



December 16<sup>th</sup>, 2025

Downtown Residents Association  
Community Association Land Use Committee (CALUC)  
300-722 Cormorant Street  
Victoria, BC, V8W 1P8

**RE: 617 BROUGHTON STREET PRE-APPLICATION COMMUNITY CONSULTATION**

Dear CALUC Members and Community,

Acting on behalf of GWL Realty Advisors, we are writing to introduce a proposed mixed-use development at 617 Broughton Street in Victoria's Historic Old Town District.

This letter provides an overview of the project ahead of the rescheduled January 13<sup>th</sup>, 2025 CALUC meeting. The meeting was originally scheduled for September 9, 2025 but was postponed. In an effort to engage the community in early September, the applicant held an Open House to gather preliminary feedback and inform the community of the proposed development. The CALUC meeting was then rescheduled to October 15<sup>th</sup>, 2025; however, due to the Canadian postal strike, notice was unable to be properly distributed. As such, the CALUC meeting is now scheduled for January 13<sup>th</sup>, 2025. The rescheduled CALUC meeting welcomes the community again and invites your feedback on the preliminary design and community integration approach.

**Current Site and Opportunity**

Fronting Broughton, Gordon and Courtney Streets in Old Town, the site currently houses a three-storey parking structure above ground-floor retail. The site sits directly west of St. Andrews Presbyterian Church (924 Douglas Street), a designated heritage property, creating an important contextual relationship for our design.

**Development Overview**

This underutilized, car-centric space presents a significant opportunity to contribute meaningfully to the continued development of downtown Victoria. As such, our proposal transforms this parking structure into a vibrant mixed-use development that addresses Victoria's housing needs while enhancing the urban fabric.



The proposed 13-storey building features two 6-storey wings extending eastward, connected by a substantial outdoor amenity area above the first floor.

**Key Project Elements:**

- Housing: 251 new purpose-built rental units, including 32% family-sized units (two bedrooms or more) – exceeding City requirements;
- Commercial Space: 14,226 square feet (1,322 square metres) of ground-floor retail with active frontages on Broughton, Courtney, and Gordon Streets, plus the new plaza;
- Public Amenity: a large public plaza that creates an enhanced interface with St. Andrew's Church;
- Parking and Access: Three below-grade levels providing vehicle spaces, loading facilities, and bicycle parking, accessed via Courtney Street;
- Resident Amenities: a large indoor amenity space on Level 11 and outdoor amenity space provided across Levels 2, 7, and 12; and,
- The development achieves a Floor Space Ratio (FSR) of 5.9, creating significant housing density in this central location.

**Moving Forward**

We value community input as this project evolves through the design development process. Your feedback at the upcoming CALUC meeting will help ensure our proposal reflects community priorities while delivering needed housing and public space improvements within Old Town.

We look forward to our discussion on January 13<sup>th</sup>, 2025, and continuing to work collaboratively with the community as this project advances.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J. Tinney'.

Jonathan Tinney  
Principal

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jtinney@svn-ap.com



# VISION

GWL Realty Advisors Inc. is excited to play a key role in creating a vibrant, mixed-use community in the heart of downtown Victoria. This site offers an opportunity to strengthen the surrounding neighbourhood by introducing thoughtfully designed rental housing, active ground-level uses, and public spaces that enhance connectivity and urban life.

Upon completion, this project will serve as a welcoming addition to the area, contributing to a dynamic streetscape and fostering a strong sense of community for residents, workers, and visitors alike.

## Project Overview

Our proposal for the site includes:

- A 13-storey mixed-use building with two 6-storey wings extending eastward, connected by a substantial outdoor amenity terrace above the first storey
- 251 purpose-built rental units, including 32% family-sized units (two bedrooms or more)—exceeding City requirements
- Approximately 14,226 square feet (1,322 square metres) of ground-floor retail along Broughton, Courtney, and Gordon Streets
- A new public plaza enhancing the interface with the historic St. Andrew's Church and providing space for outdoor patios, passive recreation and community gatherings; and,
- Three below-grade parking levels with vehicular parking, loading areas, and ample bicycle storage, accessed via Courtney Street

Overall, this development will deliver strategically placed housing density in a central, transit-rich location while supporting a well-integrated urban environment.



View of Proposal Looking Southwest



View South along Broad Street



View East along Broughton Street



View across Douglas Street



# PLANNING CONSIDERATION

## 1. Aligns with Official Community Plan Policies

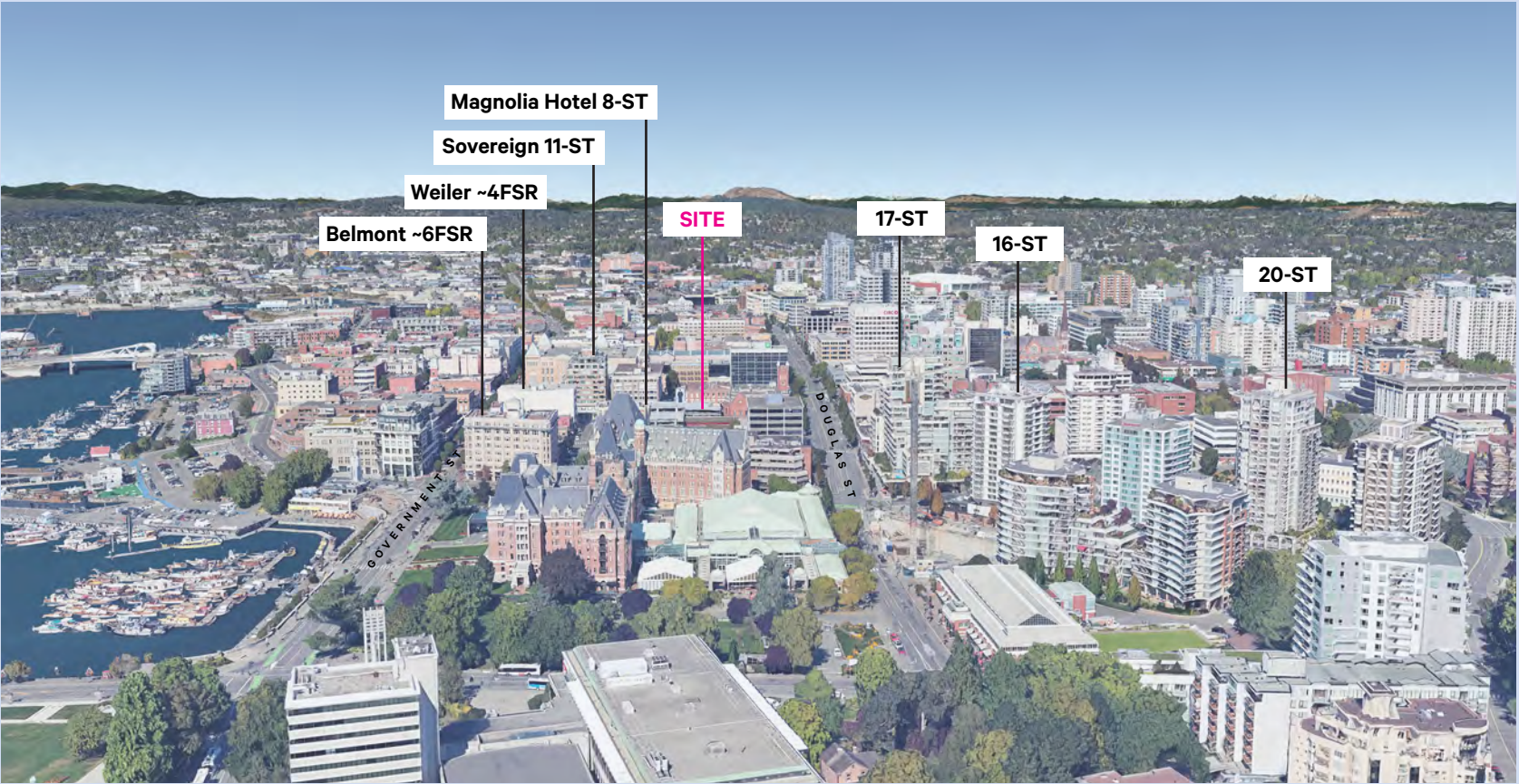
The public benefits included in this proposal provide a strong rationale for the requested increases in density and height, aligning the project with the OCP and requiring only a zoning amendment application. These benefits include: 251 rental housing units in the downtown core at a form and scale appropriate to Old Town; high-quality retail space to support downtown vitality; and a significant new public plaza (583 m<sup>2</sup>) that will enhance livability for residents and visitors alike.

## 2. Fits within the neighbourhood

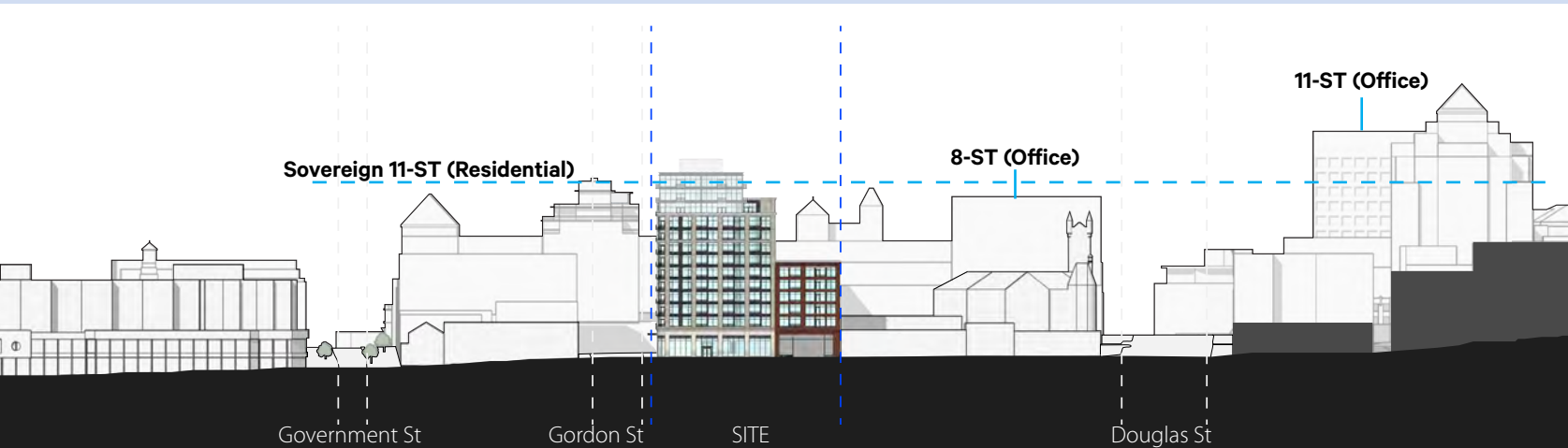
The height and form of the project align with both historic and newer buildings in this part of Old Town, including the Belmont, Yarrow, and Weiler Buildings, as well as more recent developments such as the Magnolia Hotel and The Sovereign. These precedents demonstrate that taller, higher-density buildings are compatible with Old Town’s established character.



View East along Broughton Street



Aerial Photo Looking North



Courtney Streetscape Elevation



### 3. Views are maintained

The building height matches its context, reinforcing Old Town's distinctive "saw-tooth" roofline pattern. The proposal fits within the skyline from key public viewpoints such as Laurel Point, supporting the City's "Urban Amphitheatre" approach to downtown density and enhancing the character and legibility of Old Town's historic skyline.



*View from Laurel Point*



*Gordon St. looking North - Union Club on the Right*

### 4. Appropriate Form and Character

The design offers a contemporary interpretation of the prevailing Edwardian commercial style found throughout this part of Old Town. Materials, massing, building orientation, and architectural detailing integrate seamlessly into the surrounding urban fabric.



*View South West at Broughton and Douglas Street Intersection*

### 5. Heritage Sensitivity

The new public plaza along Courtney Street provides additional space for viewing the distinctive apse of St. Andrew's Church—a feature currently hidden behind a parking ramp. The building's placement also maintains existing views of the church's steeple and unique stepped gables from key vantage points along Douglas Street.



# PARKING AND ECONOMIC IMPACTS

Community concerns were raised about the loss of the existing parkade, prompting GWL to commission Bunt & Associates and CBRE to study parking demand and retail impacts.

## Parking Study Findings

Parking demand at the site has declined from 2016 to 2024, largely due to post-COVID work-from-home trends. The area is well-connected by transit, cycling, walking, and road networks, supporting ongoing residential growth.

Existing parking within a two-block radius can accommodate current and anticipated demand, with only minor midday weekday constraints at 1 pm. Any excess demand is modest and could be absorbed through nearby street parking, other lots, or shifts in commuter behavior. The proposed reduction in parkade supply aligns with City policy to reduce vehicle traffic and parking in the historic core.



Existing Parking Structure



Existing Parking Structure in Context

## Retail Study Findings

The projected reduction in weekday vehicle trips may slightly reduce retail spending by commuters. However, the loss is more than offset by spending from new residents generated by the redevelopment.

The project replaces some transient, car-dependent spending with a stable 24/7 walk-in customer base.

Overall, the proposal supports a more sustainable, vibrant, and resilient Downtown Core for businesses, residents, and visitors with the introduction of 24/7 residence.





# PUBLIC BENEFITS

## New Public Plaza Provided

A new public plaza will be provided between the proposal and St. Andrews Cathedral, this creates a better interface than what exists today (an existing parking structure). The plaza is designed to highlight the Church while providing a place for people to gather and enjoy outdoor events, relax, and connect with the surrounding community.

## Better Use of Land

The proposed redevelopment represents a strategic opportunity to transform underutilized parking in an ageing structure into a vibrant mixed-use community in an amenity-rich area of Victoria's Downtown. The project supports the evolution of a more complete, walkable, and active urban environment. It aligns with City goals for a more sustainable, human-scaled downtown—reducing vehicular trips and introducing new residents.

## Much-Needed Rental Housing

The development introduces a diversity of housing options, including family-friendly units, contributing to a balanced downtown residential community. The building will accommodate people from all walks of life—young adults, families, and seniors.

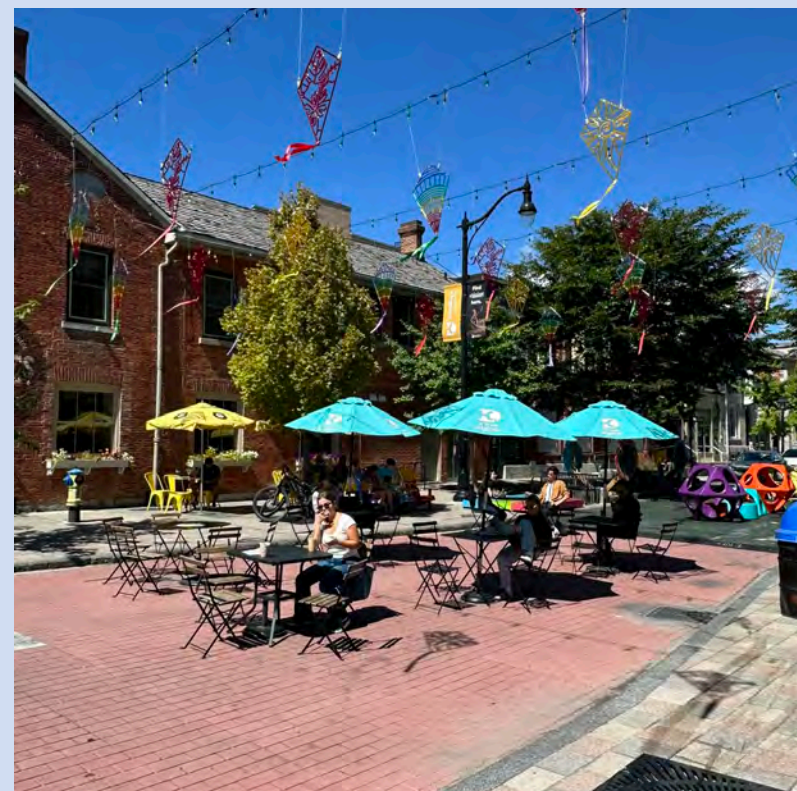


View of Proposed Plaza from Broughton Street

*(The historic clock shown in the illustrations is a conceptual idea and has not been finalized. Securing an appropriate location and coordinating with the clock's owner is still pending.)*



View of Proposed Plaza Looking Southeast





Heritage Integration

The design highlights the adjacent heritage context through architectural quality, complementary masonry, and careful corner articulation that references—but does not replicate—Edwardian commercial building forms. The development is designed to respect and enhance the prominence of the adjacent St. Andrew’s Cathedral, a protected heritage building and significant cultural landmark.

Public Realm Improvements

The development brings the public realm to life with inviting open spaces, active street frontages, and improved landscaping. A new urban plaza serves as a hub for community gathering, while ground-floor retail and café uses provide “eyes on the plaza”—enhancing safety and encouraging pedestrian activity. Thoughtfully placed trees and planted areas add greenery, support urban forest goals, and create an attractive, functional space for residents and visitors.



St. Andrew’s Presbyterian Church



Public Plaza Activation



Government Street - Victoria, BC



Heritage Integration Example



Public Plaza Example



# COMMITMENT TO ENGAGEMENT

Meaningful community engagement is a cornerstone of good city-building. By actively involving local residents, stakeholders, and elected officials in the planning process, we ensure that new development responds to the needs and aspirations of the community. This approach aligns with the City of Victoria's Official Community Plan, which emphasizes "engaged citizens" as a core value.

## LONG-TERM COMMITMENT

GWL is an applicant with a strong track record in Victoria—managing this site since 2012 and will retain ownership well beyond completion. GWL is dedicated to engaging a diverse range of voices, including residents, tenants, stakeholders, and local organizations, throughout the planning process and beyond. By seeking broad input, GWL aims to ensure this project serves the community now and for years to come.

## ENGAGEMENT TO DATE:

At this early stage, engagement informs the proposal and allows for input before detailed design:

- Applicant-led Open House (September 2025)
- Existing tenants meeting (September 2025)
- Targeted stakeholder meetings with local Councilors and City Staff (Spring 2025–present)
- Meetings with the DVBA and Victoria Chamber of Commerce (October 2025)
- One-on-one meetings with adjacent businesses and landowners (Fall 2025)

Due to the Canada Post strike, mailouts for a formal CALUC meeting could not be completed in time for submission. GWL and its consultants look forward to the CALUC meeting scheduled for January 13th, 2025.

GWL is committed to incorporating feedback from this meeting into future submissions.

