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MEMORANDUM

To: David Fullbrook – Merchant House Capital
From: Tim Shah, Senior Transportation Planner
Our File #: 2421.B01
Project: Victoria Press Building Parking Review
Date: September 2, 2021

Watt Consulting Group was retained by Merchant Housing Capital Inc to complete a parking review for the proposed redevelopment of the 2621 Douglas Street site (formerly the Times Colonist building), referred to as the “Victoria Press Building”.

The purpose of this memorandum is to comment on the expected parking demand of the proposed new land uses, determine the adequacy of the proposed supply, and identify suitable parking management and transportation demand management (TDM) strategies that could reduce site parking demand.

1.0 SITE LOCATION + CONTEXT

The site is located at 2621 Douglas Street in the City of Victoria. Historically, this site was the offices for the Times Colonist. It is currently designated as a heritage building. The following describes the context within which the site is located, and which partially defines the transportation options available:

- Planning Context | The site is located within the Humber Green Large Urban Village, per the City of Victoria Official Community Plan. The Large Urban Village will consist of low to mid-rise mixed-use buildings with wide sidewalks and transit service. The OCP also directs 40% of future population growth into Village and Centres, suggesting that this area may see significant redevelopment in future. In addition, as a heritage building,

there is relevant policy direction in Section 8 of the OCP (Placemaking – Urban Design and Heritage).¹ Specifically, policy 8.52 states the following:

“Continue to enable and support heritage conservation through incentives and allowances including, but not limited to: property tax reductions; grants; bonus density provision; and, zoning variances.”

The policy suggests that zoning variances such as parking, will be considered for heritage buildings including the subject site.

- **Walking** | The site is approximately 1 kilometre from downtown (10-15 minute walk). The site has a WalkScore of 96 – “Walker’s Paradise: Daily errands do not require a car”².
- **Cycling** | The site is located on Douglas Street where transit-cycling priorities lanes are located on both sides of the street. In addition, the site is located on the Kings-Haultain cycling corridor, which is part of the City of Victoria’s all ages and abilities bike network.³ This will include a traffic calmed neighbourhood bikeway along Kings Road / Haultain Street from Douglas Street to Richmond Road. This is anticipated to improve the cycling conditions along this corridor and make it easier / safer for future employees to cycle to the site.
- **Transit** | The subject site has excellent access to frequent transit. There is a northbound stop immediately in front of the subject site and a southbound stop on the far side of Douglas Street. These bus stops are served by over 18 bus routes that provide service to key employment hubs and destinations within the region including downtown Victoria, the University of Victoria, Camosun College, Swartz Bay, the West Shore (e.g., Colwood, Langford, and Metchosin), and Sidney. With access to a multiplicity of bus routes serving a variety of destinations, future employees can reliably use transit for both commuting and non-work trips.

¹ City of Victoria. (2017). Official Community Plan Section 8 (Placemaking – Urban Design and Heritage). Available online at: https://www.victoria.ca/assets/Departments/Planning-Development/Community-Planning/OCP/Replaced/OCP_Sec8_Jul2017_web.pdf

² More information about the site’s Walk Score is available online at: www.walkscore.com/score/2621-douglas-st-victoria-bc-canada

³ City of Victoria. (2020). Cycling. Available online at: <https://www.victoria.ca/assets/Community/Cycling/Appendix%20A%20-%20Kings-Haultain%20-%20approved%20design.pdf>

Douglas Street is identified as an exclusive corridor on the Rapid Transit Network (RTN). The RTN is intended to move high volumes of passengers between major regional destinations along key transportation corridors. The RTN will provide service frequency of 15 minutes or better between 7:00am to 10:00pm, 7 days a week. There are also priority bus lanes between Fisgard Street and Tolmie Avenue, which are helping to shorten travel times for passengers and increase the reliability of transit. Lastly, the applicant is proposing to upgrade the bus shelter on Douglas Street to a T4 shelter, which will include more passenger amenities. This will help increase the appeal of transit for future employees of the site along with other transit users who use the bus stop.

2.0 PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

The proposal includes four distinct land uses, as described below.

1. **Office** | A total of approximately 98,166 sq.ft. (9,120m²) of office space is proposed.
2. **Restaurant** | a rooftop restaurant (including patio) of 4,962 sq.ft. (461m²) is proposed.
3. **Commissary** | a cafe space, office and conference space, and commercial kitchen of 16,533 sq.ft. (1,536m²) is proposed.
4. **Distillery / Brewpub** | A distillery or brewpub is proposed consisting of approximately 6,619 sq.ft. (615m²) of production / manufacturing area, a retail sales area (i.e., beer shop), approximately 1,345 sq.ft. (125m²) in size, where customers could purchase growlers of beer from the brewpub, and a service / mechanical room approximately 9,052 sq.ft. (841m²).

2.1 PARKING SUPPLY

2.1.1 VEHICLE PARKING

The proposed vehicle parking supply for this development is 122 parking spaces.

2.1.2 BICYCLE PARKING

The applicant is proposing 92 long-term bicycle parking spaces and 48 short-term spaces. Ten of the 92 long-term bicycle parking spaces will be designed to accommodate a cargo bicycle, which are larger bikes that do not fit in a typical bike parking stall. Cargo bike parking will make it easier for future employees to park their cargo bikes, particularly for those who utilize a cargo

bike for dropping off / picking up children at daycare or school. In addition, 43 of the 92 long-term bicycle parking spaces will have access to 110V outlets to facilitate charging for electric bike users.

3.0 OFF-STREET PARKING REQUIREMENT

Per the City of Victoria’s Off-Street Parking Regulations (“Schedule C”), the minimum parking requirement is 214 parking spaces, as identified in **Table 1**. As such, 214 parking spaces is the expected parking demand for the site and the applicant is short 92 parking spaces.

The required bicycle parking for the site is 66 long-term spaces and 35 short-term spaces. The applicant is exceeding these requirements.

TABLE 1. SUMMARY OF OFF-STREET PARKING REQUIREMENT

Land Use	Quantity	Required Minimum Parking Supply	
		Rate	Total
Office, Village / Centre	9,120m ² (98,166 sq.ft.)	1 space per 55m ² floor area	166.8
Restaurant, Village / Centre	461m ² (4,962 sq.ft.)	1 space per 25m ²	18.4
Commissary			
Kitchen	1,356m ² (14,595 sq.ft.)	1 space per 140m ² floor area	9.6
Restaurant, Village / Centre	160m ² (1,722 sq.ft.)	1 space per 25m ²	6.4
Office, Village / Centre	20m ² (215 sq.ft.)	1 space per 55m ² floor area	0.36
Distillery / Brewpub			
Service / Mechanical	841m ² (9,052 sq.ft.)	1 space per 140m ² floor area	6.0
Industrial	615m ² (6,619 sq.ft.)	1 space per 140m ² floor area	4.3
Retail Sales	125m ² (1,345 sq.ft.)	1 space per 50m ² floor area	2.5
TOTAL			214

4.0 SHARED PARKING

Shared parking refers to a scenario where land uses have different peak parking demand periods. Under a conventional scenario, each land use would provide enough parking to satisfy its own peak parking demand. Under a shared parking scenario, parking supplies are shared and the total parking supply seeks to meet the peak parking demand of all land uses combined, rather than the combined peak demand for all land uses individually. All “shared” parking spaces must remain unassigned and available to all user groups included in the pool of shared parking spaces.

The office, restaurant, commissary and distillery / brewpub uses present an opportunity for shared parking, particularly among the visitor / customer parking spaces. The results of the shared parking analysis indicate that peak parking demand can be met with 15 fewer parking spaces (approx. 7% less) if the visitor / customer parking is shared between office, restaurant, commissary, and distillery / brewpub uses. This effectively reduces the demand to 199 parking spaces (see **Table 2**).

TABLE 2. SUMMARY OF OFF-STREET PARKING REQUIREMENT, WITH SHARED PARKING

Land Use	User Group	Peak Parking Demand	Peak Parking Demand (Sharing)*
Office	Employee	155	155
	Visitor / Customer	12	10
Restaurant	Employee	4	4
	Customer	14	8
Commissary	Employee	10	10
	Customer	6	1
Distillery / Brewpub	Employee	7	7
	Customer	6	4
Employee Demand		176	176
Visitor / Customer Demand		38	23
Total		214	199

*This estimate was developed based on recommendations from the Urban Land Institute’s Shared Parking manual that provides parking demand ratios for employees / visitors / customers for various commercial and institutional uses.

5.0 ON-STREET PARKING

An on-street parking analysis reported 82 on-street parking spaces in proximity to the subject site. Most on-street parking is restricted to 1 hour or 2 hours from Monday to Saturday between 8:00am and 6:00pm. Observations were completed in June 2018 during seven count periods at different times of the week and day.

Peak occupancy was observed on Wednesday June 6 at 10:00am when on-street parking was 59% occupied, with 34 spaces unoccupied. If results are isolated to include only one- and two-hour parking (i.e., exclude loading, 15- and 30-minute spaces), the peak observations found on-street parking at 66% occupancy with 24 spaces unoccupied. The analysis found that on-street parking is significantly under-utilized during evenings and weekends.

6.0 TRANSPORTATION DEMAND MANAGEMENT

Transportation demand management (TDM) refers to policies, programs, and services that influence whether, why, when, where, and how people travel.⁴ TDM initiatives typically aim to reduce single-occupant vehicle (SOV) trips and encourage sustainable travel options such as walking, cycling, public transit, and shared rides. Successful TDM initiatives can result in the reduction of parking demand, fewer vehicle trips, and associated benefits of decreased greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, improved personal health and well-being, reduced traffic congestion, and lower infrastructure costs.

6.1 SUBSIDIZED TRANSIT PASSES

6.1.1 OVERVIEW

As discussed above, the site has excellent transit access and as the Transit Future Plan becomes implemented, transit service is anticipated to improve significantly, which will make transit more appealing as a commuting option. The applicant could increase the appeal of transit by providing a subsidy. For example, the BC Transit “ProPass” program is a permanent bus pass purchased by an employee through payroll deductions. The program’s primary goal is to reduce rush-hour traffic by encouraging employees to use transit whenever possible. The program is currently offered in a select number of transit systems in the province including the

⁴ Transport Canada. (2011). TDM for Canadian Communities.

Victoria Regional Transit System and Kelowna Regional Transit System. The program grew by approximately 12 percent from 2018 to 2019, which indicates that transit ridership was growing in places such as Greater Victoria before the COVID-19 pandemic.⁵

An example of a successful subsidized transit pass is Royal Jubilee Hospital. The employer (Island Health) joined BC Transit's ProPASS program in 2009, which is a permanent bus pass purchased by an employee through payroll deductions. Island Health has nearly tripled the ProPASS subsidy since 2009, from \$5.54 per pay period in 2009 to \$17.50 in 2017 (representing a reduction of 48% from the monthly cost due to the subsidy). ProPASS enrollment has increased each year since the program was introduced. The program started in 2009/10 with just over 200 participants and by 2019/20 there were over 500 participants—a 150% increase in enrollment among Island Health employees. This has helped the hospital manage its vehicle parking demand challenges.⁶

6.1.2 RECOMMENDATION

Based on the ProPASS success in other major employers in the region, it is recommended that the applicant work with future commercial tenants of the site to enroll in the ProPASS program and provide an additional 10% discount on the monthly price. This would effectively lower the cost to approximately \$62.96 per month, representing a 25% discount from the regular cost of a monthly pass. Further incentivizing transit use among employees is anticipated to reduce parking demand. The research on transit subsidies and parking demand is not consistent and is influenced by factors such as the price of parking. However, available studies have reported that employers who have provided subsidized transit initiatives have seen reductions in driving mode share in the range of 8 to 20 percent.^{7,8,9}

⁵ Email correspondence with BC Transit Manager of Sales and Revenue on January 3, 2020.

⁶ Island Health. (2019). Carbon Neutral Action Report. Available at: <https://www.islandhealth.ca/sites/default/files/about%20us/documents/island-health-cnar-2019.pdf>

⁷ Smart Growth America. (2013). Transportation Demand Management: State of the Practice. Available online at: <https://smartgrowthamerica.org/app/legacy/documents/state-of-the-practice-tdm.pdf>

⁸ Shoup, D. (2004). Eco Passes: An Evaluation of Employer-Based Transit Programs. UC Berkeley: University of California Transportation Center. Available online at: <https://escholarship.org/uc/item/3t2037jb>

⁹ City of Seattle. (2008). Best Practices in TDM. Available online at: https://www.ctc-n.org/sites/www.ctc-n.org/files/resources/07_seattle_best_practices_in_transportation_demand_management.pdf

Not every single employee will be required to join the ProPASS program; however, higher enrolment will increase the share of employees using transit to commute to and from the site. The applicant will need to work with BC Transit and future commercial tenants to promote and encourage enrolment in the ProPASS program. Further, it is also recommended that the applicant work with BC Transit to create a more detailed implementation plan that identifies the number of passes and the total discount that will be provided.

A 15% reduction in employee parking demand is supported if the applicant commits to an additional 10% discount to the ProPASS program. The 15% reduction is only supported if the applicant can successfully work with commercial tenants to enroll in the ProPASS program.

6.2 TRANSIT SHELTER

6.2.1 OVERVIEW

The applicant is proposing to include a Type 4 transit shelter on Douglas Street. According to BC Transit's Transit Shelter Program, a Type 4 (or T4) shelter is typically intended for park and ride facilities, small transit exchanges, or stops with high levels of passenger boardings per weekday (400+).¹⁰

The provision of a high-quality transit shelter is an important part of the overall transit experience. Transit passengers often cite bus stops as a barrier to transit use due to poor quality shelters, inadequate lighting or other design and infrastructure characteristics. Further, research has reported that shelters and improvements at bus stops were among the top five enhancements needed to encourage new riders to transit who are currently using other modes of travel.¹¹



Examples of T4 shelters, cantilever base shelter (left) and standard base shelter with extra panel (right). Source: BC Transit, 2020

¹⁰ BC Transit. (2020). Transit Shelter Program. Available online at: <https://www.bctransit.com/documents/1529710350967>

¹¹ Ibid.

6.2.2 RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the applicant commit to providing a T4 shelter, which will help increase the appeal for employees, customers, and visitors of the subject site along with others in the neighbourhood. A T4 shelter is anticipated to help support transit use at the site and bolster the implementation of the ProPass program, making it more feasible for the program to be used by future commercial tenants throughout the life of the development. As a result, this will help reduce vehicle parking demand.

Due to limited research on this topic, a 1% reduction in employee parking demand is supported if the applicant provides a T4 shelter.

6.3 ELECTRIC BICYCLE PARKING

6.3.1 OVERVIEW

Electric Bikes (E-bikes) are an emerging transportation phenomenon that are gaining popularity worldwide and within the Capital Region. With supportive cycling infrastructure in place, E-bikes have the potential to substitute for, or completely replace, almost all trips taken by a gasoline powered car, which could address congestion issues and mitigate parking challenges within urban areas. Cargo electric bikes are also gaining popularity, especially among young families who could transport their children and groceries, for example. Even though e-bike ownership is growing locally, research has reported that one of the main barriers facing prospective E-bike users is the lack of secure parking available, which is critical for helping minimize theft of the electric bike.¹²

6.3.2 RECOMMENDATION

Based on correspondence and recommendations to the applicant, they will commit to the following:

1. **Cargo Bike Parking** | 10% of the long-term bicycle parking spaces (10 spaces) will be designed for cargo bikes, which are harder to fit in a standard bike rack where the stall depth is 1.8 metres. Cargo bikes can be as long as 2.5m. Cargo bikes are typically longer

¹² WATT Consulting Group. (2018). Capital Region Local Government Electric Vehicle + Electric Bike Infrastructure Backgrounder. Available at: https://www.crd.bc.ca/docs/default-source/climate-action-pdf/reports/electric-vehicle-and-e-bike-infrastructure-backgrounder-sept-2018.pdf?sfvrsn=a067c5ca_2

than regular bicycles because they are capable of carrying cargo and/or multiple passengers and can be a popular option for young families.

2. **Access to Charging** | About 47% of the long-term bicycle parking spaces (43 spaces) will have direct access to an 110V wall to help facilitate charging for e-bike owners and/or prospective e-bike owners.
3. **Security** | All of the e-bike parking spaces will be in a secure facility to alleviate bike theft.

A 5% reduction in employee parking demand is supported as the applicant is committing to provide electric bike parking.

6.4 END-OF-TRIP CYCLING FACILITIES

6.4.1 OVERVIEW

Bicycle end-of-trip facilities further encourages the use of cycling. These facilities typically contain change rooms and showers, bicycle repair tools, and personal lockers. The provision of end-of-trip facilities has the potential to reduce parking demand. Providing showers and clothing lockers at workplaces has been found to be effective at encouraging bicycle use, particularly among commuters who require professional clothing attire.¹³

6.4.2 RECOMMENDATION

Consideration should be given to providing shower and change facilities to encourage cycling among employees. Shower / change facilities should be provided consistent with the City of Victoria's Bicycle Parking Strategy.

The following are key considerations:

- No less than one shower for each gender for every 30 long-term bicycle parking spaces;
- No less than one locker per long-term bicycle parking space, distributed by gender;
- Wash basins (i.e., sinks) shall equal the number of showers provided; and
- Additional showers and lockers are warranted if the building will include a fitness facility.

¹³ City of Victoria. (2011). Bicycle Parking Strategy. Available at:

<http://www.victoria.ca/assets/Departments/Engineering~Public~Works/Documents/parking-bicycle-strategy.pdf>

The provision of end-of-trip facilities is expected to reduce parking demand by approximately 3 to 5% among employees.¹⁴

A 5% reduction in employee parking demand is supported if the applicant commits to providing end-of-trip facilities.

6.5 ADDITIONAL LONG-TERM BICYCLE PARKING

6.5.1 OVERVIEW

The applicant is committing to provide 92 long-term bike parking spaces. This exceeds the Schedule C requirement by 26 spaces (or about 39%). The provision of additional bicycle parking spaces can support employees to satisfy potential bicycle demand in the present and future. Insufficient bicycle parking is considered a key barrier to promoting cycling, with additional bicycle parking associated with an increase of cycling by 10 to 40%.¹⁵

6.5.2 RECOMMENDATION

Based on correspondence and recommendations to the applicant, they are committing to provide 92 long-term bike parking spaces.

A 2% reduction in employee parking demand is supported for every additional 10% of long-term bicycle spaces provided beyond what is required in Schedule C.¹⁶

6.6 PRICED PARKING

6.6.1 OVERVIEW

Given the urban location of the proposed development and its access to several transportation options, consideration should be given to priced parking for employees. Priced parking is the most effective demand management tool to reduce parking demand. The overall impact of priced

¹⁴ Victoria Transport Policy Institute. (2015). Parking Management: Strategies for More Efficient Use of Parking Resources. Available at: www.vtpi.org/tdm/tdm28.htm#_Toc128220491

¹⁵ Hein, E. & Buehler, R. (2019). Bicycle parking: a systematic review of scientific literature on parking behaviour, parking preferences, and their influence on cycling and travel behaviour. *Transport Reviews*, 39(5).

¹⁶ This estimate was derived from the City of Vancouver's Transportation Demand Management for Developments in Vancouver, which is available online at: <https://vancouver.ca/files/cov/transportation-demand-management-for-developments-in-vancouver.pdf>

parking on demand may differ based on a range of factors including the specific land use type and availability of other transportation options, for example. However, what is clear is that parking demand tends to decrease as the price increases.

Coordination with the employers of the businesses that will lease the commercial spaces is required for this measure, which may result in challenges administering priced parking. If an agreement were in place that ensured priced parking would be in effect for the proposed development and employers committed to such a measure, based on the research below, a 20% reduction in parking demand would be supported. The size of the reduction could be larger depending on the price of parking.

The reduction in employee parking demand resulting from priced parking will also vary depending on price. Numerous studies have found parking demand reductions of 20% to 30% where employee parking is priced at market rates (varies by community), with reductions ranging anywhere from 10% to 50%.¹⁷ Further, priced parking has also been shown to have impacts on mode choice. One study estimated that with free parking in place, 62% of commuters would drive alone and 22% would use transit; however, with a \$6 daily parking fee, single occupancy vehicle travel dropped to 46% and transit use increased by 50%.¹⁸

6.6.2 RECOMMENDATION

The site is in proximity to two Robbins Parking sites including 2606 Douglas Street (across the street from the subject site) and 2230 Government Street. Both lots have monthly paid parking in effect ranging from \$125 per month for unreserved stalls to \$150 per month for reserved stalls.¹⁹ Assuming \$150 is the market rate for monthly parking, it is recommended that this rate be adopted at the subject site to manage parking.

A 20% reduction in employee parking demand is supported if the applicant commits to priced parking for employees.

¹⁷ Transportation Research Board. (2005). Transit Cooperative Research Program, Parking Pricing and Fees: Traveler Response to Transportation System Changes, Report 95, Chapter 13, 2005; Page 13-15, Table 13-9. Available online at: www.trb.org/Publications/TCRPRReport95.aspx

¹⁸ Hess, D. B. (2001) Effect of free parking on commuter mode choice: evidence from travel diary data. Transportation Research Record 1753: 35-42.

¹⁹ The Robbins Parking Locator is available online at: <https://robbinsparking.com/parking-locator/>

6.7 TDM SUMMARY

A summary of the proposed TDM measures and parking reductions is provided in **Table 3**. An employee parking reduction of 50% is supported if all the proposed TDM measures are provided. This represents a reduction in the estimated employee parking demand by 88 spaces. With TDM and shared parking, the total site parking demand is 111 spaces, which is 11 spaces lower than proposed supply (122 spaces).

TABLE 3. SUMMARY OF ESTIMATED PARKING DEMAND WITH TDM

TDM Measure	Parking Demand / Reduction
Estimated Employee Parking Demand, Baseline	176 spaces (per Table 2)
Total Employee Parking Demand Reduction	-50% (-88 spaces)
Subsidized Transit Pass	-15%
T4 Transit Shelter	-1%
Electric Bike Parking	-5%
End-of-Trip Facilities	-5%
Additional Long-term Bicycle Parking	-4%
Priced Parking	-20%
Estimated Employee Parking Demand with TDM	88 spaces (176 – 88)
Estimated Visitor / Customer Parking Demand	23 spaces (per Table 2)
Total Site Parking Demand with TDM	111 spaces (88 + 23)
Proposed Parking Supply	122 spaces
Difference	+11

7.0 SUMMARY

The purpose of this memo is to quantify the expected parking demand associated with the proposed redevelopment of the 2621 Douglas Street site (“The Victoria Press Building”) to include office, a distillery / brewpub, commissary, and a restaurant.

The proposed parking supply for the site is 122 spaces. The required minimum parking supply under the City of Victoria’s Schedule C regulations is 214 parking spaces (92 greater than proposed). The total parking supply necessary to meet the Schedule C requirements may be reduced by approximately 15 spaces (199 spaces) if the visitor / customer parking associated with the office, restaurant, commissary, and distillery / brewpub uses is shared (i.e., unassigned).

The review of on-street parking conditions determined that short-term parking nearby the site experiences moderate occupancy during a weekday mid-day and may appeal to customers / visitors of the site. All nearby on-street parking experiences low occupancy during evenings and weekends and may appeal to restaurant patrons during these periods.

Six TDM strategies are recommended including: [a] subsidized transit passes, [b] T4 transit shelter [c] electric bike parking [d] end-of-trip facilities [e] additional long-term bicycle parking and [f] priced parking. If the applicant committed to all six TDM strategies, an employee parking reduction of 88 spaces would be supported. The combination of a shared parking arrangement and the adoption of the recommended TDM measures could lower site parking demand to 111 parking spaces, which would be 11 spaces under the proposed parking supply.

Please contact me if there are any questions or comments regarding this memorandum. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Watt Consulting Group



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