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TOWNLINE.CA

January 7, 2020  
City of Victoria  
1 Centennial Square  
Victoria, BC V8W, 1P6

Dear Mayor Helps and Council;

**RE: Development Permit Application – 1700 Blanshard Street (Hudson Place Two)**  
**Legal Description: Parcel Identifier: 000-059-897 LOT A, OF LOTS 699 TO 700 INCLUSIVE, AND OF LOTS 703 TO 707 INCLUSIVE, VICTORIA CITY, PLAN 13333, EXCEPT PART IN PLAN EPP3862**

Townline Homes is pleased to submit for development permit application for Hudson Place Two at 1700 Blanshard Street.

Townline and its partners have been actively developing the Hudson District since 2007 and we have been very much focused on continuing to build a diverse and rewarding downtown community. To date, we have completed a number of milestones of this multi-phased project. This includes the renovation of The Hudson in 2010 with 152 market condos and the completion of three purpose-built rental buildings since 2014, bringing a total of 404 market rentals to Downtown Victoria. Most recently, we started construction of Hudson Place One- 176 market condo units – and are on track for completion in early 2020.

Townline's vision for the Hudson District has been since the beginning- and remains through each phase of development- to foster a community in the northern bookend of downtown Victoria, complete with diverse housing opportunities, vibrant retail, and essential services for our residents and the greater community. Keeping these values in mind, we curated and opened the Victoria Public Market in 2013 which has become an important community retail hub, providing support for independent businesses and merchants in the CRD. In 2016 we opened our Hudson Walk pocket park between Herald and Caledonia, featuring public amenities including a kid's playground, seating areas, and a dog run. This focus on providing inclusive community spaces will continue to drive our design of the Hudson District.

Along with these achievements, Townline and its dedicated non-market housing wing, TL Housing Solutions (TLHS), are committed to building affordable housing through our proven partnership model with the non-profit housing sector. To date, we have completed 314 affordable rental units in the CRD, with a further 328 units either in design development or close to starting construction. Of these total 642 units, 407 (63%) of them are within the municipal boundaries of the City of Victoria.

#### **Approved Zoning and Master Development Agreement (MDA)**

Townline's investment in the Hudson District stretches back almost 15 years with the original acquisition of the iconic Hudson's Bay Company (HBC) department store in 2004. Approval was granted in 2007 for Townline to restore the HBC building and build out the remainder of the block under a site-specific zone referred to as *CA-59 Hudson District*

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IS  
THE  
TOWNLINE  
WAY

*Zoning.* The associated Master Development Agreement (MDA) provides specific details created to guide development over three distinct areas within the Hudson District. Most salient to this application for Hudson Place 2, which is located in Development Area 3 within the MDA, was granted a conditional bonus density of 7.47 to 1 Floor Space Ratio (FSR) and a maximum height of 72m.

The density and height noted above were approved by the City of Victoria Council in recognition for the design intricacies undertaken by Townline to ensure the preservation and restoration of the iconic Hudson's Bay Company department store on Douglas Street, in addition to the required provision of the following community amenities at stipulated in the MDA:

- ☐☐☐ A publicly accessible mid-block connection between Fisgard and Herald Streets, secured with a Statutory Right of Way (completed);
- ☐☐☐ Following the terms and conditions of a housing agreement executed in 2007; and
- ☐☐☐ A public art contribution of \$60,000 (minimum).

#### **Project Overview - Hudson Place Two**

The project is envisioned to be a mixed-use commercial and rental residential tower with a six-storey podium and dynamic ground level retail. We are thrilled to have selected MCM Architects as the design lead on the project to provide us with a style that compliments- but remains different from- the other buildings on the block. A design rationale provided by MCM is enclosed with this letter and outlines the integrated design approach our team has taken thus far in our process.

The residential entrance will be located mid-block at 1700 Blanshard Street with a walkway that connects through the building and provides an internal pedestrian connection to the other Hudson buildings located on the block.

The residential portion of the building will contain 245 residential units with a diverse mix of unit types and sizes including studio, one-bedroom and two-bedroom suites. We anticipate that the style and character of this building will continue to attract a range of professional singles, couples, and families, similar to the mix of residents we have attracted in the Hudson District's other rental and condo offerings.

Approximately 8,282 sf of commercial space will wrap around both Fisgard and Herald Streets and we anticipate attracting strong tenants seeking the exposure and vibrancy of the District that has emerged over the past five years. We are proposing considerable sidewalk, road and intersection improvements along Blanshard Street that will dramatically enhance the experience of pedestrians, cyclists, and vehicle users entering downtown along the Blanshard corridor. These improvements to the benefit of the community public will include widened sidewalks, the continuation of the dedicated bike lane along Blanshard, and a proposed layby for vehicle drop offs/pickups.

Other notable features and benefits (both for residents and the greater public) of our proposal include:



- A mid-block service connection road between Fisgard and Herald that will provide key service functions for the building including residential and commercial loading, garbage and recycling as well as courier and retail parking;
- Two secure outdoor amenity programming areas to appeal to all residents including a co-work style business centre, a guest suite, music/hobby rooms, fitness centre, dog run, and rooftop lounge designed for friends and family celebrations.
- A dedicated level of public commercial and retail parking that will be available at both hourly and daily rates on par with current street parking. This will connect with the commercial parking levels of the adjacent Hudson Place One and Hudson Mews buildings and when completed will provide over 100 public commercial stalls;

#### **CMHC Rental Construction Financing**

Townline is pleased to announce a conditional partnership with CMHC through the CMHC Rental Construction Financing Initiative to fund the project as a rental building. This would secure a minimum of 20% of the units as Affordable Rental units for a term of 16 years. As a condition of the CMHC financing, Hudson Place Two will exceed the City of Victoria's standards on accessibility and energy efficiency performance of the building. Currently in place is a Conditional Commitment Letter from CMHC to Townline. Townline must meet a list of requirements in order to secure a Loan Agreement with CMHC, one of which the items required is a Building Permit.

#### **Parking Requirements**

Townline recognizes the importance that public parking plays in fostering vibrant and accessible retail in downtown Victoria. As mentioned above, our proposal includes a surplus of public parking stalls (available at competitive hourly and daily rates) in an effort to ensure and maintain the viability of the Hudson District (and surrounding neighbourhood's) retail offerings. As such, our plans exceed the minimum vehicle and bicycle parking requirements as set out by Schedule C, with approximately 113 of the project's 308 vehicle stalls designated as commercial parking. A project data sheet is enclosed with this letter.

#### **Public Art Requirement**

Townline has engaged Jan Ballard of Ballard Fine Art to act as the project art consultant. Townline's relationship with Jan is longstanding, and we are excited to have Jan assist us in providing a lasting artistic legacy in the Hudson District which will reflect not only the District's character, but Townline's vision for the community as well. As discussed above and shown on our application drawings, we have identified a few key locations on the Hudson Place 2 project site as a home for public art (satisfying the public art requirement) and Townline will be also contacting the art representative at the City of Victoria as designs progress.

#### **Relaxation of Street Wall Setback on Blanshard Street**

As per part 5 of the site specific CBD-2 zoning, the only setbacks required is a setback from each of Herald, Blanshard and Fisgard streets of 1cm for each 5cm of building height above 10m. As shown in accompanying



supporting documentation, these setbacks leave a very small footprint for siting a building of the allowed FSR. Considerable consideration was given to the placement of the tower, aiming to maintain reasonable separation and views from other buildings on the block while also respecting the setbacks. In its final proposed location the tower cuts into the required setback a maximum of 8m at roof level.

### **Sustainability**

Townline is committed to ensuring its development efforts are as sustainable as possible. Our corporate policy mandates we seek to construct buildings that are durable, thoughtful and rewarding places to live. Hudson Place Two is being designed to satisfy a number of building performance measures encouraged by both LEED principals and the rolling adoption of the BC Energy Step Code. Hudson Place Two will align with the City of Victoria's Energy Step Code requirements, which will be verified and tested through Townline's engagement of a third-party energy-modeller.

On behalf of Townline, I would like to express our excitement to be moving forward with Hudson Place Two. We see this project as not just another residential tower in the District, but also as a celebration of- and contribution towards- the civic evolution and diversification which has occurred in downtown Victoria over the past ten years. We feel that with each added project, the Hudson District continues to reaffirm its intent as a sincere, mixed-use community for Victorians to enjoy. And as part of this, we would like to thank all those who have worked with Townline and contributed to our projects, including our residents, partners, retail tenants, the hardworking and talented staff at the City, our design teams, our trades and suppliers, and the community at large who have come forward to express their shared appreciation for the Hudson District. We look forward to seeing our community completed.

Sincerely,

Dave English  
Development Manager  
[Dave.english@townline.ca](mailto:Dave.english@townline.ca)

Encl:            Design Rationale – Gerda Geldenhuys – MCM Architects  
                  Upper Setback Variance Diagram – MCM Architects