

Alena Hickman

From: Adele Haft [REDACTED]
Sent: April 6, 2026 11:42 AM
To: Development Services email inquiries
Subject: Thank you for your recommendation to decline the most recent proposal for 50 Government Street in James Bay

Categories: correspondence

Dear Members of the Development Services,

Thank you for recommending that Mayor and Council decline the 50 Government St Redevelopment Proposal (REZ00861 and DPV00251) when it comes to Council this Thursday, 9 April 2026.

For what it's worth, here is my letter to Mayor and Council ahead of that meeting.

Wishing you all the best,

Adele

*"I urge you to REJECT this **ninth** 50 Government St redevelopment proposal for these reasons:*

(1) In a proposal almost identical to the previous one, the applicant again proposes a six-storey building (5-storeys + basement: see PRB, Plans_Revised_Bubbled, 19 Jan 2026, p.16/29; see 14 Nov 2025, pp.10ff.). However, in his Letter to Mayor & Council of 4 Nov 2025 (LM&C, p.1/8) and now in his current PRB (p.3/29), he says the building is five storeys and fails to mention the basement, which the PRB reveals to be at least as tall as a person at ground level near Government St and a full storey as it continues west alongside neighbouring properties (p.17/29). Furthermore, this building will have 17 units, 2 more units than in his 7th proposed building that was already too large. Surrounded by 1- and 2-storey homes on Government and South Turner (e), *the property's lot size—586 sq metres previously zoned for a single home or duplex—remains far too "constrained" (p.3/29) for his ambitions and belies his contention that it is "modest in form"* (LM&C, p.1). City Staff has repeatedly recommended *against* the applicant's proposals (paraphrasing City Staff recommendations: FOI request) and the neighbourhood continues to voice strong opposition to these proposals (<https://www.50government.com/>).

(2) The property is neither in James Bay Village nor on Dallas Road, yet *special zoning and five extraordinary variances are still being requested for the building's setbacks* (PRB, p.3/29). For a building of this size, side setbacks are slashed from 9.0 m minimum to 1.55 m on the north and 2.19 m on the south; the rear setback is reduced from 8.0 m to 5.65 m; and street frontage is drastically reduced from 30 m minimum to 17.5 m. A major parking variance is also requested: instead of the 21 spaces required, 2 spaces are proposed.

(3) The PRB says the building is 16.565 m tall and thus complies with the maximum height of 17 m for a five-storey building (p.3/29). As with the number of storeys reported, there may be a sleight of hand here. According to the elevation drawings, the building's height is being measured by subtracting its average grade of 17.750 m from the parapet height of 34.315 m. *But if the basement's floor of 17.042 m is subtracted from the parapet height of 34.315, the height would be 17.273 m* (p.14/29). Whether the building height is 17.273 m/56'8" (non-compliant) or 16.565 m/54'4" (compliant), however, it will still be 3-4 m taller than the 24 June 2025 proposal of 13.88 m/45 ft (PRB, p.4/28) and will tower over and overshadow neighbouring homes.

(4) On the north side, the building's vertical wall rises 54+ ft straight up and its 26 windows + doors (p.13/29) will deprive long-time residents of privacy and the healthy enjoyment of their gardens, while offering nothing but noise, light pollution and other very real problems. So too on the west, the building's 54+ ft vertical height rises straight up with 24 windows and glass railings as well as its expanded outdoor area crowding their neighbours. On the south side, neighbours are overlooked by 3 stories of glassed balcony/deck (28 windows total). Since 54 residents could occupy the seventeen 1- to 3-bedroom units (PRB, Code Analysis, p.16/29: four 3 bedrooms; two 2-bedrooms; eleven 1-bedrooms), there will be little outdoor space for children's play (PRB p.9 & 20ff./29; architect's LM&C, 4 Nov 2025, p.5/8). The proposal may call for sprinklers, but the building's *single stairway and single fire fighter access* as well as its potentially combustible materials (PRB, p.16/29)—coupled with minimal setbacks and step-backs/transitions—pose a serious fire hazard for fire fighters and evacuating residents. Furthermore, such a fire would spread easily to the wood-frame heritage buildings that beautify this southeastern part of James Bay. *Mid-size and large multi-unit buildings are best located on corner lots with large setbacks to minimize such impacts.*

(5) The proposal assumes that the 54 new residents will live car-free. But there is no legal way to demand that occupants NOT own cars. *With only 2 parking spaces on the lot*, rather than the 21 required (PRB, p.3/29), 50 Government residents will park on *already narrow and over-crowded Battery and Government Streets*. The architectural drawings (PRB, pp.1 & 5/29) fail to show that vehicles currently park cheek-to-jowl on both sides of Battery St and on the east side of Government St. (No parking is permitted on the west side due to the new bike lane.) Government St will not magically empty of cars when new residents flood into 50 Government, though the diagram on p.2/29 does highlight the absence of trees on the proposal's street front. The resulting overparking will create an even more treacherous situation at this T-junction than already exists for cars, pedestrians, bikes, horse carriages, and the kids who skateboard down Battery Street...

(6) The property is located at the base of the Battery St Heritage Conservation Area AND beside two heritage homes on the 0-100 block of Government St, whose own HCA application is currently stalled. Although the proponent makes no mention of either, the City itself has an investment in this neighbourhood that attracts tourists and cruise ships—as exemplified by Council's recent direction that Staff consider making James Bay itself an HCA. Yet the proposed building, while capitalizing on these attractions, doesn't fit the scale or character of the present or potential HCAs showcased by tour operators as examples of James Bay's rich history. Moreover, a survey conducted by neighbours and based on city data reveals that 70% of properties in the area are already multi-unit. In terms of “gentle density, housing diversity, and affordability” (LM&C, p.1/8), *the neighbourhood does more than its share to offer truly affordable housing to a diverse and inclusive population while nevertheless remaining a destination*. In fact, James Bay itself is already a model of densification, as the President of the JBNA Trevor Moat has testified before Council on 15 September 2025 ([Jbna.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/12/JBNA-OCP-Text-Presented-to-Council-TMOAT-20250915.pdf](https://jbna.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/12/JBNA-OCP-Text-Presented-to-Council-TMOAT-20250915.pdf)). Council's instruction to City planners to consider all of James Bay for HCA status should include pausing proposals that request variances, as well as pausing any applications within proposed HCAs until staff have reported back and Council has made decisions on HCA boundaries.

(7) The property itself already has four units and four sets of residents in accord with needed densification goals for single family lots. **In the previous redevelopment proposal (LM&C, p.1/8), the applicant dangled the possibility of two units being offered in the City's RTE Program, yet no mention of them is made in the current PRB (p.2/29).** It is therefore increasingly unlikely that the rental units will be affordable to most students, seniors, and income-challenged individuals and families. For instance, my niece, a grad student at UVic, shares a 2-bedroom unit in a charming small apartment house a block from Beacon Hill Park for the price of the 1-bedroom listed under 50 Government's RTE Program. That's double what she pays now and not “transformative” for the very people this proposal purports to help. Furthermore, she and each of her roommates own a car.

(8) A proposal of 6-8 units, within existing guidelines, might be an appropriate way to gently densify this lot located in the *middle of a block* on the quiet southeast edge of James Bay. Nevertheless, on public television the applicant

has cited financial necessity for failing to meet zoning bylaw requirements. Or implied that his extraordinary variance requests for such a large building ought to be similar to those of his one- to 2-storey neighbours (e.g., “Variance requested to permit setbacks similar to the existing and adjacent buildings”) or are forced upon him by the City (“The proposal requires setback variances due to the limitations imposed by the property's frontage requirements”: PRB, p.3/29). Such excuses don’t justify repeated non-compliance and the willful wasting of Council, City planning, and taxpayers’ time and resources. Or challenging OCP-2050, which offers to streamline approval IF the proponent stays within the applicable zoning bylaw without demanding several extraordinary site-specific variances in return. Approving this project would not only defeat the purpose of the new OCP, it would also encourage others to build oversized buildings on too-small lots...to the detriment of the very communities that make our great City vibrant and attractive. Council’s direction to planning staff to consider all of James Bay for HCA status should include pausing proposals that request variances, as well as pausing any applications within proposed HCAs until staff have reported back and Council has made decisions on HCA boundaries.

Thank you, as always, for your support and commitment to ensuring that any (re)development of 50 Government St creates housing that preserves our historic neighbourhood *and* benefits the City."

Sincerely,

Dr. Adele J. Haft

A black rectangular redaction box covering the signature area, consisting of two stacked horizontal bars.

Alena Hickman

From: Development Services email inquiries
To: Victoria Mayor and Council
Subject: RE: OEZA-50 Government street



From: Mike Jones [REDACTED]
Sent: April 2, 2026 9:20 PM
To: Victoria Mayor and Council <mayorandcouncil@victoria.ca>; Marianne Alto (Mayor) <MAalto@victoria.ca>; Matt Dell (Councillor) <mdell@victoria.ca>; Jeremy Caradonna (Councillor) <jcaradonna@victoria.ca>; Dave Thompson (Councillor) <dave.thompson@victoria.ca>; Krista Loughton (Councillor) <kloughton@victoria.ca>; m.alto@victoria.ca; Chris Coleman (Councillor) <ccoleman@victoria.ca>; Marg Gardiner (Councillor) <mgardiner@victoria.ca>; Stephen Hammond (Councillor) <shammond@victoria.ca>; Susan Kim (Councillor) <skim@victoria.ca>
Cc: Renata Lang [REDACTED] Renata Lang [REDACTED]
Subject: OEZA-50 Government street

Dear Mayor and Council,

Thank you for your continued consideration of the proposal at 50 Government Street, and for the thoughtful input provided by the surrounding community.

We recognize and respect the concerns raised by neighbours regarding building scale, setbacks, overlook, and overall fit within the immediate context. These are important considerations, and since the previous Committee of the Whole, we have worked diligently to respond to feedback from Council, staff, and the community. Revisions include increased setbacks and open space, removal of external staircases, improved landscaping and tree retention, and full compliance with accessibility and tree protection requirements.

At the same time, this application presents a clear set of trade-offs.

A smaller four-storey building would likely be more readily supported by staff and the immediate community from a form and fit perspective. However, in practical terms, that outcome would most likely result in a condominium development or a building with smaller units—delivering little to no secured rental housing, no meaningful family-sized units, and no affordability component.

By contrast, the current proposal delivers 17 secured rental homes, including four three-bedroom units suitable for families and two below-market units. It also avoids underground parking, reducing construction impacts, timelines, and embodied carbon.

We have made a concerted effort to retain these housing outcomes while responding to every request raised through the process—whether from Council, staff, or the community. The resulting design reflects an attempt to balance these sometimes competing objectives on a constrained infill site.

From a policy standpoint, the proposal meets the permitted use and density under the current zoning framework and remains well within the upper 2.75:1 FSR contemplated for secured rental housing. The additional storey and compact form are what enable the inclusion of larger, more livable units while maintaining project viability.

It is also important to note that the requested setback variances are not solely a function of lot width, but of building form and how floor space ratio is achieved. Even on a larger or assembled site, similar variances would likely be required to deliver comparable density and family-oriented unit mix within a building of this type.

In this context, we respectfully submit that the proposal represents a reasonable balance—accepting modest departures from certain form-based guidelines in exchange for meaningful gains in housing supply, diversity, and affordability.

We appreciate the complexity of this decision and thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Mike Jones

A large black rectangular redaction box covering the signature and any contact information that might have been present.

Alena Hickman

From: Development Services email inquiries
To: Victoria Mayor and Council
Subject: RE: 50 Government Street

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: April 3, 2026 8:06 PM
To: Victoria Mayor and Council <mayorandcouncil@victoria.ca>
Subject: 50 Government Street

Dear Mayor and Council,

I am writing as a renter to express my strong support for the proposed development of the 50 Government housing site.

Like many renters, I have experienced firsthand the challenges of finding stable, affordable housing. Rising rents and limited availability have made it increasingly difficult to remain in the communities we call home. Developments like this are a crucial step toward addressing these issues and creating more inclusive, livable neighborhoods.

The addition of new housing—especially if it includes a mix of affordability options—will help ease pressure on the rental market and provide opportunities for people from diverse backgrounds to live and thrive in this area. It also reflects a forward-thinking approach to urban planning, one that recognizes the importance of housing accessibility for the long-term health of the community.

I encourage you to move forward with this project and continue prioritizing solutions that support renters and working residents. Expanding housing supply is not just beneficial—it is necessary.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Alex Gurnell

Born and raised in Victoria

Alena Hickman

From: Christine Smart [REDACTED]
Sent: April 3, 2026 11:18 AM
To: Development Services email inquiries
Subject: 50 Government St

Categories: correspondence

Good Morning ,

I reside at [REDACTED] Battery Street in James Bay, we've been following the proposed development at 50 Government Street closely over the last couple of years.

It is quite frustrating that this applicant has not responded with revisions that acknowledge the clear negative feedback from the neighbourhood, city staff, or council's advice from the Dec 2024. In fact the applicant has done the opposite and proposed a building that is more aggressive, pushes variances and overwhelms. The new OCP directs that the street set backs are minimized with the centre of residential blocks to be areas of green space with trees, gardens and space for urban nature. This development is an affront to this concept by building deeply into the centre of the block and imposing a structure right to the property lines with variances one might expect to see on a corner but not the centre of a block with heritage homes, family gardens and protected trees.

The current building is a great example of missing middle housing, we would welcome additional densification for families with green space, and a building that speaks to the heritage surrounding it and the adjacent and connected heritage district.

We are deeply disappointed that the plans and proposal are inappropriate, as a neighbourhood we are very welcoming of diverse housing. We currently within a block radius have retirement homes, CRD housing, low and high rise apartments complexes, threshold society, heritage houses with strata suites, heritage houses with suites, duplexes. It may appear that many homes are simply single family, but that is rare. We are a prime example of a great balance of what the missing middle should be, and ideal densification that works. Please don't tip the balance of what we have achieved, this simply isn't the right build and will deeply affect residents of South Turner, Government St. and also us on Battery Street. We need to have thoughtful density that works with neighbours and communities, not against it.

Thank you for listening,

Christine Smart
[REDACTED]

James Bay
[REDACTED]

Alena Hickman

From: Development Services email inquiries
To: Victoria Mayor and Council
Subject: RE: 50 Government St.

From: Dominic Ohl [REDACTED]
Sent: April 3, 2026 9:34 PM
To: Victoria Mayor and Council <mayorandcouncil@victoria.ca>
Subject: 50 Government St.

Hello,

I'd like to express my support for the affordable family rental housing project being proposed for 50 Government Street.

We all know we need more affordable housing in our city.

I live downtown and I believe we should be approving as many of these types of projects as we can in order to contribute to a vibrant, thriving and well populated downtown core. The folks that move into these units will undoubtedly be spending a good chunk of time and money downtown.

Thank you for everything you do and for your consideration in this matter.

Dominic Ohl

Alena Hickman

From: Development Services email inquiries
To: Victoria Mayor and Council
Subject: RE: 50 Government street

From: erin hlasny [REDACTED]
Sent: April 3, 2026 8:36 PM
To: Victoria Mayor and Council <mayorandcouncil@victoria.ca>
Subject: 50 Government street

Hello,

My name is Erin, and I am writing to express my support for the proposed housing development at the 50 Government street site.

As a renter I have seen firsthand how challenging it has become to find reliable and affordable rental housing. The limited availability creates stress for many individuals and families, making it difficult to plan for the future or feel secure in where they live.

Increasing the housing supply is an important and necessary step toward addressing these challenges. Developments like this have the potential to ease pressure on the rental market, create more opportunities for residents, and contribute to a healthier, more balanced community.

I support moving forward with this project and appreciate the efforts being made to prioritize housing accessibility and long-term stability for residents.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Erin

Alena Hickman

From: Development Services email inquiries
To: Victoria Mayor and Council
Subject: RE:

From: Nacho Reinoso [REDACTED]
Sent: April 3, 2026 8:39 PM
To: Victoria Mayor and Council <mayorandcouncil@victoria.ca>
Subject:

Hello,

My name is Nacho, and I'm writing to support the proposed housing development at the 50 Government site.

Right now, it's really tough to find rental housing. There just isn't enough supply, and that's pushing prices up and making it harder for people to find a stable place to live.

Projects like this can actually help. Adding more homes is an important step toward easing the pressure and giving people more options.

I hope you'll move this proposal forward and keep focusing on housing solutions that support renters and the community as a whole.

Thank you for your time.

Thx,
Nacho

Alena Hickman

From: Development Services email inquiries
To: Victoria Mayor and Council
Subject: RE: Back to the drawing board for 50 Government Street - no "reluctant" approvals for too big, too high and out of character

From: Joan Athey [REDACTED]
Sent: April 4, 2026 3:10 PM
To: Victoria Mayor and Council <mayorandcouncil@victoria.ca>
Subject: Back to the drawing board for 50 Government Street - no "reluctant" approvals for too big, too high and out of character

Hello Mayor and Council:

Looking at the recent plans, not much has changed with regard to respecting the OCP and the proposed re-development at 50 Government Street.

Citizens are disappointed if not angry, to say the least. An over-sized, over-height, close-quartered housing complex on a relatively small lot in an established neighbourhood that might become a Heritage Conservation Area simply cannot be allowed to set a precedent.

Please .. no "reluctant" approvals. No more "sitting on the fence". No more wasting taxpayers money sending an uncooperative developer back to frustrate staff.

NO to 50 Government, please listen to your constituents.

Sincerely
Joan E. Athey

[REDACTED]
James Bay

Alena Hickman

From: Development Services email inquiries
To: Victoria Mayor and Council
Subject: RE: Affordable Housing

From: Alyssa Ouslis [REDACTED]
Sent: April 7, 2026 8:11 AM
To: Victoria Mayor and Council <mayorandcouncil@victoria.ca>
Subject: Affordable Housing

To whom it may concern,

My name is Alyssa, and I am writing as a renter to express my support for the proposed housing development at the 50 Government site.

From my experience, the lack of available rental housing has made it increasingly stressful to plan for the future. Many people are competing for the same limited options, which drives up costs and makes it harder to find a place to settle long-term. Adding more housing is a necessary step toward improving this situation.

This project has the potential to make a meaningful difference by increasing supply and helping to stabilize the rental market. It's encouraging to see efforts that focus on practical solutions and recognize the importance of housing for everyday residents.

I support moving forward with this development and hope to see continued action that prioritizes housing accessibility and stability for renters.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Alyssa Ouslis

Alena Hickman

From: Development Services email inquiries
To: Victoria Mayor and Council
Subject: RE: 50 Government Street Proposal

From: Dom Butcher [REDACTED]
Sent: April 7, 2026 9:22 AM
To: Victoria Mayor and Council <mayorandcouncil@victoria.ca>
Subject: 50 Government Street Proposal

Hello Victoria Mayor & Council,

I am writing to express my strong support for the proposed development at 50 Government Street, with particular emphasis on its commitment to providing affordable housing and attainable rental options for members of our community.

At a time when housing affordability continues to be one of the most pressing challenges facing residents, developments like this are not just beneficial—they are essential. The inclusion of rental units starting at \$1,222 per month represents a meaningful step toward addressing the growing gap between income levels and housing costs. For many individuals and families, this level of affordability can be the difference between instability and security, between uncertainty and the opportunity to build a better future.

Access to centrally located, reasonably priced housing has a profound and lasting impact on people's lives. It enables residents to live closer to employment opportunities, education, public services, and community networks. This proximity reduces transportation costs, improves quality of life, and allows individuals to invest more of their time and resources into personal growth, family, and community engagement.

Affordable housing is not simply about providing a place to live—it is about creating the conditions for people to thrive. It supports workers, students, young families, and those transitioning through life changes. It fosters inclusive, diverse communities where people from different backgrounds can contribute and succeed.

The 50 Government Street proposal reflects a forward-thinking approach to urban development by prioritizing accessibility and affordability in a central location. These types of projects are critical for ensuring that our communities remain livable, equitable, and vibrant for years to come.

I strongly encourage approval of this proposal and commend the efforts to include housing options that will have a real and positive impact on people's lives.

Sincerely,
Dom Butcher

Alena Hickman

From: Development Services email inquiries
To: Victoria Mayor and Council
Subject: RE: No to 50 Government St Proposal

-----Original Message-----

From: Mary Koyl [REDACTED]
Sent: April 7, 2026 7:43 AM
To: Victoria Mayor and Council <mayorandcouncil@victoria.ca>
Subject: No to 50 Government St Proposal

No, No, No!!

Please listen to your staff and don't allow this proposal to come to fruition. It is simply too high and too dense for the lot being considered. I live on Clarence Street and we are being hemmed in with housing developments that are butt ugly and far too dense for our neighbourhood.

That this developer keeps coming back with shocking designs is insulting - to the neighbours and to the City. Please say NO, Enough already!

Mary Koyl
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Alena Hickman

From: Development Services email inquiries
To: Victoria Mayor and Council
Subject: RE: Development in James Bay - 50 Government Street

From: Tim Riordan [REDACTED]
Sent: April 7, 2026 9:02 AM
To: Victoria Mayor and Council <mayorandcouncil@victoria.ca>
Subject: Development in James Bay - 50 Government Street

[REDACTED]

Dear Mayor & Council:

I am writing to ask that you support the staff recommendation and decline this development proposal.

This building would be an eyesore. It is far too big, both tall, wide and deep, for the neighbourhood. Also, there is insufficient parking, which would contribute to parking congestion particularly during tourist season. The near absence of setbacks would place it's front very near the sidewalk, something the locals do not wish to walk past.

This developer has made little effort to meet Council's previous requests to adapt the proposal and continues to ignore feedback from the neighbouring community. As a result, there is little that is serious about this project, including the claim that certain units will be rented "below market". That just isn't going to happen. We all know this to be true.

I remind councillors that the election approaches and voters will have an opportunity in the Fall to provide "feedback" on how our neighbourhood has been treated these past four years. No more silly little "wellness" surveys to guide your work; just the cold hard reality of elector satisfaction.

Take care,
Tim

Dr. Timothy Riordan, EdD

"While fear can be contagious, so is courage" (Senator Elissa Slotkin, 2026)