



1715 Government Street  
Victoria, BC  
V8W 1Z4

Mayor and Council  
City of Victoria  
No.1 Centennial Square  
Victoria, BC  
V8W 1P6

March 1, 2019

**Re: Rezoning Application – 975-983 Pandora Ave. Townline**

Dear Mayor Helps and Council,

The DRA LUC has reviewed the application for the proposed rezoning and hosted a CALUC meeting on October 11, 2018 for the above-mentioned application.

Based on the information presented by the applicant, the purpose of the rezoning is to construct a 16 storey 173 unit purpose built rental building with 5000 square feet of commercial space at grade. Parking will be provided in excess of Schedule C requirements.

Comments and concerns raised by the Committee members are as follows:

- When questioned whether the proposal would include supportive housing the applicant stated it was not their practice to include market with non-market housing
- When questioned whether the proposal would consider affordable housing the applicant stated that financing and economics for a market project and funding programs for affordable housing projects don't provide the opportunity to mix those easily.
- Attendees expressed concerns regarding exterior light pollution citing the example from the recently constructed tower at 1075 Pandora which has open halls and stairwells. It was noted that this proposal does not have exterior halls or stairwells so light pollution will be minimal.
- Attendees noted the DRA has supported 3 bedroom units in the mix to support families living downtown. The applicant responded that they were definitely considering some 3 bedroom units

- Attendees questioned the amount of parking to be provided despite the small units. The applicant stated that it is their experience at their other buildings that people with small units own cars and will park in the neighbouring streets if parking isn't provided onsite.
- Attendees noted that guardrails on every downtown tower are aluminum with clear glass that does not screen possessions from public view, is there any opportunity to explore adding obscure glass and pickets to the guards to make them a feature? Applicant responded "absolutely"
- It is unfortunate that the proposed green space being provided it is hidden from public view/enjoyment. It is also shadowed by an adjacent proposed building which appears not optimal.
- It is commendable that the application complies with Schedule C parking regulations. The recent process to update Schedule C provided fact based data to support the amounts of parking required by the various types of building tenure. These regulations should be upheld.
- Variances for setbacks are requested for this development. There are expectations from the community that this application shall comply with the City of Victoria foundational planning documents, the OCP, DCAP and Schedule C parking regulations.

Since the CALUC meeting took place, it is understood that the applicant is now seeking to be relieved of Community Amenity Contributions (CACs) required under the Density Bonus provisions of the OCP. The DRA LUC feels there is an essential need for all developments to contribute to the provision of amenities in order to accommodate the significant population increase in the downtown. Currently the funding of these essential amenities has fallen far behind the need.

The applicant represented that the proposed building would be the same quality and finishes as the Hudson Walk 2. The applicant has a strong record of constructing market rental buildings of decent quality that increases much needed rental inventory while providing adequate parking on site. The DRA supports high quality development that provides much needed rental accommodation in the Downtown Harris Green neighbourhood while complying with the City of Victoria's core planning policies.

Sincerely,



Ian Sutherland  
Chair Land Use Committee  
Downtown Residents Association

cc COV Planning

DRA CALUC MINUTES  
983 Pandora Project  
Townline  
October 13, 2018

Hudson Walk II – “...this building is ultimately very similar to our proposal...they’re going to be very similar in exterior finish...similar finishes, same fixtures”

Public Q&A

Q: Would you consider adding some supportive housing as a percentage? Is it negotiable potentially?

A: We have explored that but it gets tricky with negotiating who runs that and who runs our building. Often a non-profit has to be the operator and how that works in the building in terms of residential access to the building and parking is tricky. We have a sister company, TLHS, that works with non-profits to develop affordable rentals and supportive housing. We don’t typically mix market and non-market housing for a number of reasons.

Q: We’re not looking at only supportive housing but also affordable housing for seniors and single moms. If we’re going to have all these renters coming in, it would be great to have more affordable housing. You could work with the City to make that happen.

A: In the CRD, we have over 200 units under construction and another couple hundred in the works with Pacifica Housing and Cool Aid Society. The challenge is that the financing and economics for a market project and funding programs for affordable housing projects don’t provide the opportunity to mix those easily.

Q: With the housing crisis, if you could provide supportive housing, you would be the heroes of the day.

Q: How much parking would there be for commercial and visitors? How many spots will be available for the 165 residents?

A: Of the 165 parking spots, 10% (17 spots) will be visitor stalls. And for the commercial there will be 8 stalls.

Q: Mix of units sizes: so many one bed and 104 but would probably be more affordable. Would rather not see too many single people living between L2-L7; some diversity sound better. And you didn't mention a caretaker, will there be one?

A: There will be an onsite resident manager who will live in the building and will be there 24/7. Like our other buildings, there will be a two staff who will get a discounted rent, as opposed to building a dedicated caretaker suite.

Q: You said that there will be bike storage at grade, but as I walk down Vancouver, I want something pleasant to look at. What will that look like from the street? Retail and then the entrance and then?

A: It's still at its early stages. At the corner, there will most likely be an architectural concrete finish, painted. Our goal is to make the entire street wall an attractive place to walk by. Like Hudson Walk II. There are wide sidewalks, trees and lots of glazing. We plan to make it aesthetically pleasing (than what is shown). It won't be like you're walking along a concrete tunnel.

Q: I'm surprised that your not taking advantage of the government grants to put in affordable or low income housing.

A: I'm happy to chat with people after the meeting about the housing projects we're working on in the region.

Q: What about the glass canopies? Are you not concerned that people will be camping/hanging out?

A: It's not something we are overly concerned about because this is going to be an active commercial space. We're going into this project and this location with our eyes wide open. When Townline started developing the Hudson projects, that was the periphery of downtown. At the time there were issues with crime and loitering. We can only go forward with our best intentions to safe proof the building. The canopies serve a purpose of collecting rain and sheltering pedestrians so it's a double-edged sword.

Q: Will the public have access to the green space?

A: No, it is a private internal space.

Q: As to unit mix, the DRA has always promoted families living downtown. Is there an opportunity to have some 3-bedrooms units in this building?

A: It's definitely something we're discussing. We will be looking at providing at least some. This is the same as Vancouver. There aren't enough places for people that have two kids can live. It's something we're looking at.

Q: What are the unit sizes?

A: Junior 1-BD: 450 to 500 sq ft and 1-BD: 500 to 600 sq ft

Q: You alluded to the lighting. Could you elaborate on that? I live in the building next to Revenue Canada and we are bombarded by the lights from the building that was just put up at 1175 Pandora.

A: The owner of the company is very concerned about not creating problems for neighbours. The lighting that was mentioned, uses sensors, so any areas that the lighting is not needed, they are either dark or very dim. When someone enters the space, the lights come on. So we don't waste energy. We don't have any outdoor corridors. The building at street level will be well lit for wayfinding, safety and security.

Q: How many rental units are there exactly and how many parking stalls are for those units exactly?

A: Currently there are 165 residential units but that number may come down as we introduce some larger units. For parking, 176 total, 168 residential. About .9 stalls per unit, which is higher than Schedule C; about 50 stalls above the regulation.

Q: What's the reason for more parking when we're building smaller units, so many people may be single, within walking distance, can take the bus?

A: It's been our experience that while those things are true, a lot of people still have cars. Even while we encourage people to ride bikes, they still own cars. At Hudson Walk, the cars are there in the parkade getting dusty, but we don't want the cars to end up on the neighbourhood streets.

Q: Do you have (parking) spots for MODO?

A: That's something a lot of developments are looking into but I think it's something that ultimately ends up coming later from the resident manager running the building and the owner, seeing the opportunity arise. If it's underground parking and people in the building are using a car share program, it makes sense for the building to use parking spots that are there for car share. Car share challenge – secure parking means only the residents in the building can have access and none of the neighbours can use it.

Q: Do you have any concerns about being located down the street from Our Place and the safe injection site?

A: As Justin said, we're coming to this with our eyes wide open. We've seen what's happening in the neighbourhood day and night. We've opened a dialogue with Our Place to see if we can mitigate any problems going forward and work with them to help the people that are around. With Save-On opening (at St Andrews site), it will change the neighbourhood with more people walking around.

Q: The 16 stories, is that etched in stone? If St Andrews development can make a profit at 6 stories, why is it so necessary to go this high? We're getting so many of these towers everywhere, we're becoming like every other boring city.

A: The height of the building is outlined in the Downtown Core Area Plan. And that's the height the City has designated for this site. The height is in meters not floors; 45 meters. As to why we have to use that, it's economics of the business.

When buying the land, you're buying it based on what it's valued at and if it's valued at something that can go 45 m, that's what it's valued at. Density and heights permitted are outlined in DCAP and they change depending where the property is located. We have designed the building to conform to the community plan.

Q: What is the range of rental prices for the units?

A: 1 BD about \$1400 to \$1500. Prices vary according to views and size. Cheapest units are currently \$1000 and they go up from there. Every suite has laundry. Tenants can opt not to rent parking spots, so that brings their rent down. And some couples might want the extra parking, so they'll pay a premium to rent those spots.

Q: Are there going to be any e-charging spots?

A: We're starting to see demand for that and we're starting to put them in or at least future proofing the building by putting in conduit.

Q: Will this project have them (e-charging)?

A: We'll probably rough in the infrastructure for a couple spots for future use.

Q: Are there any variances as part of the application that you haven't disclosed?

A: We aren't looking for any variances from the bylaws but from the guidelines. Minor variances for setbacks. The guidelines require two levels of setbacks. We are just providing one of them.

Q: The guards on every downtown tower are aluminum with clear glass, is there any opportunity to explore adding to the guards to make them a feature. Not just clear glass to display everyone's stuff. Pickets. Some obscure. Hudson I – beautifully done.

A: Absolutely. A few other projects denser at the base, lighter at the top.

Q: How long do you think it'll take to build this? For 6 years we've been putting up with constant noise of construction?

A: We are hoping to coordinate construction time with neighbouring project. 18-20 months.

Q: This is a corner building on Vancouver & Pandora, but we're not seeing anything that highlights the corner as we often do. A diagonal cut provides interest for pedestrians. (Someone else says, "It looks like a warehouse.")

A: The corner is the entrance to the CRU and the other entrance is on Vancouver.

Comment: We hear from young people who say that small units are no longer affordable and that larger units with 2 or 3 bedrooms are more affordable as roommates or couples can share the rent. You've mentioned that you are looking to add some larger units and I think it will be a great way to address some of the aspects of affordability using a different approach.

Comment: I think the rooftop is a great idea, with green views for residents. Bike storage at grade and hopefully you have some options to increase that in your parking area.

Comment: Support larger units as mentioned, support that this is a bigger project of quality in a difficult location, support your rationale for lack of setback as response to saving the DiCastri building, everyone shifts a bit, agree we want to make sure people in their units still have their views without everyone seeing their bbqs from the street. In whole I think it's a quality project.