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VANCOUVER, BC, CANADA V5X 0C3

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TOWNLINE.CA

April 22, 2021

Mayor & Council  
1 Centennial Square  
Victoria, BC  
V8W 1P6

**Re: Rezoning and Development Permit Application  
975, 983 Pandora Avenue / 1468 Vancouver Street**

Legal Description: LOT A LOTS 842, 843 AND 844 VICTORIA CITY PLAN VIP79484  
LOT 842, VICTORIA CITY, EXCEPT PARCEL B (DD 118179I) THEREOF

Dear Mayor and Council,

Townline Homes Inc. has submitted a combined rezoning and development permit application for 1468 Vancouver Street, on the corner of Pandora Avenue and Vancouver Street. Building on Townline's history of constructing quality homes (both market and non-market) in Victoria, and in continuing with our company's mandate to create meaningful and diverse housing for our communities, we are proud to propose our first purpose-built rental building in the Harris Green neighbourhood.

Along with offering one and two-bedroom market rental housing, we plan to maximize consumer choice by providing co-living rental units. This is a unique housing model, emphasizing intentional communities through shared housing and amenities, providing reasonably priced homes in an amenity rich living environment. Each co-living room will share a kitchen and dining space with the others in its pod.

Motivated by this mandate of providing market rental housing, we look forward to working in partnership with the City of Victoria to deliver a diversity of rental inventory product. We will be pursuing a 219 covenant – housing agreement with the City of Victoria. As such, we will be requesting that the City waive any CACs associated with the proposed bonus density in order to ensure the continued delivery of rental housing in Victoria.

Further to the need for market rental housing, is now a project that adapts to social distance living in a meaningful matter. We are not certain, but we believe this to be consistent with co-living and that creating a community that is safe and stable is more valuable than a transient lifestyle.

Townline has a strong history in the City of Victoria, having nearly completed all phases of The Hudson District over the past decade. Of the finished buildings, 3 are purpose-built rentals which continue to be a popular choice for those renting and are home to many long-term tenants. As a result, these projects have proved to be an effective model for Townline's rental buildings; they have provided insight into which unit types have the greatest demand, which amenities in rental buildings get utilized the most and

how to program our ground floor in order to successfully engage the streetscape. We are building on this collective expertise in order to create another successful rental building in downtown Victoria.

### Neighbourhood Context and Our Site

The Downtown Core Area Plan (DCAP), which includes the Harris Green neighbourhood, outlines a pedestrian friendly downtown core which remains well-connected, attractive, and provides a model for livable urbanism. We have kept this vision in mind as we progressed through the design development process, as our site sits on the corner of Pandora Avenue and Vancouver Street. The Harris Green Neighbourhood is in a phase of transition, with multiple new developments either under construction or being proposed:

- North
  - 1002 Pandora Avenue is a 5-storey mixed-use building currently under construction by BlueSky Properties.
  - 932 Pandora Avenue is a 10-storey mixed-use building currently under review by Kang & Gill Construction Ltd.
- East
  - 1415 Vancouver Street is a 3-storey office building, currently tenanted by the Government of Canada Tax Services branch
- South
  - 1400 Vancouver Street is a 16-storey mixed-use development proposed by Cox Developments. This project is directly to the South of our site. Through the design stages of our proposal, we have had continued communication with Cox Developments to ensure that our building designs and programming complement each other.
- West
  - 941 Pandora Avenue houses outreach and social services for adults and is owned by the Vancouver Island Health Authority. We have been in communication with these neighbours as well, working towards a crane swing and underpinning agreement to satisfy both parties. We have commissioned an acoustic report to assist us with identifying noise levels and mitigation solutions given the nature of the VIHA's program requirements and protocols. We will be in communication with program director John Braun and Robert Guenther.

Our site is comprised of 2 legal parcels located on the South-West corner of Pandora Avenue and Vancouver street, previously the location of the Seventh-Day Adventist Church and Photoprint Ltd. Together, they create a parcel size of 2,043.8 sq. meters. Both of these sites are currently zoned CA-43 and are designated for a maximum FSR of 5.50 in the DCAP. A unique attribute of this site is the Harris Green Park, which runs down Pandora Avenue from Quadra Street to Chambers Street; this park provides an attractive and effective separation from our site to the active vehicle and bicycle lanes on Pandora Avenue.

### Building and Landscape Design

Our project has been designed by Foad Rafii of Rafii Architects, who has an extensive history designing buildings in downtown Victoria. The proposed development will contain 121 residential units, in the form of a 4-storey podium and a 16-storey tower. This design, which includes the podium, successfully creates a primary street wall for the majority of the Pandora Avenue frontage and reduces the required size of the tower floorplate as much as possible while still utilizing the 5.50 FSR. By reducing the tower floorplate, the overall mass of the building is minimized from the street level which greatly improves the pedestrian experience. The residential unit breakdown is as follows:

- 43 x 1-bedroom suites
- 24 x 2-bedroom suites
- 4 x 3-bedroom co-living suites
- 38 x 4-bedroom co-living suites
- 12 x 5-bedroom co-living suites

On the corner of Pandora Avenue and Vancouver Street and extending down the Pandora frontage is the commercial space. This landmark corner provides excellent street frontage for commercial tenants, as it fronts on 2 arterial roads. Furthermore, extending the commercial space West down Pandora Avenue activates the street front, creating an engaging experience for passers by.

On the West side of the commercial space is the architectural breezeway which looks into the development's landscaped courtyard. Hidden outdoor spaces such as this are part of the character of downtown Victoria and we believe that creating an attractive sightline to this green space pays homage to the history of the Harris Green neighbourhood. Furthermore, while developing our plans, we have discovered that this breezeway also provides a welcomed open-air break to the otherwise omnipresent street wall which occupies any downtown core. We received comments at ADP regarding music room access and have improved accessibility to the music room from the breezeway by way of garage style overhead doors.

Other notable features of our project:

- An open-concept commercial/residential entrance way which provides the option of opening the space during business hours, creating a sense of community
- Private residents' courtyard with thoughtful programming including a dog run and multiple outdoor social spaces
- Resident amenities including a gym, bike workshop, social lounge, communal kitchen, and music room (all of which cater to the demands of urban renters)

The proposed design and programming were initially presented to City Planning Staff in August 2018 and again in November 2018. During both meetings we received valuable initial feedback and have successfully addressed the concerns which were raised. Since the initial review comments were received in January, 2019, there has been continued communication with staff in order to address the number of

constraints on this site. After receiving second round staff comments in April 2020, we have met with the City in regards to policy updates made to the City's Downtown Public Realm Plan and have updated our plans based on this discussion. Our most current submission, addresses third round staff comments as well as those comments received at ADP on November 25, 2020.

### Transportation

This proposal uses Victoria's new Off-Street Parking Regulations and meets all requirements for residential parking, commercial parking, bicycle parking, and visitor parking. Our proposal's parking count is as follows:

|                                     | Parking Requirement | Parking Proposed |
|-------------------------------------|---------------------|------------------|
| Residential Parking Stalls          | 101                 | 102              |
| Visitor Residential Parking Stalls  | 12                  | 12               |
| Commercial Parking Stalls           | 6                   | 6                |
| <b>Total Vehicle Parking</b>        | <b>119</b>          | <b>120</b>       |
| Long Term Bicycle Stalls            | 147                 | 271              |
| Short Term (Visitor) Bicycle Stalls | 14                  | 14               |
| <b>Total Bicycle Parking</b>        | <b>161</b>          | <b>285</b>       |

In the coming months, Vancouver Street is designated to become a AAA bike route with a separated bike lane on its West side. We are excited to be proposing a project which lies directly on this new bike route; within a 15-minute radius our tenants will be able to go as far east as Oak Bay, as far North as Quadra, or into Victoria West. As car ownership continues to decrease, this proposed development provides a central location for future tenants to reach a large portion of the greater Victoria area with a relatively short bike ride. When first introduced to the new bike route, we viewed it as a great opportunity to provide a development that promotes the usage of bicycles as opposed to single occupant vehicle trips. We have provided ample bike storage which will be designed to be well lit and easy to navigate. Furthermore, there is a dedicated stair which leads from the dedicated bike repair room to the bike storage rooms located on P1.

### Heritage

983 Pandora Avenue was the location of the Seventh-Day Adventist Church. In order to ensure any historical value was recognized and retained, we engaged Donald Luxton and Associates Inc. to complete a heritage assessment of the building. Officially dedicated in 1949 and designed in a Moderne Ecclesiastical style, the church was a reminder of the extended period of mid-century growth that Victoria sustained. Although the form, scale, and massing of the building was relatively unique, over the decades, various parts of original building form had been upgraded and replaced. Ultimately, the underlining architectural integrity had been compromised, including the replacement of the original windows.

After further review by our design team, we believe there are some interior design ques which we can incorporate into the new development. As a building that had been on a prominent corner of Victoria for 69 years, we feel it is pertinent to pay homage to the historical significance of the site as the neighbourhood develops into a modern streetscape.

### Community Benefit

One of the major benefits to the community is the provision of a purpose-built rental building so close to the downtown core. As the costs of living rise, access to developments which have been designed specifically for rental tenants will become increasingly desirable. As you may be aware, the rising costs of construction and project development are negatively impacting the business case behind purpose-built rental buildings. As uncertainty continues to rise, the potential continued cost increases would directly affect this project. With this in mind, we respectfully ask the City to waive any CACs associated with the requested bonus density in order to ensure the continued delivery of rental housing in Victoria. Referencing the City of Victoria's Density Bonus Policy, approved October 27, 2016 it is supported that purpose-built rental housing, secured by a rental housing agreement is exempted from the Amenity Contributions request.

With modern design and construction techniques, the pedestrian experience on this prominent corner of the Harris Green neighbourhood will be greatly improved, bringing it up to a modern standard which will last into the next century.

### Sustainability

Townline prides itself on being a down to earth company and leading the industry in green building design. We have various LEED certified projects throughout the lower mainland and although this proposed development does not seek LEED status, we plan on providing various environmentally friendly designs and features. Firstly, there is a courtyard and dog run on the ground floor which provides engaging greenspace and advocates an outdoor lifestyle which represents life in the Pacific Northwest. Secondly, as previously mentioned, we have provided ample bike parking in an effort to promote commuting via bicycle as opposed to vehicle; this development is in a very central location and the majority of the city can be reached relatively easily by bicycle. Finally, all common areas will be lit with LED fixtures and be

controlled by occupancy sensors. Not only do LED fixtures dramatically reduce electrical consumption, having them controlled by occupancy sensors greatly reduces the amount of time that 24/7 lights are on.

### Conclusion

Townline Homes Inc. is excited to propose a purpose-built rental tower with a unique diversity of rental units on the corner of Pandora Avenue and Vancouver Street. The Harris Green area is a neighbourhood in transition and we are proud to be a part of its transformation. We believe this proposal meets the needs of the City and residents alike, creating a development which fulfills the unique needs of rental tenants while being creatively designed to produce a positive pedestrian experience for the general public as well. Working in the City of Victoria has been a long-standing tradition for the Townline Group of Companies and we look forward to continuing this tradition with this development. We welcome all feedback regarding our proposal.

Sincerely,



Dave English  
Senior Development Manager  
Townline Homes Inc.