



STRONGITHARM CONSULTING LTD.

October 6, 2021

Mayor and Council
Victoria, BC
#1 Centennial Sq.
Victoria BC.

11 Chown Place - Masterplan Application

Dear Mayor and Council;

Introduction

This application is being made on behalf of the Gorge View Society to:

1. Approve a masterplan for the long-term redevelopment of its 5.6 acre property, 11 Chown Place, located between Harriet Road and Balfour Avenue; and,
2. Receive zoning entitlements reflecting the purpose, policy, and direction described in the masterplan and allow for future redevelopment.

The Gorge View Society has taken a leadership role in recent years in reviewing its assets and realizing not only the dire need for more affordable housing in our community, but the recognition that the existing housing on the property is nearing the end of its viable life and underutilizes the land's potential.



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The Burnside Gorge Neighbourhood Plan also recognized the unique conditions of the site, located in an active neighbourhood in close proximity to the urban services and could significantly contribute to the City's affordable housing stock. It specifically identifies the site as a Special Planning Area. A masterplan provides the policy framework for future redevelopment. It is a dynamic, long-term planning document that includes a conceptual layout to inform future development. A masterplan is typically developed for large or strategic sites that will be comprehensively redeveloped over time. A masterplan links the relationship between future buildings, social settings, and the surrounding environments from a holistic perspective.

The Plan

A masterplan has been developed for Chown Place within the existing policy framework of the City's Official Community Plan. The exception being an approach to allow an increase in height to a maximum of 6 storeys in strategic locations on the property. This would specifically apply towards the Harriet Road frontage, which is the main entrance to the site.

Masterplan Principles

There are two sets of principles which are foundational to the preparation of this Plan; The Gorge View Society's vision and aspirations for the long-term redevelopment of the land; and, the City of Victoria's goals and directives contained in the Official Community Plan.

Gorge View Society Redevelopment Principles

The Gorge View Society has established redevelopment principles to help guide planning. They are:

1. The Gorge View Society (GVS) will continue to provide affordable rental housing, primarily for people with low-to-moderate incomes.
2. GVS will transition from a focus on independent affordable senior rental housing to a mixed demographic, including families.
3. Redevelopment of Chown Place lands will take place on a phased basis.
4. Redevelopment plans will be guided by the City of Victoria's planning policies, site conditions, neighbourhood context, and affordable housing needs.
5. Redevelopment will consider transitional needs of existing residents.
6. Redevelopment design and character will be respectful of impacts on the neighbourhood.
7. Timing for redevelopment will occur as funding programs, market conditions, and GVS infrastructure allows.
8. New projects will be guided by a project specific financial plan so GVS can be assured that they can sustain the project financially over time.
9. GVS will prioritize communication with relevant agencies and stakeholders as an essential part of the redevelopment process.

10. GVS will foster and enhance its relationship with the Burnside Gorge Neighbourhood Association (BGNA).

While not identified as a principle, Chown Place is known for its affinity with the land and garden plots that provide space for residents to grow vegetables and flowers. It is perhaps a legacy of the land's historic use as an orchard. Maintaining a strong garden presence is an important design strategy.

City of Victoria OCP Policies

Burnside Gorge Neighbourhood Plan Policies applied to the property include:

1. Maintain affordable housing;
2. Protect or replace non-market housing units;
3. Provide circulation for pedestrians throughout the site;
4. Consider densities of approximately 1:1 floor area ratio and three story heights;
5. Protect the Garry Oak meadow; and
6. Enhance the street canopy, reflecting the site's history as an orchard.

Key Features of the Masterplan

The development of the masterplan has come from the vision provided for an inclusive neighbourhood based on (1) the redevelopment principles; (2) site conditions, (3) relationships with neighbours; and (4) recognition of the need to increase affordable housing opportunities in Victoria.

Key features of the draft masterplan include:

- reduce the footprint of buildings by increasing building heights in strategic locations on the land to allow for greater green space;
- preserve the Garry Oak meadow and enhancement of the Society's garden plot program;
- maintain the Balfour Avenue play-lot as a neighbourhood amenity;
- introduce neighbourhood pedestrian cross-throughs on a north-south and east-west axis;
- where appropriate, terrace building heights and maintain side-yard setbacks to respect neighbouring lands;
- provide a combination of apartments, and ground oriented townhouse buildings to facilitate a mixed neighbourhood of families and seniors with a targeted ratio of 20% families and 80% seniors;
- introduce underground parking to reduce surface parking and its impact on stormwater run-off management associated with surface parking;

- site a new community building that has good access to the outdoors and is centrally located to the residents living within Chown Place and the surrounding neighbourhood, allowing for easy access to serve residents and the broader neighbourhood;
- create additional outdoor gathering spaces and places of identity within the project, including a plaza that frames new buildings and a central mews walkway leading into the site from the Balfour Avenue frontage;
- provide architecturally thematic elements for all buildings that create a sense of unity thus integrating the Chown Place community. The City's Form and Character Development Permit guidelines for multi-family dwellings should apply; and,
- prepare shadow studies to demonstrate that the proposed site planning gives respects to neighbouring properties.

Site Information

The following table provides an overview of the proposed long-term redevelopment, at time of final build out of the project based on current plans.

	Existing	Proposed
Site Area	22,475 m2	22,475 m2
Site Coverage	+/- 30%	25.47%
Open Space	N/A	60.6%%
Building Height	3 storeys	Up to 6 storeys / 20m
Floor Space Ratio (FSR)	1.0:1	1.0:1
Number of Dwellings	169 (including new building under construction)	313
Parking Stalls	67	154 (bylaw required: 135)
Bicycle Parking	N/A	To meet by-law requirements

The proposed unit configuration is as follows:

	1 bdrm	2 bdrm	3 bdrm Townhomes	Total
Estimated Number of Units	252	43	18	313
Average Unit Size	Senior 1 bdrm 49m ²	2 bdrm 68m ²	T.B.D.	

Traffic and Site Servicing

A traffic report has been prepared examining potential traffic impacts, considering the long-term build out of the project, based on 313 units and a 80:20 ratio of senior and family housing units. The traffic report looked at the intersections and Harriet and Gorge Rd.; Harriet and Burnside Rd.; Balfour Ave and Gorge Rd., and Balfour Ave and Burnside Rd., indicating and concluding that there will be minimal impacts on the roads. The traffic report did not identify any requirements for specific improvements to the road networks.

Consultants have also conducted an impact assessment on offsite sewer/drains, water, and electrical services. No significant issues have been flagged.

Phasing

A masterplan is a long term vision. The Gorge View Society redevelopment vision will be phased over the next 25 to 50 years. A schedule of timing or the exact order of development will be dependent on a number of factors, not the least of which is senior government housing funding programs and, for example, what may be the focus of those programs in terms of seniors vs. family housing. While unconfirmed at this time, it is likely that the next phase of redevelopment will be focused along the Harriet Road frontage.

Consideration of future phasing will also take into account the future internal subdivision of the land required for Gorge View Society legal and financial purposes, but will not change any of the principles, site planning or design objectives. The Gorge View Society will work with City staff on the legal aspects of the Plan.

Community Engagement

The Gorge View Society has developed a Masterplan Committee which has met numerous times. It has helped shape the needs, prioritized amenities, and participated in workshops preparing the draft plans. The Masterplan Committee comprises of planners, architects and other society members familiar with real estate.

In addition, there has ben regular updates with the Burnside Gorge Neighbourhood Association and specifically Land-Use Committee members. Information meetings, including survey of needs and preferences has taken place with existing resident in a well attended outdoor event with some neighbours also attending. A neighbourhood meeting, with invitations going out to about 130

properties, covering a wide area of the neighbourhood was held on September 1, 2021. Participants were invited to ask questions and share their views. The predominant question from attendees related to existing traffic conditions along adjoining streets.

Closing

The Gorge View Society is excited to be moving forward with its masterplan for the long term redevelopment of the property. Confirming the masterplan and the associated zoning entitlements, will enable the Gorge View Society to respond quickly to future senior government funding programs to allow for the timely construct of new affordable rental housing units. The masterplan also provides clarity and certainty to residents of Chown Place and neighbours, who will have awareness of future redevelopment plans, no matter how long into the future a phase of development may occur.

We believe the masterplan responds to the site conditions, social conditions, neighbourhood impacts and housing need. We look forward to working with staff and Council on this important masterplan project.

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Deane Strongitharm', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Deane Strongitharm, MCIP, RPP

cc. Gorge View Society
Number Ten Architectural Group

Attach. CALUC Form and Plans