



April 2, 2020

Mayor Lisa Helps & Council
City of Victoria
1 Centennial Square Victoria BC
V8W 1P6

RE: 650 SPEED AVENUE -- Application for Temporary Use Permit

Dear Mayor Helps & Council:

Victoria Cool Aid Society (Cool Aid) is pleased to submit this application for a Temporary Use Permit approval for the motel located at 650 Speed Avenue. This application proposes using the 22-unit motel known as the Mayfair Motel for the temporary relocation of tenants from our Cedar Grove property located at 210 Gorge Road East while the latter site is redeveloped.

PROJECT SUMMARY

The building and lot being considered is currently zoned *T-1 Limited Transient Accommodation* and has operated as an affordable motel since 1961. The motel was originally designed as a small apartment building; all units are self-contained with full kitchens and bathrooms and adequate electrical supply for a permanent residential use. The building has been very well maintained and is highly suitable for the purpose of providing more long-term affordable rental housing stock.

Cool Aid's purchase of the building and immediate use is to allow for the interim relocation of our Cedar Grove Supportive Housing program, and to allow for this use, we are seeking a two-year Temporary Use Permit for the operation of our supportive housing program. When our 210 Gorge redevelopment is complete, the relocated tenants will be welcomed back to their new units at 210 Gorge, and at that time, our long-term plan is to make an application to rezone the property for affordable rental housing, and be able to offer these 22 units as long-term rental housing for low to moderate income individuals.

GOVERNMENT POLICIES

The site falls under the Town Centre designation in the Official Community Plan which supports both residential and commercial uses. The Burnside Gorge Local Area Plan also supports a residential use for this property with additional density for an affordable rental use.

PROJECT BENEFITS AND AMENITIES

Cool Aid has been actively working on the redevelopment of the Cedar Grove property for over four years now. A critical aspect of the redevelopment has been the need to find a suitable property to relocate the existing tenants to. For over two years, Cool Aid had been actively searching for suitable units to block lease, but the supply was simply not available.

Finding the Mayfair Motel property has enabled us to keep the Cedar Grove community of people together, along with the program's support staff, during the redevelopment phase.

We are also able to move the program to a property which, in many ways, is better suited for a supportive housing program than the current 210 Gorge property has been. The 650 Speed Avenue property has a controlled access entrance, with adequate programming space on the ground level and an elevator for those with mobility issues.

IMPACTS

Cool Aid respects that BC Housing has committed to a moratorium on any additional supportive housing units in the Burnside Gorge neighbourhood, and wish to make it clear that there will be no net increase in supportive housing units in Burnside Gorge as a result of this proposal. We are simply temporarily relocating tenants who have been a part of the Burnside Gorge neighbourhood for many years to a different part of the neighbourhood. As stated, in the long term, we will make an application to the City to rezone the property as rental housing.

Early in the process of acquiring the building, Cool Aid reached out to neighbours on Speed Avenue to make them aware of our plans to apply for a temporary use permit. We have been proactive and transparent in our communications, with the goal of working with immediate neighbours to ensure the successful transition of our supportive housing program to the neighbourhood.

We have heard feedback that the neighbourhood is contending with issues of vehicle break-ins and other challenges and have expressed a concern that the relocation of our supportive housing program could exacerbate this situation. We have been working with the strata council members at nearby buildings and management of local businesses to collaborate on solutions, which will address these concerns around safety and security in the immediate area. We are confident that by building and maintaining a strong relationship with our neighbours, the addition of these permanent rental-housing units will be well accepted.

SAFETY AND SECURITY

With controlled access and location of our support staff on the ground level, we will maintain safety and security for both our tenants and neighbours. The property is already equipped with security cameras for both the interior and exterior. Cool Aid will be reviewing these camera placements and exterior lighting to determine if any upgrades are required.

Cool Aid wrote to Mayor and Council in January expressing our support for VicPD in their request for additional officers so that they have the capacity to adequately respond to neighbourhood concerns such as those raised by members of the Burnside Gorge community. Community resource officers are effective supports for neighborhoods and service providers, and neighborhoods experiencing an increase in reported crimes rightfully expect an increase in police patrols and a more visible and responsive presence in the community.

Cool Aid continues to work with our neighbours and the Burnside Gorge Community Association to mitigate any impacts that our own operations have on the neighbourhood. As well, we continue to work with other service providers and the Community Advisory Council to address neighbourhood issues and reduce to the extent possible the impacts of homelessness on both the individuals experiencing it, and the residents and businesses of Burnside Gorge.

TRANSPORTATION

The property's location along the Douglas Corridor is highly accessible for public transit, which is a key transportation choice for our tenants. There are 15 parking spaces available on site and we are requesting a variance for 2 parking spaces. The majority of residents in our supportive housing programs do not own cars. There are 3 tenants in our Cedar Grove housing program who own vehicles. Combined with our staff on-site, we anticipate our need for parking to be 7 spaces total during this temporary use period which is well below the number of parking spaces provided.

GREEN BUILDING FEATURES

This temporary use permit would not envision changes to the current building structure.

CONCLUSION

We feel very fortunate that we have located an appropriate and suitable housing option for the relocation of our Cedar Grove tenants. We are seeking Council's approval for this Temporary Use Permit so that we may proceed with our redevelopment at 210 Gorge Road E, and create an additional 51 units of affordable housing on that property. With the addition of the Mayfair Motel purchase, we will be achieving an additional 22 units of affordable rental housing stock within the City of Victoria.

Sincerely,

Kathy Stinson
Chief Executive Officer

cc:
Deanna Bhandar,
Director, Real Estate Development