

February 26, 2018

Mayor and Council
City of Victoria
1 Centennial Square
Victoria, BC

RE: 1301 Hillside Avenue, Rezoning and OCP Amendment Application

Dear Mayor and Council, on behalf of NVision Properties, I am pleased to submit for your consideration an innovative and timely development proposal for the vacant land and former gas station at 1301 Hillside Avenue. With the attached development permit, rezoning and OCP amendment application, NVision Properties offers The City of Victoria a unique solution to a challenging and important development site in the Hillside Corridor. Contained in this package are the details for what I believe will become a landmark building at the corner of Hillside Avenue and Cook Street.

Our proposal speaks to Victoria's future as a less car dependent city and directly addresses the need for new purpose built rental accommodations in our rapidly growing city. We have taken the opportunities and constraints inherent to the land at 1301 Hillside head on and designed a timeless building that speaks to the future of Victoria and the future of the Hillside Corridor as articulated in the Official Community Plan. The site has amazing opportunity in the form of; an Urban Residential designation; its location directly adjacent to two major arterials that provide transit access to the Downtown, Camosun and UVic; as well as its central and walkable location, which is book-ended by Hillside Mall to the east and Quadra Village to the West. It is constrained as a result of its past use as a gas station, by way of a restriction on any subsurface uses (i.e. underground parking), a result of the environmental remediation process it is currently going through.

As such, an ordinary approach to this site would be inappropriate. Instead, our building program was carefully thought out and custom tailored to the site and built on the assumption of limited vehicle parking, given that we are prohibited from to constructing underground parking. Our solution to this challenges was to propose a rental housing project, where smaller unit sizes, shared building amenities, a high volume of bike parking and a transit accessible, walkable location will together attract residents who are interested in living a less vehicle-oriented lifestyle. With a strong understanding of the market and potential users of the site, matched with intelligent product design that delivers on the needs of these users, we feel confident that we've designed a winning project, whose limited parking supply will not negatively impact the surrounding neighbourhood or our future residents.

Strategies and policies to support our proposal include; the exclusion of commercial space to avoid increased parking demand, street accessible secure bicycle parking at a rate of 1.4 stalls per unit, as well as shared building amenities that foster a social atmosphere which we feel will be compelling to young professionals, small families and students who may be looking to live car-free or with only one vehicle. An on-site transit stop, walkability to nearby parks, schools, the Cridge Center for the Family and the amenities found in Quadra Village, such as groceries and coffee shops rounds out the package. From the policy perspective, the OCP calls for Hillside Avenue to become a major apartment



corridor and suggests higher densities are appropriate in locations that are within walking distance of the corridor.

We feel the timing of this proposal is right and that it supports the vision Victoria Council has embarked on to reduce our collective reliance on single occupant vehicles and instead encourage more trips to be made by walking, cycling and transit. As one of the first major projects in the Hillside Corridor, we take comfort in knowing that our proposal is taking many of its cues directly from the vision Council has articulated for a better designed, healthier Hillside Corridor. Our proposal plays a vital role in supporting Council's vision for this area, transforming a forgotten corner and a former gas station into something much more valuable to the community.

We envision a landmark building that pays respect to the design language of the neighbourhood, one that will improve the pedestrian experience at Cook and Hillside and spur positive change in the Quadra Village. Our future residents are exactly what is needed to rejuvenate this corner and bring new life to this forgotten site. They will use the new pedestrian and cycling infrastructure upgrades that Council is implementing today. Many will rely on transit as their primary mode of transportation for long distance trips and will walk or cycle for their daily trips to pick up groceries or visit the local coffee shop. Our novel approach to this formerly contaminated site directly supports Council's goal of transitioning the Hillside Corridor into a transit-oriented multi-family area.

At the heart of our proposal lies a traditional looking 6 storey market rental apartment, with 46 residential units in a mix of bachelor, one and two bedroom layouts. The ground floor of the building is clad in brick and presents beautifully to the street. Vehicle parking is screened from public view, with secure bicycle parking areas pushed to the exterior to provide visual interest for passing pedestrians. A small residential lobby and semi-public park space with an arbour and a community library round out the ground floor, creating a community gathering spot or a place for pedestrians to take a break. Inside, 25 parking stalls accommodate all of the 1 and 2 bed units, leaving 24 bachelor units intended to be for car-free residents. On the second level a wrap around deck helps to resolve the major grade change between our site and Cridge Center, providing a beautiful overlook into the Gary Oak meadow to the south and east of us, that is accessible by both private and shared amenity areas.

We are very excited to submit this application for your consideration and sincerely hope you will find merit in our proposal. I hope Council can share in our vision of this site and recognize that such a unique property requires a unique solution. We believe passionately that this proposal represents the best possible outcome for the site and that it will be very successful in creating appropriate and accessible housing. We hope that you will feel as passionate as we do a look forward to presenting the details of this project to you.

Sincerely



Adam Cooper MCIP, RPP
Development Manager

