

June 15, 2020

Mayor Lisa Helps & Council  
City of Victoria  
1 Centennial Square  
Victoria BC V8W 1P6

**Re: Development Permit Applications for Harris Green Village, Phase 1 (1033, 1043, 1045 & 1061 Yates St)**

Dear Mayor Helps & Members of Council:

On behalf of Starlight Developments, CitySpaces and the consultant team are pleased to submit this Development Permit application for the first phase of a master plan redevelopment for the 900 and 1000 blocks Yates Street (referred to as Harris Green Village). This phase comprises the eastern half of the 1000-block of Yates Street, bounded by Cook and View Streets, and is commonly referred to as the Harris Chrysler property (1045 Yates Street).

This application is to be considered in context with the Harris Green Village *Urban Design Manual* and *Rezoning Booklet*, which define the urban design strategy and massing framework, and establish the public realm contributions and other amenities that will be achieved throughout the project.

### **Project Description**

Residential rental is the primary use intended for the site, along with ground-oriented retail and second level childcare space. The plans envision 34,187 m<sup>2</sup> (367,986 sf) of residential space (equivalent to approximately 510 units) in a full mix of unit sizes and types. Corner plaza space at the prominent intersection of Yates and Cook Streets provides a generous public realm presence and a gateway expression at this important corner. Residential lobbies are located on Yates Street and View Street.

Commercial space, totaling 3,324 m<sup>2</sup> (35,779 sf), is situated along Yates and Cook Streets, partitioned into small-to-medium commercial units and one large unit to allow for a range of shops and services. The building frames the surrounding streets and serves to anchor the eastern gateway to Harris Green. The redevelopment of the site, on what is now primarily an auto-oriented, large paved parking area and single-storey service building, will complete the built form for the block.

### **CitySpaces Consulting Ltd.**

Suite 101  
848 Courtney St.  
Victoria BC  
V8W 1C4

250.383.0304 Tel

[www.cityspaces.ca](http://www.cityspaces.ca)

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The following table summarizes key elements of the project:

| Project Information Table                            |                       |
|--|-----------------------|
| Zoning, Existing                                     | R-48, S-1             |
| Site Area  | 6,337 m <sup>2</sup>  |
| Total Floor Area                                     | 38,022 m <sup>2</sup> |
| Residential Floor Area                               | 34,348 m <sup>2</sup> |
| Commercial Floor Area                                | 3,324 m <sup>2</sup>  |
| Childcare Space                                      | 515 m <sup>2</sup>    |
| Floor Space Ratio                                    | 6.0:1                 |
| Site Coverage  | 83%                   |
| Open Site Space                                      | 12%                   |
| Max Building Height (tallest building)               | 65.05 m               |
| Tower Heights (2 towers in storeys)                  | 19 + 17               |
| Parking Stalls (required: 418)                       | 460                   |
| Bicycle Parking (storage + temporary, required: 595) | 680                   |

### Urban Design Expression

The design provides a perimeter block of building, which creates a pleasing street façade and features two slender towers. While simple in form, the towers are varied with balconies, which evoke a sense of movement and rhythm. Tower heights are stepped across the site, with the taller tower located on the west side and shorter tower sited toward Cook Street, and both are substantially setback from the street. There is a 24 m separation between the westerly tower face and the closest existing “Regent” tower to the west and between the two “on-site” towers.

A central interior courtyard on the roof of the first-floor commercial space provides a large outdoor amenity space for residents and ample light and visual interest for residential units. There are cascading podium levels that sculpt the building and optimize solar performance for the public realm, achieving a comfortable building scale and a variety of outdoor amenities for residents. A corner plaza is placed at the Yates/Cook Street intersection expands the public realm and will complement a similar plaza strategy planned by another development for the north side of the intersection.

The ground floor plan is predominantly commercial retail space on the Yates and Cook Street frontages. There is a residential lobby on Yates Street and two additional elevator lobbies — one from P1 (commercial/visitor parking) through to L2 (location of childcare space) and one from P3 through to G (combination of access to parking for commercial visitors, as well as a shuttle elevator for bikes). View Street has a residential lobby for podium and eastern tower residential units, a series of grade-oriented two-storey townhomes, and parking and loading access.

Light brick columns are featured along streets, dividing the retail bays and attracting retail shoppers and pedestrians. Continuous weather protection along retail frontages provides pedestrian comfort and opportunities for signage. Special feature canopies at main entrances provide a visual hierarchy and sense of



arrival. Continuous retail, lobbies, and townhomes support ‘eyes on the street’, helping to promote security and wellbeing to the neighbourhood. The podium terraces towards the south are framed and detailed with metal panel accents that break-up the building’s scale and provide visual accents and interest.

The towers are clad in clear glass, with dark spandrel panels and charcoal gray aluminum mullions contrasting with white painted balcony slabs and silver railings. The podium features varied terraces and balconies accented in a warm copper-coloured metal panel, with natural light-coloured brick at the base that supports the tall curtain wall of retail glazing, and clear glass and charcoal gray colored aluminum canopies. The overall composition has a varied and visually interesting street experience, and a sense of identity.

The typical upper level floorplans for the two towers are offset from one another, and from the adjacent Regent Towers in order to maximize sunlight, views, and privacy. Each tower has a maximum floorplate of 650 m<sup>2</sup> (6,997 sf), which is consistent with City policy.

### **Landscaping & Rain Gardens**

The landscape design proposes to prioritize green infrastructure by including rain gardens in the road right-of-way boulevards, and increasing the number of street trees. Rain gardens will be prominently featured on Yates Street, and will function not only as a means of capturing and containing rainwater run-off from the sidewalk, but also as a neighbourhood amenity that enhances the public realm. An overall increase in the number of on-site and street trees will further enhance the urban forest in the neighbourhood, as well as promote infiltration, offer water quality benefits, and reduce peak flow during storm events. The significant existing horse chestnut trees on Cook Street will be protected and retained to further support the urban forest.

Lush roof terrace plantings will provide inviting spaces for residents. Outdoor amenity space for residents includes an outdoor kitchen and dining area, enclosed dog park area, and informal play areas for children of all ages.

### **Project Benefits & Amenities**

#### **Childcare Space**

The childcare space is located on the second level of the Yates Street frontage, with a total area of 515 m<sup>2</sup> (5,543 sf), and associated outdoor space. At maximum, the facility will accommodate approximately 75 children. A west-facing outdoor area includes a play area and outdoor tables and seating. A separate elevator accesses the childcare space, and also provides access to P1 commercial and visitor parking.



### **Corner Plaza Space**

Corner plaza space is provided at the prominent intersection of Cook and View Streets, and a smaller urban space expands the public realm at the southeast corner of the site. The ground level exterior walls are set back three metres from the street property lines. Incorporating “new town paving standards”, this design element that transitions into the public sidewalk will evoke a feeling of spacious, comfortable public spaces with ample room for street activities and outdoor restaurant seating.

### **Resident Amenities**

An exhaustive complement of amenities is provided for residents of the project, including:

- A substantial central internal courtyard on the second floor of the podium with pedestal paver floors and lush planters. Outside amenities within the courtyard include an outdoor kitchen with barbeques, benches, moveable tables and chairs, and an outdoor children’s play area. The courtyard will complement the surrounding interior amenities, and allow for flexible programming as tenants needs and preferences change over time.
- Interior amenities include a gym and fitness studio, change rooms, a multi-purpose/social room, and co-working and study spaces — all fronting onto the courtyard space.
- Three additional outdoor recreation spaces are found at various podium roof levels, including a dog run and additional outdoor seating areas.

### **Economic & Environmental Benefits**

- More than five hundred (500) residential units will be added to the rental market, significantly expanding Victoria’s apartment rental inventory, and be a stabilizing influence on rental rates by providing much needed rental housing supply.
- Based on the Economic Policy Institute’s estimates for 2019, it is estimated this project will generate approximately 260 construction and construction-related jobs per year during the construction period.
- The project will generate a sizable tax base, with direct tax revenues to the City estimated in the order of one million dollars annually.
- Residents occupying the 500+ residential units will significantly contribute to the vitality and financial health of Downtown retail shops and other local businesses.
- Living, working, and recreating Downtown reduces dependency on all forms of motorized transportation, prompting positive health, economic, and environmental benefits.



### **Transportation & Parking Variance**

The submitted plans provide a parking ratio that adheres to Schedule C requirements. However, it is anticipated the number of parking spaces will be reduced and/or replaced to allow for additional storage and to support amenity space. A minor variance in parking will be sought. Bicycle parking will meet bylaw requirements.

Parking will be located entirely below-grade. Service access for commercial units, garbage, and recycling is located at street level, but within the building envelope and enclosed from exterior view.

Access to the parking and services areas will be from View Street, and a consulting transportation engineer’s report provides details for improvements to the intersection of View and Cook Streets.

Although parking requirements will meet or nearly meet Schedule C, a series of Transportation Demand Management (TDM) measures will be implemented to encourage alternate transportation choices to private vehicle use. Starlight will work with City staff to determine appropriate TDM measures for this development given its location and proximity to transit, and as a final parking count is determined.

Currently, the following TDM measures are being contemplated:

- Three Modo (carshare) cars stationed on site;
- Three public EV stations in the commercial/visitor parking;
- EV load share will be provided in the residential parking to support up to 90 stalls, and that can be expanded as demand warrants;
- Bicycle parking in the basement is provided with an elevator sized to allow easy access to the street;
- Bicycle lockers are provided with a room for larger cargo-style bikes to encourage healthy active lifestyles and reduced car usage;
- End-of-trip bike storage is provided to encourage employees to use active transportation to and from their places of business; and
- Multi-modal wayfinding signage to help direct and orient residents, employees, and visitors to transit, bike share, car share, and bicycle parking and amenities.

### **Environmental Features**

The Harris Green neighbourhood is minutes from the Victoria's core with ample transit, cycling, and pedestrian infrastructure to meet all economic, social, recreational, and service needs. This project supports a sustainable lifestyle as the site is within walking distance to a wide range of commercial uses and community facilities, and in close proximity to transit and cycling infrastructure, which greatly enhances the sustainability of this development.

Green aspects of the project include:

- As a mixed-use, transit-oriented project, the development will provide a local option for housing, shopping, and leisure, and a childcare facility to support the growing community;
- The urban infill nature of the project adheres to the principle of promoting development on existing urban sites, diverting development pressure from greenfield locations, and making more efficient use of existing infrastructure;
- The project supports a high degree of walkability and cycling access to nearby amenities for residents, thereby reducing vehicle trips;
- Car share and load sharing EV stations are provided to reduce CO2 emissions;
- Extensive bike parking, lockers, and a bike repair station are provided;
- Landscape and stormwater management strategies, including partial green roofs, will retain and infiltrate rainwater, limiting the post-development peak water run-off from the development.

In order to reduce the urban heat island effect, improve building performance, and reduce CO2 emissions, the project design is implementing the following measures:

- 100% of the parking lot is covered and enclosed, or underground;
- The project will provide roof-top terraces with community gardens and garden beds to provide the opportunity for residents to engage in urban agriculture;



- A mix of unit types for various styles of living will have access to balconies and/or to large terraces on roof decks to provide all with access to the outdoors and views;
- Large windows in living room areas will increase natural lighting, provide views, and improve wellbeing;
- Outdoor water conservation strategies include water efficient landscaping. The project will aim to achieve an overall reduction in water use by specifying efficient fixtures;
- The building will have wildlife-resistant recyclable material storage facilities that are accessible to all users of the property;
- Ventilation supply and distribution will be designed to satisfy the requirements of ASHRAE standards, and will include ensuring ventilation is supplied to each suite and adequately distributed to each occupied space;
- The project will target STEP CODE 3. Passive envelope strategies have been implemented to reduce reliance on mechanical systems. Glazing percentage targets 50% window-to-wall area for the towers to minimize glazing heat loss and heat gain into each unit. All windows will be double pane, low-e glazing with thermally broken frames;
- Glazing specifications on the different building orientations will be considered for maximized solar control and passive heating; solar heat gain coefficient (SHGC) variations can benefit both energy and comfort. Glazing with projected balconies can have a higher SHGC for passive heating benefits during winter months, while shaded during summer months. Benefits will be based on completed energy modeling;
- Significant daylight penetration into each residential suite will increase passive solar gain during winter months, reduce reliance on artificial lighting, and provide access to views;
- Continuous weather protection along the commercial unit frontages will serve as combined solar control to reduce summertime heat gain, and mitigate glare issues in locations where buildings are not self-shading. The project has reduced exposed slab edges by providing insulated panels across the majority of the envelope.
- Every unit has access to an outdoor balcony, providing passive natural ventilation and cooling during shoulder months; and
- Low-energy lighting systems, including motion sensors, will be employed in all common areas throughout the project. ENERGY STAR appliances will be used throughout the project.



### In Closing

This project is the first of a three-phased comprehensive redevelopment plan that will significantly fulfill the long-term vision and policy objectives of the Harris Green Neighbourhood and the *Downtown Core Area Plan*. This prominent gateway site demands a signature development that bookends the eastern edge of the Downtown area. The massing and design vernacular has been thoughtfully considered. With its sculpted towers, use of high quality materials, and accentuation of wide public walkways at street level, this project will become a feature landmark and a positive contributor to the urban fabric of Victoria.

Should you require any further information about this application, please do not hesitate to contact me at 250.383.0304 x 122 or [dstrongitharm@cityspaces.ca](mailto:dstrongitharm@cityspaces.ca).

Sincerely,

Deane Strongitharm, RPP, MCIP

Attachs.

cc. Starlight Developments

