



January 27, 2025

Mayor Alto and Council
City of Victoria
VIA ELECTRONIC DELIVERY

Mayor Alto and Council,

RE: APPLICATION FOR REZONING AND DEVELOPMENT PERMIT – 210 LANGFORD ST. & 824 ALSTON ST.

M'akola Development Services, on behalf of M'akola Housing Society, is pleased to share our Application for Rezoning and Development Permit for our 55-unit Indigenous affordable housing development at 210/220 Langford Street and 824/826 Alston Street in the Vic West neighbourhood. The building will be operated by M'akola Housing Society, a non-profit housing provider with extensive experience operating affordable housing across British Columbia. M'akola Development Services will be acting as the project lead for this collaboration.

Our submission is requesting approval for the following:

- A Zoning Bylaw amendment to rezone the subject sites from **R2 Two Family Dwelling District zoning to the Comprehensive Development (CD) site specific zoning.**
- A Development Permit for the project, which falls under **DPA 16: General Form and Character.**

This letter serves as an introduction to the application package, and includes the following details:

- Project Summary
- Amendment to the Zoning Bylaw
- Application for Development Permit
- Compliance with Community Plans
- CALUC Meeting
- Awarded Funding
- Closure

Thank you for your consideration to support this affordable Indigenous rental housing project.

Sincerely,

Holly Pridie, RPP, MCIP

Project Manager | M'akola Development Services

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Attachments:

1. Application Form (Rezoning)
2. Application Form (Development Permit)
3. Letter of Owner Authorization
4. Set of Plans, including:
 - a. Site Plan
 - b. Landscape Plan
 - c. Survey Plan
 - d. Floor Plans
 - e. Elevations
 - f. Cross Sections
 - g. Building Elevations and Streetscape Plan
 - h. Civil Plan
 - i. Tree Management Plan
3. Environmental Site Assessment
4. Title Search
5. Building Code Compliance Report
6. Archaeology Data Report

1. PROJECT SUMMARY

Located at 210/220 Langford Street and 824 Alston Street, the project is a 55-unit affordable housing development for Indigenous families, individuals, and Elders. The three properties will be consolidated into one site for the development. The homes include a mix of studio, one-bedroom, two-bedroom, three-bedroom, and four-bedroom units, with an emphasis on larger units that are culturally appropriate and encourage intergenerational households to reside here. Outdoor spaces include a large internal courtyard for residents and landscaped spaces off Langford Street.



Figure 1: View from Langford Street

1.1. SITE/PROPERTY CONTEXT

The project is located in the Vic West neighbourhood of the City of Victoria, in close proximity to services, amenities, and natural areas that encourage diverse transportation options, build community connections, and support tenant wellbeing.

The chosen subject site is 1.5 km away from downtown Victoria, and within 3 km of the local secondary school, middle school, and elementary school. Several BC Transit routes are within a few blocks of the subject site, with the option for more major routes on Douglas Street the Bay Street Bridge. Nearby active transportation options include dedicated AAA bike lanes, including the Galloping Goose regional trail.

1.2. ABOUT THE OWNER AND OPERATOR

M'akola Housing Society (MHS) is a non-profit organization based in Victoria with over 30 years of experience providing safe, affordable, and high-quality rental homes specifically built for Indigenous Peoples. MHS's current housing portfolio includes over 1,000 units in communities across British Columbia, including those in the Greater Victoria area. This project leverages the depth and breadth of M'akola's experience, as both a housing developer and provider, to contribute a solution to the growing challenge of affordable housing in Victoria. MHS brings the following to the project:

Extensive experience and capacity. MHS has over 30 years experience in housing operations and asset management. MHS possesses very mature operating infrastructure and successfully operates affordable Indigenous properties across the province.

Critical need and demand and high degree of impact. The need for affordable, suitable, and safe housing for Indigenous families is well documented. As per their mission, MHS will prioritize Indigenous tenants in this building thereby reducing some of the need and demand in the area.

Advancement of Truth and Reconciliation. This proposal will demonstrate how the project will honor and promote local Indigenous culture and support the Calls to Action from Canada's Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

M'akola Housing Society and the City of Victoria have an established relationship centered around our shared goals of expanding affordable, Indigenous, and family-friendly housing options in the region. In this project, 25% of the homes are three- and four-bedroom units. The public benefit associated with this unit mix is indisputable since recent reports indicate a near-zero vacancy rate and low construction rate for units of this size over the past five years.

2. AMENDMENT TO THE ZONING BYLAW

We are requesting to rezone the subject sites, which will be consolidated into one site, from **R2 Two Family Dwelling District zoning** to the **Comprehensive Development (CD-site specific) zoning** to permit the proposed form of development and level of density.

Please see below Zoning Analysis comparing the proposed zone to the proposed zoning and variances required for the 55-unit development.

Table 1: Comparison Table of Current Zone and Proposed Zoning

	R-2 (Existing Zone)	CD (Proposed Zoning)
Permitted Use	Duplex	Multi-family residence
Maximum Lot Coverage	40%	42%
Maximum Density	0.50:1	2.4:1
Maximum Height	7.6 m (2 storeys)	22 m (6 storeys)

Minimum Front Setback	7.5 m	4.5 m
Minimum Interior Side Setback	1.5 m	9.6 m
Minimum Exterior Side Setback	3.5 m	5.15 m
Minimum Rear Setback	10.7 m	2.95 m
Required Parking	12 stalls	37 stalls

3. APPLICATION FOR DEVELOPMENT PERMIT

Our project falls within Development Permit Area **DPA 16: General Form and Character** (Official Community Plan, pg. 302). The proposed building has been designed to be consistent with the City of Victoria's policies, good urban design principles, and the objectives of the Official Community Plan. The project is responsive to the envisioned context of the surrounding area, located on the edge of a small urban village, the Westside large urban village and a general employment urban place designation.

Specific project details speaking to design, public safety, sustainability, transportation, and infrastructure are below.

3.1. GENERAL DESIGN

- Ground floor patios and exterior unit entrances bordered by raised planters, which creates defined private realm whilst connecting through to the adjacent street and public space.
- Building articulation achieved through variations in massing and materials.
- Indigenous art feature planned for western façade.
- Main entry features a large overhang design with wood soffit finish and a landscape feature.
- Shadowing impacts are minimal, with properties to the north buffered by Langford Street and a setback for the top floor.
- Generous tenant amenity space through an exterior courtyard on the ground level and an amenity room on the top floor.

3.2. CLIMATE CHANGE AND SUSTAINABILITY

- The project will be built to BC Step Code 4, with an estimated energy savings of over 50% every year.
- Building features include continuous exterior insulation, high performance glazing, airtight building envelope, and LED fixtures throughout.
- Building is optimally oriented with the site layout, with the long axis running east-west. This maximizes passive solar heating in winter on the south façade, while minimizing west-facing suites which are exposed to intense afternoon summer sun.
- Boulevard trees and landscaping that enhances biodiversity and supports native and pollinator plantings.

- Rain gardens for on-site stormwater management.
- Low maintenance, native planting species to minimize the need for watering and chemical treatments.

3.3. TRANSPORTATION AND PARKING

The proposed parking lot is an underground parkade, accessed off Langford Street, which has 37 vehicle parking stalls (31 residential parking stalls and six visitor stalls) and 68 long-term bike storage spaces. At the front entrance of the building, there are six short-term bike parking spaces.

In M'akola Housing Society's extensive operating experience, affordable rental projects that are close to services, transportation, and schools have less parking uptake than is required by typical parking bylaws.

3.4. INFRASTRUCTURE

The project team is in ongoing discussions with City staff to address infrastructure load and confirm if there are any necessary requirements.

4. COMPLIANCE WITH COMMUNITY PLANS

4.1. OFFICIAL COMMUNITY PLAN

The project is compliant with the City of Victoria's Official Community Plan (OCP). Specifically, the following items, excerpted below from the land management and development section (pg. 40), lay out the conditions by which the project can proceed without an OCP amendment:

Item 6.8: Where a site or area is providing primarily non-market housing, achieving (*sic.*) heritage conservation objectives, or other significant public benefit, development can depart from the guidelines established for Urban Place Designations, if the development is consistent with City policies, good urban design principles, and the objectives of this plan, and is responsive to the envisioned context of the surrounding area

Item 6.9: Site specific development can depart from the guidance established for Urban Place Designations if the development goes through a rezoning, is supported by the local area plan, is consistent with City policies, good urban design, good urban design principles, and the objectives of this plan, and is responsive to the envisioned context of the surrounding area

The Official Community Plan locates this site within the Traditional Residential Urban Place Designation on the edge of a Small Urban Village, a Large Urban Village (Westside), and General Employment Urban Place Designations. While the proposed project exceeds the specified density envisioned for Traditional Residential Urban Place Designation, the OCP states that projects providing non-market housing, among

other public benefits, can depart from the guidance established by the Urban Place Designations. As such, an OCP amendment is not required.

The proposed development meets a number of goals of the OCP including:

- Accommodating population growth in or near Urban Villages.
- Supporting the regeneration or redevelopment of older rental housing developments by considering higher density redevelopment proposals on these sites.
- Working in partnership with senior levels of government for the provision of non-market housing.
- Supporting a range of housing types and tenures across the city and within neighbourhoods to meet the needs of residents at different life stages, household compositions, and abilities.
- Increase opportunities for ground-oriented and multi-unit residential housing.
- Encourage partnerships that address the need for affordable non-market housing for households with children.
- An emphasis on establishing housing units directed toward specific groups in core need.
- Encouraging buildings adjacent to sidewalks to maximize entrances at ground level to support active land uses and provide interest for pedestrians.
- Integrate off-street vehicle parking in a way that does not dominate development or streetscapes.
- Reduce greenhouse gas emissions through compact land use patterns, high building performance measures for new building construction, and the BC Step Code.

The proposed project aligns with OCP policy direction, and the principles of sustainability as outlined in the OCP.

4.2. VIC WEST NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

In the Vic West Neighbourhood Plan, Alston Street was identified as a route for connectivity in the community. North-south pedestrian and cycling routes were identified as a way to reinforce and enhance Vic West as an “eclectic, vibrant and diverse” (pg. 9) neighbourhood. The plan also highlighted the need for more housing to be built closer to transportation and transit options.



Figure 2: Rendering at corner of Alston St. and Langford St.

5. CALUC MEETING

On June 11, 2024, the project's initial design was presented to the Vic West Community Association Land Use Committee (CALUC). Members of the project team were in attendance to answer questions from neighbours and community members about the proposed family housing. In response to community concerns of parking and site planning, the building was redesigned to facilitate an underground parkade and a landscaped courtyard area. Updated designs were provided to the CALUC in November 2024.

6. AWARDED FUNDING

In 2024, this project received a key funding award through BC Housing's Indigenous Housing Fund, as well as funding from the City's Victoria Housing Reserve Fund. The City's support was instrumental to the success of both funding applications as staff highlighted the project's local benefit and the municipal subsidies.

7. CLOSURE

Based on the surrounding land uses and nearby amenities, this site is ideal for increased residential density. The design of the building and site aligns with the policy objectives put forward by the City of Victoria and introduces an additional 55-units of deeply needed affordable rental housing for Indigenous people into the community, filling a significant housing gap in Victoria.