prescribed in corresponding zoning bylaws
- Site coverage of 72.9% is well over what similar zones allow for lots this size
- Building height is well above and all setbacks well below what existing multi-storey zoning bylaws would permit for lots of this size
- Site area is 1243sqm for proposed 43 units, whereas another developer of 202-204 St. Lawrence St with 1212sqm area has proposed only 4 units

- The pitched roofs add to height unnecessarily and are not appropriate for a high-rise
- Large number of significant stretches to City's published guidelines are being sought
- Zoning laws are designed to protect neighbours, not to entitle developers.

Privacy and shading issues for neighbours at the rear (East) property line

- Developer stated previously that balconies would be inset, but the drawings clearly show that balconies project into the rear yard setback
- Balcony doors are full-height glass; developer stated windows would be elevated off floors
- There will be total loss of privacy and direct sunlight to the rear yard neighbours
- This is akin to expropriation without compensation.

Streetscape will be adversely affected

- Developer emphasizes massing transition from 5 to 3 to 1.5 storeys to south neighbour on Menzies, but makes no mention of 5 to 1 storey transition at the more visible North boundary, nor the 5 to 1.5 storey transition on the East (rear) boundary of the property
- This is a tourist area; a monolithic flat-face development is not suitable in the context of the historic village centre and streetscapes
- An unbroken vertical wall four storeys high faces Menzies street, which is contrary to what the OCP guidance calls for
- The proposed structure, façade, and transitions are abrupt and bear no relation to other buildings on the street.

Housing types and Living Spaces:

- The proposal removes 3 original period houses, adding to the list of dozens which have been lost or will soon be lost due to development in James Bay in recent years.
- Developer proposes four 3BR units of 43 total, so families are under-served
- MMHI calls for 30% of suites in a building to have 3 or more bedrooms
- More family-oriented housing is needed in James Bay
- Units are very small, especially the 3BR units
- There appears to be almost no storage space shown in the plans

Parking/Traffic Matters

- Parking is already in short supply on Medana and Menzies Streets; 17 spaces seems very inadequate for 43 units
- At least 34 parking spots should be provided under Schedule C
- Working people often need vehicles to do their jobs
- James Bay has limited access in the event of emergency; streets are narrow and traffic is congested, with only three exits from the district
- James Bay is in a tsunami area and has the highest median age in the city so emergency vehicle access is very important.

Trees and greenspace are being endangered and/or lost

- Trees are being removed regardless of bylaw protection, so the community is losing cooling value to buildings and habitat for birds and insects.
- Significant trees grow on adjoining properties and have roots that extend into the subject lots
- Trees will be starved for light and soil due to shading from the 5-storey building
- Developer acknowledges blasting will be necessary, since soil depth is shallow, and thus very precious for the tree roots.

Development context and tenancy issues

- A resident stated that each of the 13 districts in Victoria would need to build 50 units every year for 18 years to keep up with demand, and James Bay already has 428 units under development
- Land prices are increasing due to developer demand and increased densification

- Lower-income tenants are being displaced and forced to move away in a very tight rental market

Planning Context and Design Guidance

- Developer refers to the downtown core area plan, but this site is not in the downtown core
- The six-storey reference in the OCP is context-specific and not an entitlement; it needs to be justified by the proponent
- This is a mid-block development, and should not be tallest building on this side of the block, according to the OCP
- By way of comparison, the building at 225 Menzies, one block North, is also commercial ground floor with residential floors above, however:
 - o that lot is over 42m deep where the subject lot is only 25.15m deep
 - o that building is only four storeys high where the proposed building is five
 - o its front façade is highly articulated whereas the proposed façade is vertical
 - o its front setback is considerably larger, and a covered pedestrian area is provided
 - o the neighbours at the rear of that property are also multi-storey apartment buildings, not century-old houses
 - o Menzies Street is considerably narrower South of the five corners so buildings should be of lower height to maintain consistency
- James Bay is already the most densely populated residential community in Victoria, and also has the largest number of units being built of any Victoria district outside of downtown.

Developer has not responded to the most critical neighbour feedback

- Neighbours have been consistent that height/massing is too great, yet the proposal is still at five storeys, and even taller now due to addition of commercial space
- Height has always been the primary issue, and this proposal moves in the opposite direction to what neighbours requested
- A resident quotes from City staff comments sent to developer June 28 2022: *“Given the lower scale context and potential heritage value of some of the adjacent buildings and the relatively shallow depth of the property, the proposal could potentially benefit from a reduced scale that is more neighbourly and sensitive to the character of the James Bay village”*
- All engagements with developer have been at neighbours’ request, not initiated by the developer; Neighbours want to have input into the design, not be told what is happening
- Several neighbours asked why the proponent is bringing an almost identical proposal back to CALUC when they have been clear about what build form they believe is best for the site.
- Neighbours have suggested that a townhouse development with no more than three storeys might be the best fit for this combined lot.

Residents made clear in their comments that while they support increased density, it must be aligned with the OCP, family-supportive, and sensitive to the unique needs and constraints of James Bay.

This proposal is well beyond what neighbours consider appropriate re-development of this site. The JBNA CALUC requests future community consultation be required in the event that an alternate proposal be advanced that differs significantly from the current approved use for this site.

Yours truly



Tim VanAlstine
JBNA CALUC CO-Chair

JBNA ~ honouring our history, building our future

From W : This project is a great example of what is wrong with the Missing Middle Initiative. I believe city staff should have intervened in this project long before it got to this stage. This project demonstrates a complete failure to appreciate context for a new development.

From W : I suggest this may be a good project but planned for the wrong location.

From H : Just to note, the developer and the Mayor were trying to ram this through without any opportunity to hear from CALUC.

From I : *As a community, can we reject the offered amenity, if we collectively feel it is not really an amenity needed here?*

From D : what is a Landscape Tree. Sounds small to me

From Y : . . . this is the wrong location for a building of this size — seems to be some large lots kitty corner to the capital project that would be a more appropriate location, than dropping a giant apartment complex into a residential neighbourhood.

From P : Slow growing ornamental maple and gingko trees - again 6 cm caliper - small

From J : City Council has just (April) approved a huge new development in the same block (Village Green) which will triple (at least) the number of residents and the traffic, remove all the mature shade trees and boulevard trees, and do away with the affordable housing which Village Green did provide. Why is this development proposal even being considered?

From P : Please do tell us the size and canopy of these trees - canopy size not the height

From J : The most recent planning document for James Bay which I have found on the City site is dated 1993 or 1994. There does not appear to have been any planning consideration for this area of the neighbourhood. In Vancouver, there has been criticism of ill-conceived density without regard to the appropriateness for neighbourhoods. Is this happening here?

From L : Yes, what happened to the Neighbourhood Plan - Housing goals and objectives, item 9 - New development should respect existing streetscape character?

From L : The City of Victoria website describes James Bay as having “the feeling of being in a ‘village’ not a city”

From D : *This is the problem of missing middle housing. It does not deal with the reality of existing citizens and their homes*

From K : Other drawings have shown projecting balconies. What is it?

From K : The lot is only 80' deep. Where is there a five storey building on an 80' deep lot in Victoria outside of the commercial core?

From C : It seems like the intention was to mislead and downplay the impact of setbacks here

From L : and the roof being amenity space for the neighbourhood? How?

From J : Today I saw several proposals for James Bay on the City development tracker site. This neighbourhood needs to demand that City Hall stop further development in this neighbourhood until there has been a more considered planning process which aims at preserving the community character. Otherwise, I see only incremental destruction of this neighbourhood.

From B : Any idea of how much green space (not just trees) is being lost? The current small houses have large yards compared to the footprints of the buildings? I can't see any benefits to the neighbourhood in this proposal.

From J : What is the age and possible heritage value of the buildings which will be destroyed?

From D : Not sure about heritage value of the Menzies properties, but based on BC Assessment, the three properties were bought as a package in November 2021 for 3.6 million total.

From E : . . . there is nothing here in this development to benefit the community. It does not address family dwelling, and it too high for the neighbourhood and will detrimentally affect houses on Medana directly behind the structure.