



RELIANCE
PROPERTIES

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City of Victoria
1 Centennial Square
Victoria, BC V8W 1P6

Attention: Mayor and Council

Re: Capital Culture District (formerly known as 'LoRo (Lower Rock Bay) and, 'The Capital Iron Site'):
Application for Rezoning for a Comprehensive Development Urban Design Plan at 1824, 1900,
1907, 1908, 1924, 2010 Store Street and 530 Chatham.

*Introduction and
Overview*

DAU is pleased to share this application for new Land-use, Density and Regulatory Zoning Parameters proposed by Reliance Properties, for the above named subject properties. Totalling just under 7 acres, the properties span the boundary between the Burnside-Gorge Neighbourhood and Downtown Victoria. In consultation with City Planning Staff, it has been determined that the purpose of this application is to put in place an appropriate Zoning and Land-use Bylaw and OCP amendment for the subject properties and not, at this time, to apply for a concurrent site-wide Development Permit. However, to better understand the implications of the proposed zone, the application includes an Urban Design Plan to illustrate the potential form and characteristics that would result from full build-out of the properties, in compliance with the proposed CD Zone. Separate Development Permit Applications will subsequently be made for each site and building development to follow.

Impetus and Intention

The proposed redevelopment is an uncommon opportunity to catalyze revitalization of a City district through principled private development. The intention of the Application is to create an integrated and resilient part of the City, a heterogeneous neighbourhood that balances private interests with arts and cultural spaces and a superior public realm. To achieve this intention, the proposal has two overarching aspects:

1. Redevelopment of an Urban Brownfield Site:

Inspired by the local precedents of Selkirk Waterfront and Dockside Green, the proposed Capital Culture District Comprehensive Plan Rezoning will guide planning and design for the gradual, phased urbanization of the upland and the industrial harbourfront, that are on the northern shoulder of Victoria's Downtown Core. While the area is now under-utilized and in transition, it has served an important function in the City for many decades as host of industrial, commercial, transportation and infrastructural support. Under the proposed Rezoning, some in-demand industrial and marine uses will continue on the site and will be augmented and integrated with new uses. However, most of the subject properties have devolved from heavy and intrusive activities and are ready for transition to a more resilient socio-economic mix and intensity of use. This process has started organically, with the area attracting uses such as small scale manufacturing, brewing, arts and crafts, recreation, retail-wholesale, high-tech/ offices, non-profit institutional, food and beverage, as well as residential redevelopment in both renovated and new buildings.

2. A Pilot Project for the anticipated Plan for Victoria 3.0

Importantly, the proposed Capital Culture District Plan is centrally located in the area designated as an 'Arts and Innovation' District in the City's 2020 Victoria 3.0 Economic Action Plan. The Victoria 3.0 initiative, aimed at promoting 'Recovery, Reinvention and Resilience', is now underway, including contemplated Zoning and Urban Design Frameworks for the entire area.

The goals and principles of Victoria 3.0 are fully integrated within this Rezoning application. It is important to note that, along with economic viability and land development intentions, the Applicant's goal is to support long-term, phased and flexible uses on the site. The careful balance of employment and residential development will encourage a wide mix of uses on the site with a focus on creatives, makers and entrepreneurs. The proposed range of housing sizes, types and tenures is an important component of the Plan's economic viability.

The guiding intention is to develop viable new private buildings and preserve heritage structures, while simultaneously creating public space and arts and cultural facilities. To that end, Reliance Properties and the Board of Directors of the Art Gallery of Greater Victoria (AGGV) have signed a Letter of Intent to locate a proposed new Art Gallery as a keystone part of Phase One, at the heart of the Plan.



Illustration of future build out of the Capital Culture District Plan

*Planning Policy
and
Parameters:*

The Capital Culture District Plan has been designed to balance the multi-faceted priorities of the site and project proforma, while meeting the intent of City policy objectives and demonstrating best practices for progressive, sustainable urban design. The proposed CD Zone establishes a framework to intensify and diversify uses within the site, thereby reflecting the aspirations of the 'Victoria 3.0 Arts and Innovation District'.

Density

The Capital Culture District Plan is proposed to have an overall Floor Space Ratio (FSR) of 3.0:1, which is permitted by the current zoning and is consistent with the Official Community Plan (OCP). A range of densities are proposed within the site, as part of the comprehensive arrangement of uses and building typologies that forms this urban design plan. As proposed, a portion of the property would have a slightly higher FSR than is anticipated in the Burnside Gorge Neighbourhood Plan.

Land Use

The Capital Culture District Plan includes “Core Employment” Land Use as designated in the OCP and “Employment Centre” as identified in the DCAP, as well as the “Marine Industrial”/“Industrial Employment”/“Industrial Arts” called for in the Burnside-Gorge Local Area Plan. Proposed uses include marine industrial, industrial, commercial, arts and cultural, high tech, residential, live/work and more. Additional uses, beyond those anticipated in the current policies, are proposed to respond to the aspirations included in Victoria 3.0 and to provide flexibility of use and location, key concepts to both arts and innovation. Existing industrial uses, although modified to be compatible with non-industrial adjacencies, will be integrated as the plans develop.

Height

A range of building forms and heights are proposed to facilitate the Project intentions. Appropriate relationships between street width and building height are established through building podiums, ranging from 3 storeys (on the West block, adjacent to the Store Street heritage buildings) to 4-5 storeys (on the East block). Building podiums are envisioned to have recessed ground floors to allow for generous public sidewalks.

Above the podiums, building walls are set further back from the street. Taller building forms are essential to the urban design strategy that prioritizes publicly accessible open space (as outlined under ‘Neighbourhood Impacts’ to follow). Proposed building heights exceed those anticipated by current policy. Select locations are proposed for three buildings of up to 17 storeys: in the East block, a 13 storey artists live/work building is proposed and one residential tower at 17 storeys; one 10 storey building is proposed on the West block. The three taller buildings step down, with the topography and in height, from Government Street towards the harbour. The shape and position of the taller buildings within the larger plan has been carefully considered to mitigate potential view and shadow impacts.

It is important to note that build-out of the site will be subject to subsequent Development Permit Applications, and so governed by the upcoming revised Downtown Core Area Plan.

Need and Demand, Benefits and Amenities

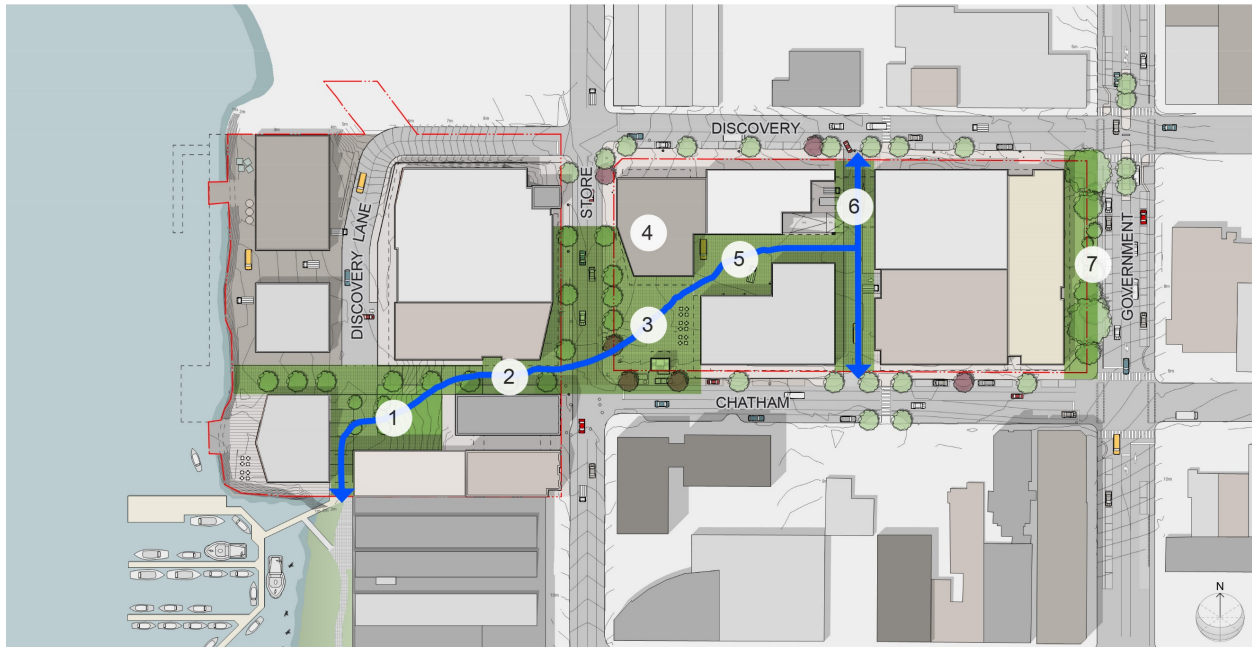
As with all urban redevelopment, the Capital Culture District Plan is driven by public need and private objectives. The proposal is an amalgam of ideas that reflects both parts of this dynamic. Careful planning has gone into the crafting of the proposed CD Zone, to ensure the zone’s quantitative parameters stem from intentional qualitative principles of good urban design. The Developer and Design Team have been mindful of the scale, population density and heterogeneity, beauty and safety of the urban district that the proposed parameters will produce. The following Planning Objectives identify and articulate the needs, demands,

benefits and amenities that are intended to result from the realization of the Capital Culture District Plan:

- ***A Balanced Mix:*** Augment and transition present commercial and industrial activities with a wider variety of uses arranged around a network of public spaces, including a new plaza adjacent to a major cultural institution and a direct concourse providing public access to the harbourfront. Construct buildings to accommodate a wide variety of industrial, marine, commercial and residential uses. This mixed-use approach will help facilitate a diverse, resilient local economy.
- ***Robust Infrastructure:*** Design and construct circulation and servicing networks to facilitate and serve knowledge-based, technological, arts, crafts, commerce and light industry.
- ***Urban Reconnection:*** Physically and visually link the street-grid to the East, to the harbour and to the former heavy industrial Rock Bay lands to the North.
- ***Social Diversity:*** Facilitate and curate amenities to support a wide and changing urban demographic, including family living, as well as nurture creativity and entrepreneurship.
- ***History as Inspiration:*** Commemorate and celebrate the area's First Nations traditional and post-colonial trade, industrial and manufacturing histories.

*Neighbourhood
Impacts and
Amenity
Contributions*

During the area's transitional period, positive urban design impacts are intended with every phase of the comprehensive development. These include the repair, reconnection and expansion of a pedestrian-focused network of paths and street rights-of-way. This initiative is anticipated to be of significant benefit to the immediate neighbourhoods as well as to Downtown and the City in general. The Open Spaces created will be one of the most important results of the Capital Culture District Plan that will be regulated by the proposed CD Zone. These benefits can be considered part of the Amenity Contribution from the project and will be detailed in the subsequent Urban and Architectural Designs that will be able to be constructed subject to Development Permitting.



Network of Publicly Accessible Open Site Spaces & Amenity Contributions

1. Discovery Square: Statutory Right-of-Way (Direct Amenity Contribution)

The design of the square will be inspired by and commemorate both pre-colonial and industrial site history, and will include terraced seating and, potentially, a significant water feature.

2. Harbour Concourse: Statutory Right-of-Way (Direct Amenity Contribution)

This public landscaped pedestrian street is aligned with the Chatham Street right-of-way, connecting Store Street down to the harbour's edge and the harbour pathway, which will be extended to meet the David Foster Way to the South. The concourse will allow the working harbour functions to continue and also forms part of the stormwater management strategy.

3. A New Public Plaza: Statutory Right-of-Way (Direct Amenity Contribution)

Located at heart of the district (the sunny south-west corner of Chatham and Store Streets), the new plaza will be inspired by the historical rail lines that cut through the site. The plaza will include trees, seating, and special paving treatment that will also extend West across Store Street to allow for expanded plaza space for larger festivals and events.

4. A Proposed New Art Gallery: (Land Amenity Contribution)

The proposed public art gallery would front onto the new public plaza, which would serve as the entry forecourt to the gallery. While the terms of an agreement between the Applicant and the AGGV are under negotiation, it is anticipated that consultation will continue with the City, as a separate process regarding allocation of value of the gallery site.

5. Artisan Alley: Service and pedestrian Circulation Route serving an Applied Industrial Arts (AIA) Building.

Inspired by the network of alleyways in historic Old-Town, the alley will provide pedestrian linkages from a new North-South, mid-block lane to the new plaza. It will also facilitate access and loading for the users of the Phase One light-industrial and commercial users of the AIA Building on Discovery Street.

6. East Block Lane: Statutory Right-of-Way (Direct Amenity Contribution)

The new mid-block lane will provide a connection between Chatham and Discovery Streets and be the physical marker between Phase One (the current parking lot) and future phases to the east.

7. Government Street Boulevard of Trees: Statutory Right-of-Way (Direct Amenity Contribution)

The proposed buildings will be set back to preserve and enhance the existing beautiful rows of London Plane and other mature trees, in a new linear boulevard park defined by shop-fronts of the future mixed commercial and residential buildings along the West side of Government Street.

Safety and Security

While Zoning does not overtly regulate criteria for Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CEPTED), this aspect of Urban Design is integral to the ideas and intentions represented by the proposed mixed-use CD Zone and Urban Design Plan. CEPTED principles are fundamental to the methodology employed by the Design Team, including the concepts of defensible space, natural surveillance ('eyes on the street'), community culture, connectivity and threshold capacity.

Transportation Circulation and Infrastructure

Through collaborative discussions between our Team's Transportation specialists and the City Engineers, acceptable and optimal strategies have been developed to anticipate future right-of-way redevelopment. Access, circulation and connection are critically important aspects of the future urban design. This is the reason, even

at this Rezoning Application stage, that this aspect of the plan has been given careful attention and coordinated in the pre-application phase with City officials.

The Capital Culture District Urban Design Plan gives priority to pedestrian and cycling circulation, meaningfully integrated within the proposed Open Space network. In addition to the publicly accessible plazas and walkways described earlier, the project supports transportation policy through the following:

- wider sidewalks throughout
- improved street landscapes and parking
- complete underground parking for all new buildings with capacity for paid public visitor parking
- general traffic-calming techniques will be employed throughout.

Utilities Infrastructure

Along with the outlined street and public open space design principles, the circulation network will incorporate civil engineering aspects such as landscape based rainwater management. Gardens and water features that treat and drain rainwater will be a central part of the open space and streetscape as well as storm sewer design. Slopes of the subject properties and uphill proximity to the harbour will naturally facilitate ecologically sound removal and creative use of rainwater.

Systems related to electrical power, water supply, sewer and information/communication infrastructure will be the subject of close collaboration between specialists on the design team and those of the City Engineering Department. As a fundamental quality of Brownfield Site Redevelopment, the optimization of utility systems in close proximity to new development is a sound and environmentally responsible strategy. To that end, locations, capacities, augmentation and improvements of underground services will be determined and coordinated at the appropriate time of Development Permit and subsequent Building Permit Applications.

Histories and Heritage Preservation

The Capital Culture District project intends to respect and commemorate both indigenous and colonial histories of the site. The City of Victoria, mandating Victorian-colonial heritage preservation, has recognized Heritage Registered buildings located at 1824, 1900 and 1910 Store Street. Accordingly, they will be preserved for adaptive re-use in compliance with Heritage Guidelines. The 1970's extension to 1900 Store Street is proposed to be removed, exposing the stone wall of the historically significant building.

Early History

For many years before European colonial presence, indigenous people lived and hunted in the area. The Lekwungen-speaking peoples (Esquimalt and Songhees Nations) shared the shores of the Harbour. They provided a visiting camp in the

Rock Bay Area for other Nations to use for trade with settlers and merchants at Fort Victoria. This ended around 1860 when a smallpox epidemic afflicted many of the visiting aboriginal groups. The Songhees and Esquimalt Nations, through the joint Matullia Organization, have re-acquired the former site of the BC Hydro installation to the South of the Rock Bay and have long-term intentions for the lands.

The Capital Iron site, DcRu-116 is a pre-contact archaeological site as described by Grant Keddie, Curator, BC Archaeology. In 1976, an archaeological excavation was undertaken related to construction activity for a new building. 133 artifacts were recovered and it was determined that the site was first occupied in 260 A.D. to 424 A.D.

Post-Colonial/ Modern History

Industries lined the shore of what is now known as the Upper Harbour and Rock Bay. Historical and some current activities around the area include a tannery, sawmills, an asphalt plant, a propane tank farm, and a concrete batch plant. A coal gasification plant operated by Victoria Gas and BC Electric (a predecessor to BC Hydro) provided power to the city from 1862-1952 and left extensive contamination behind. In the 1930's, uses on the lands of the subject site included coal sheds, rock bins, offices, a hotel, rice milling, warehousing, ship dismantling, scrap metal salvaging, freight sheds and a railway yard.

Green Building

The inherent environmental impact of buildings and urban development is significant, and is mainly guided by Zoning criteria. Urban, dense, mixed-use development has a much reduced environmental impact in comparison to suburban green-field development, which is characterized by sprawl and single segregated use zoning. Clearly, the Capital Culture District Plan and its commensurate proposed zoning is an example of environmentally sound and desirable human settlement, satisfying criteria for sustainable urban design:

- Redevelopment of brownfield sites
- Compact development served by minimum extension of utilities infrastructure
- Well-served by proximate public transit
- Served by good cycling/ multi-modal network of public rights-of-way/ streets and paths
- Mix of uses to facilitate living, working, services, and recreation within a 15 minute walk
- Variety of housing types and tenures
- Arts and cultural facilities
- Parks and open space within 5 to 10 minute walk of all residences

*Community
Engagement*

On September 21, 2021, a Community Meeting was held online. The meeting was hosted by the Burnside Gorge Community Association Land Use Committee, with the Downtown Resident's Association in attendance. A short presentation was provided, followed by a question and answer period. Topics raised were primarily enquiry based, rather than raising points of concern and were focused on the final development, rather than the process or impact of the rezoning approvals. The Acting Chair of the Art Gallery of Greater Victoria was in attendance to voice their enthusiasm for and support of the project.

Conclusion

Reliance Properties, DAU and the Design Team have worked collaboratively with City Planners and Engineers to bring forward a design concept that will, initially and over time, accommodate needed employment and a resilient mix of uses. The phased development will breathe new life into this significant urban area by improving the interface conditions and connections with the surrounding blocks and the Downtown core. In preparing this application, careful consideration has been given to the objectives of the City expressed in Victoria 3.0 and to thoughts expressed by the Downtown Residents Association and Burnside Gorge Neighbourhood Association. The overarching intention is to put in place a Zoning bylaw that will permit the creation of a vibrant, resilient, beautiful new part of Downtown Victoria and a catalyst for the future of the entire Victoria 3.0 area.

We look forward to working with staff through the Rezoning process and, in the near future, the subsequent Phase One Development Permit process. Please do not hesitate to request from us any clarifications or additional information that will assist in your deliberations.

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