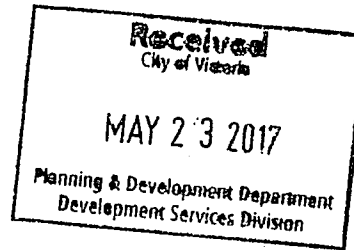


## Attachment E

May 17, 2017

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



### RE: MOUNT EDWARDS COURT APARTMENTS (1002 VANCOUVER STREET) REZONING APPLICATION

Dear Mayor Helps & Council:

CitySpaces Consulting, on behalf of the BC Rental Housing Corporation (BC Housing) and the Victoria Cool Aid Society (Cool Aid), is pleased to submit this application to rezone the Mount Edwards Court Apartments.

#### THE PROPOSAL

This application proposes rezoning the property, located at 1002 Vancouver Street, from its current R-K Medium Attached Dwelling zone to a new site-specific residential zone that would accommodate up to 93 permanent housing units for seniors aged 50+ (78 supportive and 15 affordable rental), and have 24/7 staffing.

The supportive housing units will provide a range of on-site, non-clinical supports, such as life skills training, and connections to primary health care, mental health, or substance use services. Tenants will be helped to stabilize their lives, enhance their independent living skills, and reconnect with their communities.

The affordable rental units will be fully self-contained, and meet CMHC's 80th percentile in terms of the average rental rate in the region, providing much needed rental stock.

A Heritage Designation is also sought as part of this rezoning.

#### BACKGROUND

The Mount Edwards Court Apartments were originally built as market residential units in 1911, but the building eventually served as a care facility for more than 30 years. Operated by the Baptist Housing Society until the fall of 2014, the facility had 83 independent residential rooms, with a greater number of beds and ancillary facilities. According to Baptist Housing, its daytime staff contingent was about 30. The property remained vacant until February 2016.

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Cool Aid optioned the property in the summer of 2015, and BC Housing ultimately purchased Mount Edwards in early 2016.

The Province's acquisition of the property was in response to the "tent city" crisis. With due diligence already completed by Cool Aid, and with the building vacant, Mount Edwards was easily renovated and occupied to address the urgency of finding housing for "tent city" residents.

The Victoria Cool Aid Society was chosen by BC Housing to operate the building, and on February 23, 2016, the first floor of Mount Edwards was reopened, accommodating 38 residents (most from "tent city") with transitional housing. Since then, 60 people have occupied the premises, and 18 of the original residents have moved on to permanent housing.

With an ideal location in a mixed-residential neighbourhood, Mount Edwards is close to downtown, with convenient walking access to a full spectrum of wellness, recreation, and commercial services. Because it is already zoned residential, the property provides a significant opportunity for the phased conversion into permanent supportive and affordable rental housing uses, which are consistent with the City of Victoria's land use policies.

#### **ABOUT THE OPERATOR: VICTORIA COOL AID SOCIETY**

Cool Aid's mission is to provide housing, shelter, health, and employment services to the region's most vulnerable population, and is committed to doing what it can to eliminate homelessness in Victoria.

- Founded in 1968, Cool Aid has a long history of working with the region's most disadvantaged. Overseen by a Board of Directors elected from the community, Cool Aid employs more than 300 trained staff, who are committed to working with its clients/ residents, and the community in a professional, respectful, and non-judgemental way.
- Including the current operations at Mount Edwards, Cool Aid operates 13 supportive and affordable housing buildings, accounting for 457 residential units throughout the region. Four of its buildings (Fairway Woods, Hillside Terrace, Olympic Vista, and Cottage Grove) offer supportive and affordable housing for seniors. Cool Aid also operates three permanent shelters, which house approximately 125 residents, as well as other seasonal shelters.
- The Access Health Centre, co-owned with AIDS Vancouver Island, features the Cool Aid Community Health Centre, providing integrated primary health care, counselling, pharmaceutical, and dental services to disadvantaged/low income residents.
- Cool Aid's REES Mental Health and Employment Centre operates the Community Casual Labour Pool, the Every Step Counts Running Program, and provides outreach, counselling, and volunteer opportunities.



- Cool Aid's Downtown Community Centre offers thousands of individuals, including Cool Aid Tenants and clients, a variety of free recreation, food, arts, and vocational training opportunities.
- Cool Aid (and members of its staff) has been honoured on numerous occasions for its compassionate commitment to caring for those who are disadvantaged, or need support and guidance to help them through physical and mental health issues and addictions.
  - 2009 | Cool Aid and its Next Steps Transitional Shelter received a "good neighbour" award from the North Park Neighbourhood Association;
  - 2010 | Cool Aid and AIDS Vancouver Island receive an Award of Merit from the Hallmark Society for the Access Health Centre building's heritage restoration;
  - 2012 | Kathy Stinson (Cool Aid's CEO) was honoured with the inaugural United Way of Greater Victoria Award for Collaboration and Partnership; and
  - 2013 | Cool Aid received the Victoria Foundation's Community Leadership Award
  - 2016 | Kathy Stinson was honoured with a Longevity of Leadership Award, sponsored by the Victoria Foundation's Andrew D. Beckerman Fund.

## **PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT**

Since Cool Aid announced its initial vision for redeveloping Mount Edwards in the late fall of 2015, there has been anger and fear about the existing situation and the proposed project from neighbours and Christ Church Cathedral parents and staff. This was exacerbated by the Province's purchase of the property, and Cool Aid's subsequent provision of transitional housing and supports in February 2016. Many neighbours support housing for people who are struggling 'somewhere else'. There have been concerns, many reiterated in the Community Meeting Report from the Fairfield Gonzales CALUC, regarding:



- The project's proximity to the School, and the safety of the children, and the neighbourhood in general;
- The project's potential density;
- The profile of current and future Mount Edwards' residents, and who is accountable for any incidents that may occur in or around the building;
- The possible contravention of provincial laws and commitments; and
- The amount of communication with the surrounding neighbourhood about future plans.

To address these concerns, over the past year, BC Housing and Cool Aid have:

- Maintained an ongoing dialogue with Christ Church Cathedral School;
- Met with Christ Church Cathedral School officials on numerous occasions;

- Facilitated a regular neighbourhood meeting process (unfortunately these meetings were continually focused on concern and anger about “tent city”, so the process was eventually abandoned);
- Cool Aid continued to offer the neighbourhood 24/7 access to Mount Edwards’ staff to address any concerns, and remained open to facilitating tours and meeting neighbours on an individual basis;
- Hosted a Public Open House about the plans for the new building on April 18, 2017:
  - Neighbours within 150 metres of 1002 Vancouver Street, including Christ Church Cathedral and Christ Church Cathedral School, were invited to attend.
  - Feedback was received in the form of “post-it” notes and comment forms, the transcript of which is attached to this application, as are copies of the presentation materials used.
- Presented plans for the new building to the Fairfield Gonzales Community Association Land Use Committee Meeting on April 24, 2017, which according to the Community Meeting Report, approximately 150 people attended. The summary of that meeting is provided in a separate report.

#### **RESIDENTIAL USE CONSIDERATIONS/RESTRICTIONS**

As a result of the public engagement process outlined above, BC Housing agrees to register a Section 219 Covenant (Land Title Act), or a Section 483 Housing Agreement (Local Government Act) with the City that includes the following criteria for Mount Edwards:

- A maximum of 78 supportive housing units;
- A maximum of 15 affordable rental housing units;
- All residents will be over the age of 50;
- Potential supportive housing residents will be subject to a VAT (vulnerability assessment tool) assessment to determine their eligibility, and only those who meet a low-to-moderate support requirement will be admitted. Typically residents will have, or have had, one or more of the following characteristics:
  - Issues of poverty;
  - Chronic physical health needs;
  - Management of a mental illness, or brain injury, and/or overcoming social isolation;
  - Moderate cognitive challenges; and
  - Have historically struggled with alcohol or substance use, and are currently working on recovery.
- Illicit substance use will not be permitted on the premises.



- 24/7 staffing , including a full-time Client Services worker to assist supportive housing residents with:
  - Building positive relationships with fellow residents and neighbours
  - Maintaining a safe and clean housing unit;
  - Setting and maintaining goals;
  - Facilitating employment training;
  - Finding volunteer or recreational opportunities;
  - Reconnecting with families; and
  - Arranging outside appointments.

#### **Security Plan for Supportive Housing Units**

Security is an important community consideration. Cool Aid and BC Housing commit to the following protocols for Mount Edwards:

- With a target of December 31, 2017, all current Mount Edwards' residents who do not meet the new requirements will be relocated to other housing projects appropriate for their needs;
- All residents will under go the VAT screening process to ensure there is no history of violence, or current problematic substance use;
- A minimum of three (3) staff will be on the premise at all times;
- The building will be fully monitored both inside and out, and the entrance secured and controlled by staff;
- Guest privileges will be monitored at all times, and may be revoked if security plan protocols are violated;
- Pets are permitted only if they are suitably cared for and managed; and
- Excessive noise or disturbances will not be permitted.



## LAND USE POLICY

The proposed repurposing of the existing Mount Edwards building meets many policy objectives of the City's *Official Community Plan*, including:

### Section 6: Land Management & Development

- *Designation:* Core Residential
- *Built Form:* Multi-unit residential, commercial and mixed-used buildings from three storeys up to approximately 20 storeys.
- *Place Character Features:* Three to five storey building facades define the street wall with upper storeys set back above; buildings set close to the street to define the public realm along retail streets, with landscaped setbacks in more residential areas, wide sidewalks, regularly spaced tree planting.
- *Uses:* Diverse housing types, including low, mid, and high-rise multi-unit residential and mixed-use; commercial, including office and visitor accommodation; home occupations; institutional and complementary uses.
- *Density:* Total floor space ratios ranging from 2:1 up to approximately 3.5:1 for the areas: east of Cook Street; and, south of Meares Street/east of Quadra Street/west of Cook Street.

### Section 7: Transportation & Mobility

- Consider reductions in parking requirements where:
  - 7.12.1 Geographic location, residential and employment density, housing type, land use mix, transit accessibility, walkability, and other factors support non-auto mode choice or lower parking demand; and,
  - 7.12.2 Activities and circumstances of land uses, structures or buildings include the provision of a comprehensive suite of permanent on-site alternative travel supports and active transportation infrastructure, including such things as short-term and long-term bicycle parking facilities including shower and locker facilities, ride-sharing, car-share co-ops, payroll transit passes and other automobile trip reduction measures.



### Section 8: Placemaking – Urban Design & Heritage

#### *Broad Objectives:*

- 8 (i) That heritage values are considered in land management at every scale from sites to local areas.
- 8 (j) That heritage property is conserved as resources with value for present and future generations.

#### *Areas & Districts:*

- 8.28 Maintain and enhance the heritage character of the Urban Core through incentives that support:
  - 8.28.1 Conversion of upper storeys of heritage-designated properties from non-residential uses to residential.

#### *Buildings & Sites:*

- 8.52 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.

### Section 13: Housing & Homelessness

#### *Goals:*

- 13 (A) All residents have access to appropriate, secure, affordable housing.
- 13 (B) A wide range of housing types, tenures, and prices gives residents choices.

#### *Broad Objectives:*

The housing and homelessness policies of this plan collectively address five broad objectives:

- 13 (a) That housing development that responds to future demand is facilitated through land use policies and practices.
- 13 (b) That housing affordability is enabled for housing types across the housing spectrum, particularly for people in core housing need.
- 13 (c) That the existing supply of rental housing is expanded through regeneration.
- 13 (d) That a wide range of housing choice is available within neighbourhoods to support a diverse, inclusive and multigenerational community.
- 13 (e) That partnerships enable stable housing with appropriate support services.

#### *Housing Affordability in General:*

- 13.3 Focus the City's efforts and resources on housing options that help people move beyond temporary shelter or housing to more permanent housing, greater self-reliance, and stable employment or income.
- 13.4 Consider all available tools to encourage more affordable housing across the housing spectrum.
- 13.5 Encourage new housing initiatives that partner with other levels of government, agencies, private industry, community organizations and individuals to maximize shared expertise and resources and to help achieve new affordable housing initiatives.

#### *Housing Diversity:*

- 13.17 Secure commitments to market and non-market residential dwelling units in designated heritage properties through the review and approval of heritage revitalization agreements and housing agreements.
- 13.18 Continue to develop incentives to support the rehabilitation and conversion of designated commercial, institutional and industrial designated heritage buildings to residential or residential mixed uses.



#### *Transitional, Supported & Non-Market Rental Housing:*

- 13.20 Continue to work in partnership with all levels of government, public agencies, crown corporations, organizations and the private sector to identify and leverage properties for the provision of non-market housing, including innovative approaches to blend non-market housing with other housing types and uses.

#### *Addressing Homelessness:*

- 13.37 Continue to work with coordinated community and regional efforts to end homelessness and enable stable housing with support services for people who are homeless or at-risk-of-homelessness, within the limits of the City's mandate and resources.

## Section 15: Community Well-Being

### *Community Safety:*

- 15.23 Work collaboratively with community service providers and other partners in the design of facilities and delivery of services to meet the needs of clients and those of surrounding residents, businesses and the different users of public space.
- 15.24 Seek to address problematic substance use in a coordinated way that considers public health and public order by supporting the efforts of government, agencies, the health authority, Victoria Police Department, business and community organizations to take a coordinated, comprehensive Five Pillars approach that:
  - 15.24.4 Supports access to safe, affordable and quality housing.

## Appendix A: Development Permit Areas & Heritage Conservation Areas

### *DPA 14: Cathedral Hill Precinct*

3. The special conditions that justify this designation include:
  - (a) The Cathedral Hill Precinct is a unique six-block area in the northwest corner of Fairfield. It is part of the Core Residential area, which is a major residential centre on the edge of a regional commercial and employment district. It has some capacity for growth through intensified multi-unit residential development....
  - (b) Medium density multi-unit residential and commercial development are identified in this plan for the west portions of the Cathedral Hill Precinct with built form and place character appropriate to an urban setting....
  - (c) As a transition area, the Cathedral Hill Precinct contains a diverse range of land uses, building types and forms, streetscapes, parks and open spaces and an irregular street grid pattern, resulting in built form and character that varies from block to block.
  - (d) There is a collection of heritage resources throughout the Precinct which contribute to its unique character....



Although the Neighbourhood Plan for Fairfield is currently being drafted, this proposal is in keeping with several of the emerging principles and directions developed to date, such as:

### Draft Shared Principles

2. Create more affordable housing
3. Maintain the low-rise feel and tree-lined streets in older residential areas

### Early Plan Directions for Housing

- Support new housing of different sizes, costs, tenures and forms to encourage a more diverse neighbourhood population.

### Early Plan Directions for Community Health & Wellbeing

- Encourage diverse housing forms to meet the needs of a wide range of future residents.



## **SUSTAINABILITY ASSESSMENT**

### **Economic Sustainability**

The renovated Mount Edwards' building will house 93 supportive and affordable housing units. With the current high real estate prices, increasing rents, and a low vacancy rate, providing additional housing in an area so close to downtown will have a positive impact on housing supply.

Supportive housing has proven to provide significant cost savings to the community, and society in general. The Greater Victoria Coalition to End Homelessness offers very succinct information on the economic advantages of providing housing by comparing the costs (capital and operating) of permanent housing versus those for shelter beds (<http://victoriahomelessness.ca/get-informed/fact-sheets/>). The savings described do not account for the additional costs incurred by the health care system or protective services.

### **Social Sustainability**

In addition to its mission to provide housing, shelter, health, and employment services to the region's most vulnerable population, Cool Aid is also committed to being a "good neighbour" to the wider community. Throughout the public engagement process, some neighbours shared their concerns about the safety of the neighbourhood, and some also suggested that Cool Aid has, in some way, misled or misguided neighbours about its operations at Mount Edwards, resulting in a "lack of trust".

For Cool Aid, it is extremely important to build and maintain strong and healthy relationships with the neighbourhoods in which it operates, as it has done for almost 50 years. Cool Aid is committed to an open door policy for Mount Edwards, and will provide tours of the building at any time with reasonable notice. If requested by the neighbourhood, BC Housing and Cool Aid will re-establish regular community meetings, and continue ongoing communications with Christ Church Cathedral School, Christ Church Cathedral, and neighbours.



There has also been some neighbourhood concern expressed about the number of supportive housing units proposed for Mount Edwards. The original building design lends itself to on-site enjoyment, and not to the congregation of residents on public property. Internally, the building contains several areas of social and recreational space, including a large interior courtyard and substantial open space on the north side of the building. These spaces provide ample "elbow room" for residents to occupy and assemble within the property itself.

Although the number of proposed units (supportive) will double from the existing 38 (transitional), it is currently very rare to see Mount Edwards' residents on the surrounding streets. The changes in housing type and tenant profile (seniors with low-to-moderate needs), combined with a mix of affordable rental accommodation will mitigate any perceived issues around concentration.

This combination of seniors supportive and affordable rental housing makes Mount Edwards a place where positive integration with the broader community can take place. The commitment to a Housing Agreement with the City, as well as the residency criteria for who will be living at Mount Edwards, will help ensure the social sustainability of the project and the neighbourhood.

#### **Environmental Sustainability & Heritage**

The Mount Edwards' building is currently listed on the City's Heritage Registry, and a Heritage Designation is proposed as part of this rezoning.

Constructed in 1911 and built in the Edwardian classical-style, an intrinsic part of Mount Edwards' physical character is the significant rooftop cornice. A two-storey addition at the rear was added in 1978/79, and while plain in its design, the addition's height and simplicity do not detract from the architectural integrity of the original building.

With a floor area density of just over 1.03:1, Mount Edwards has a total site coverage of 35%, and more than 60% landscape space. These numbers are very low when compare to other properties in the neighbourhood. In today's market high land values and residential demand, the site would be a strong candidate for redevelopment. This proposed rezoning will preserve Mount Edwards, and the landscaping that frames the building, with maximum on-site surface water drainage.

## SITE & BUILDING CHARACTERISTICS

CHARACTERISTIC	DESCRIPTION/UNIT	COMMENT
1	Legal Description	Lot 1, D.L. 57 Plan VIP 35568
2	Address	1002 Vancouver Street
3	Neighbourhood	Cathedral Hill Precinct Within Fairfield/Gonzales
4	Zoning	R-K Medium Attached Dwelling Permits residential, hospitals & nursing homes; limits density & unit size
5	Property Size	2,927 m <sup>2</sup> (31,506 sf) Located on corner of Vancouver Street & Rockland Avenue; slopes toward Vancouver Street
6	Building Size	<b>1<sup>st</sup> floor:</b> 1,114 m <sup>2</sup> /11,994 sf <b>2<sup>nd</sup> floor:</b> 1,128 m <sup>2</sup> /12,138 sf <b>3<sup>rd</sup> floor:</b> 777 m <sup>2</sup> /8,364 sf <b>basement:</b> 485 m <sup>2</sup> /5,220 sf <b>TOTAL:</b> 3,467 m <sup>2</sup> /37,319 sf Three storeys; 1970s addition only two storeys; large interior courtyard; large interior side yard setback; FSR = 1.03:1 (excluding basement and garage)
7	Services	All services & utilities are available No additional services required
8	Building Overall	basement: commercial kitchen & services 1 <sup>st</sup> & 2 <sup>nd</sup> floors: 83 care rooms 3 <sup>rd</sup> floor: vacant for many years Three-storey woodframe building with access to residential units via interior hallways & elevator
9	Heritage	Listed on City of Victoria Heritage Register Proposed for Heritage Designation
10	Parking	16 underground stalls Originally 17 underground stalls; one stall designated for additional storage; parking located below 1970s addition on west end of site off Rockland Avenue

## PROPOSED ZONING

The current zoning for the Mount Edwards' property is R-K Zone Medium Density Attached Dwelling District. Some parts of the physical building are legal non-conforming since the building and its previous uses existed long before the adoption of the City's Zoning Bylaw.

The proposed new zone would permit multiple residential unit use, as well as setback and siting provisions that match those of the existing building to ensure conformance with the City's Zoning Bylaw.

## FLOOR PLANS & ELEVATIONS

As evident from the plans and elevations submitted as part of this application, there is no intention of modifying the building's exterior appearance, except for some small improvements to revitalize its facade, and address minor existing issues relating to BC Building Code requirements. These improvements include: replacing windows and window awnings, upgrading and reinstating the exterior cornice, and removing the front glazing on the second floor to restore the front elevation to its original appearance, in response to the building's heritage status.

Interior improvements will include:

- Re-establishing the use of the third floor to accommodate 15 fully serviced units.
- Upgrading mechanical, electrical, and fire alarm systems.
- Re-organizing the interior walls on the first and second floors to accommodate 78 units (three of which will be fully accessible), each equipped with a small fridge, and some with kitchenettes; all will have, at minimum, a two-piece bathroom. Where possible, three-piece bathrooms will be installed.

Other interior changes related to building operations will include:

- Upgrading the existing shared lounge and activity rooms on the first two floors to include community kitchens;
- Installation of shared laundry, and some common shower facilities;
- Upgrading of existing common space to accommodate staff offices, resident support programs, and health services;
- Re-keying and electronic monitoring;
- Installation of two new stairways to provide access to the third floor, which is currently only accessible by elevator.

## TIMELINE

It is anticipated that the final occupancy of the building will be completed in two phases. Because the interior layout allows for relatively easy renovation, the intention is to have the second floor supportive housing units occupied by the end of 2017. Third floor renovations will take more time to plan and coordinate, and will be part of a future capital budget cycle.

## PARKING ANALYSIS

### Vehicle Parking Demand

Currently, at Mount Edwards, there are 17 underground parking stalls. The plan is add two of the existing stalls to a secured bicycle and scooter storage area, leaving a net of 15 vehicle stalls.

The following table is a summary of the current number of parking stalls available at all of Cool Aid's buildings in Greater Victoria, and the number of tenants in each building who have vehicles.

Building	Housing Type	# Units	# Stalls	# Tenants w. Cars
Cedar Grove	Supportive	21	6	1
Cottage Grove	Seniors (light support)	45	12	0
Desmond House	Supportive	27	0	0
Fairway Woods	Seniors Supportive	32	8	3
Hillside Terrace	Assisted Living	45	0	0
Johnson Manor	Forensics	20	4	0
Mike Gidora Place	Supportive	45	0	0
Mount Edwards	Transitional	38	16	0
Olympic Vista	Seniors Supportive	36	7	1
Pandora Housing	Supportive	40	0	0
Queens Manor	Supportive	36	6	0
Rock Bay Landing	Shelter/Transitional	23	6	0
Swift House	Supportive	49	0	0
TOTAL		457	65	5

Based on these numbers, the parking demand/need for supportive housing residents is negligible, and has been allocated at one space. The City's Schedule C requires five spaces for the affordable housing units. Additionally, three spaces are reserved for the 24/7 on-site staff.

The designated 15 spaces in the building provide ample parking for any fluctuations in tenant vehicle numbers, as well as spaces for visiting support services personnel.

ANTICIPATED VEHICLE PARKING DEMAND		
Supportive Seniors Housing Unit Spaces	78 units	1 space
Affordable Seniors Housing Unit Spaces	0.35 x 15 units	6 spaces
On-Site Staff Spaces	1 per person	3 spaces
	<b>TOTAL DEMAND</b>	10 spaces
	<b>TOTAL DESIGNATED</b>	15 spaces

#### Bicycle Parking Demand

Although vehicle parking is not an issue for Cool Aid's residents, bicycle (and some scooter) parking is important. At Mount Edwards, as per Schedule C, there is designated space in the underground parking area for a minimum of 20 Class 1 stalls. Additionally, six Class 2 stalls will be located adjacent to the underground parking entrance on Rockland Avenue for short-term resident or guest parking.


#### CLOSING

The intention of BC Housing and Cool Aid is to renovate and occupy all three floors of Mount Edwards. The building's size and siting, while non-conforming, existed prior to the adoption of the Zoning Bylaw, and are therefore be considered "legal non-conforming". No changes to the siting or size of the building are contemplated.

This application represents a special opportunity to maintain a historical building in the community while responding to the demand for permanent supportive housing, and affordable rental apartments in Victoria. We look forward to presenting this proposal to Council and committees, and demonstrating its many positive features

Should you require any further information, please do not hesitate to contact the undersigned (250-383-0304 x 22, [dstrongitharm@cityspaces.ca](mailto:dstrongitharm@cityspaces.ca)). If any additional information is needed relating to building operations, please contact Kathy Stinson, Chief Executive Officer of the Victoria Cool Aid Society (250-383-1977, [kstinson@CoolAid.org](mailto:kstinson@CoolAid.org)).

Sincerely,



Deane Strongitharm, MCIP, RPP

Attachs.

cc: Malcolm McNaughton, BC Housing & Kathy Stinson, Victoria Cool Aid Society