



STRONGITHARM CONSULTING LTD.

January 23, 2023

Mayor Alto & Members of Council  
City of Victoria  
1 Centennial Square  
Victoria, BC V8W 1P6

[RE: 422 Edward Street / 448 Wilson Street Rezoning Application](#)

Dear Mayor Alto & Council:

We are pleased to submit an application for Rezoning of 422 Edward Street and 448 Wilson Street to permit a proposed residential development comprising of 9 family oriented, 3-bedroom townhome units.

### 1. Site Background and Proposed Development Site

The proposed development is a 1,468m<sup>2</sup> parcel, located at 422 Edward Street and 448 Wilson Street in the Victoria West neighbourhood. The site fronts three streets; Wilson Street, Edward Street, and Russell Street. Russell Street is largely a pedestrian corridor that also provides driveway access to several homes.

The Victoria West Neighbourhood is comprised of a mix of housing forms. With its proximity to many amenities, the neighbourhood has attracted a number of small and larger scale infill developments, from detached to semi-detached to townhouses to small apartments. Some projects currently proposed within the vicinity of the site includes;

- "Wilson Commons", a 34-unit townhome/small apartment project with lock-off suites at 208 Wilson Street;
- A 10-unit townhouse project at 315 Edward Street and 811 Mary Street; and,
- A 31-unit rental apartment building on about a 929m<sup>2</sup> lot approved at public hearing in August 2022.

We believe the proposed townhouse project will be a positive addition to the diverse nature of the neighbourhood.

## 2. Land Use Policy

Land use policies in Victoria West are guided by two principle documents: The City's Official Community Plan (OCP) and the more recently adopted Victoria West Neighbourhood Plan.

The OCP and Victoria West Plan designates the site as "Traditional Residential". The OCP allows multi-unit buildings, including attached residential and apartments on arterial and secondary arterial roads, permitting townhomes. Specifically, Section 6.1.5 states that:

*"Traditional Residential consists primarily of residential and accessory uses in a wide range of primarily ground-oriented building forms including single, duplexes, townhouses and row-houses, house conversions, and low-rise multi-unit residential and mixed-use buildings up to three storeys in height located along arterial and secondary roads."*

The Victoria West Neighbourhood Plan has similar policies for, and encourages ground-oriented buildings up to 2.5 storeys, supporting ground-oriented townhomes. The Victoria West Neighbourhood Plan supports:

- More options for ground-oriented housing with access to on-site open space as an alternative to single detached houses;
- Townhouses on larger lots where the desired design qualities can be accommodated; and,
- Siting on corner lots or lots with laneways, on lots of at least 18m (60 ft) in width.

Both the OCP and the Victoria West plan supports a density of up to approximately a 1.0:1 floor space ratio. The Victoria West Plan encourages the retention and expansion of the urban forest.

The application is supported by policies and objectives contained in the OCP and the Victoria West Plan.

## 3. Proposed Project Overview

The application requests rezoning from the R-2 (Two Family Dwelling District Zone) to a site-specific RK-VW2 zone. With its 3 street frontages and nearly 1,500m<sup>2</sup> lot area, the site is a prime candidate for infill townhomes. A key feature is the proposed unit sizes. All townhomes will be family-oriented, 3-bedroom units with each bedroom having access to its own bathroom. The project proposes 9 townhomes split into 2 buildings to: (1) eliminate a continuous single row effect; (2) support retention of some mature trees on the site; and, (3) minimize parking impacts

by conveniently locating the parking area between the two buildings to minimize driveway and parking site coverage.

Table 1 and 2 below provide an overall summary of the proposed project.

Table 1 - Project Summary

	Site Area (m <sup>2</sup> )	Zoning	Floor space Ratio	% Lot Coverage	Open space	Total Units	Storeys	Height (m)
Existing R-2 zone	2 lots 1,467.7	R-2	N/A	40%	N/A	4	2	7.6 m and 11 m for public buildings
Proposed	1,467.7	Site specific RK-VW2	0.94:1	36%	45.3%	9	2.5	10.44m & 10.25m

Table 2 - Unit Mix

Number of Townhomes	Bedrooms	Area (m <sup>2</sup> )	Total Area (m <sup>2</sup> )	FSR
9	3 Bedroom	147	1,324	0.94:1

### 3.1 Natural Site Condition

The site and site access is characterized by the presence of mature trees both on-site and within the Russell Street right-of-way. The property is slightly crowned in the middle of the property with a more acute crowning within the Russell Street right-of-way. The right-of way is also characterized by prominent rock outcroppings, is heavily treed, and has a modest pedestrian pathway linking Wilson Street with Edward Street.

The townhomes have been sited to minimize impacts on the urban forest. Working with the project arborist, the building design has been tailored to the site characteristics, proposing narrower townhomes that face a new public connector pathway. Setbacks for the 2 townhouse buildings are staggered, specifically to protect the Chestnut trees along the western property line and mature Douglas Fir trees along the eastern property line. Siting of the buildings and other off-site infrastructure has also taken into account the tree canopy and root zones of the mature trees within the Russell Street right-of way.

### 3.2 Public Pedestrian Pathway Along Russell Street

A lot of consideration has been paid to develop a new pedestrian pathway connection between both Wilson and Edward Street. The current pathway is a modest, meandering pathway that has developed “over time”, simply by the public forging a route in the most convenient way possible. It meets no City standard and does not conform with universal accessibility requirements. A new pathway, offered as a Community Amenity, has been designed with the central objective of minimizing impacts on the mature trees and limiting impact on the prominent rock outcroppings in the right-of-way, thus limiting major blasting that would need to take place to keep the pathway within the road right-of way.

A new, accessible pathway is proposed that will have a small portion sited within the subject lot. Where this occurs, it would be controlled by way of registered easement, a common approach to mitigating site conditions. This approach will provide a new hard-surface, accessible pathway and protect most of the natural condition.

### 3.3 Parking and Bicycle Management

Nine parking stalls are proposed, one for each unit, sited between the two buildings. The on-site driveway and parking area will be built with permeable pavers to allow for natural drainage and mitigate disturbance to tree root zones. The parking area will be screened using a combination of cedar wood arbours and climbing shrubs to protect privacy impacts on neighbouring homes.

Each parking stall will be available for EV charging.

A bicycle room will store 19 long-term bicycles (more than 2 times the number of units), including a maintenance tool station, electric bicycle charging, and space for five cargo bikes. Space for cargo bike storage was raised at the CALUC meeting. Fifteen short-term bicycle stalls will be provided and be divided into 2 locations at both ends of the site.

There is an expectation that active transportation modes will be the local choice of transportation which is why bicycle parking above bylaw requirements has been incorporated into the design in anticipation of future resident needs.

### 3.4 Architecture

The architectural plans were prepared by local Architect Xeniya Vins, providing a modern design while maintaining a pitched roof motif that is seen commonly along adjoining street frontages.

The use of high-quality materials are incorporated into the design, including acrylic stucco, brick, and standing seam roof panels that transition from the ground to roof on the exterior ends. The building design is not only aesthetically appealing, but also environmentally sustainable, reaching higher energy step codes and preventing water intrusion during heavy rain events.

Each townhome entrance will front onto the proposed and newly restored Russell Street public pathway. Each entrance is set slightly higher than the path to allow privacy for the inhabitants and pedestrians. Sensitive night lighting will be provided on the pathway to improve visibility and safety compared to the current pedestrian path.

Each unit has an upper balcony that overlooks the park-like street frontage and public pathway. Each rear yard has a privacy screened patio space and secure yard area.

### 3.5 Landscaping

The landscape plans have integrated new planning to compliment established vegetation and tree regime and incorporates a combination of lower shrubs and larger trees. Larger trees include Red Maple, Dogwood, Pin, and Garry Oak. There is an extensive plant list including; Switchgrass, Heather, Camas, Broadleaf Stonecrop, and a variety of ferns. The parking lot will be developed using interlocking pavers. Arbours with climbing plants consisting of Wisteria and Boston Ivy will screen the parking area.

A perimeter fence will be installed to encourage privacy for new residents and adjacent residents. The landscape plan calls for climbing plants along the fenced area that will create a visually pleasing aesthetic to residents and neighbours.

Plans includes a landscaped children's playground area with swing set. Extensive ground-cover is proposed around the playground area. For the size of the project, it is a thoughtful amenity recognizing that the project is targeting families.

The landscape designers have also thought about planting and amenity beyond the property lines. Landscape boulevards are shown with a "mini-park mews" proposed along the Wilson Street frontage, including benches that would be available for public relaxation and enjoyment.

### 3.6 Sustainability and Public Benefits

The building, landscaping strategy, and site location all contribute to improving the environment and lessening GHG emissions. Green features to be applied to the project include:

- A high degree of walkability; within walking/cycling distance of employment centers, and commercial, recreational, social, health, and education services;
- Landscaping and stormwater management strategies include the use of raingardens and extensive greening of the site;
- A minimum of Step Code 3, and the intention will be to meet Step Code 4 objectives;
- Glazing specifications on different building orientations will be considered for maximize solar control and passive heating and solar-gain;
- Low energy lighting systems, including motion sensors will be employed in common areas, Energy Star appliances, and low water plumbing fixtures will be used throughout the project;
- EV charging will be provided to meet all City standards;
- Bicycle rooms will provide extra 15 amp plug outlets for electric bikes and a bicycle repair station;
- Outdoor water conservation strategies will include water efficient landscaping and drip irrigation systems;
- Constructing a new pedestrian path to meet current accessible pathway standards;
- Repurpose the community path by planting native, drought-resistant vegetation on both the SRW and Municipal property;
- Installation of a custom public bench along the path for community members to enjoy; and,
- Installation of a small public green space in front of 448 Wilson Street. This area shown on the Landscape Plans will include two benches surrounded by grass and colorful drought resistant trees and plants, providing an enjoyable place to rest after use on the EN Trail.

## 4. CALUC Meeting

A Victoria West CALUC meeting was held November 15<sup>th</sup>, 2022. A number of favourable comments were made, particularly relating to the siting of the two buildings, and preserving as much of the natural conditions as possible. Cargo bike storage was added to the facility in response to comments received. Assurances were provided that existing access to homes served by Russell Street would be preserved.

## 5. Closing

We believe the project is a thoughtful and respectful family-oriented infill housing development. The project is consistent with the Victoria West Neighbourhood Plan's land-use designation. The building's finishes and landscaping, amenities, and improvements offsite will contribute to, and support, the vision for the future of the Victoria West community.

We respectfully ask for Mayor and Council's favorable consideration of the application.

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Deane Strongitharm". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line extending to the right.

Deane Strongitharm, MCIP, RPP  
Strongitharm Consulting Ltd.

cc. Logic Homes Ltd.

attach: