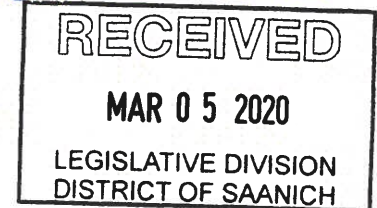




The Corporation of the District of Saanich

# Report

SAW-23 Mar 20



**To:** Mayor and Council  
**From:** Sharon Hvozdzanski, Director of Planning  
**Date:** March 4, 2020  
**Subject:** Development Permit Amendment Application and Development Cost Charge Waiver Request  
**File:** DPA00945 • 846 Nigel Avenue and 880 Vernon Avenue

## RECOMMENDATION

1. That Development Permit Amendment DPA00945 be approved.
2. That Council direct Staff to prepare a development specific bylaw that enables a 50% reduction in the Development Cost Charges due for the residential portion for this project.

## PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to seek direction from Council on the subject application. The application is to amend Nigel Valley Master Development Permit DPR00665 in order to construct a five-storey affordable housing apartment comprising a total of 70 residential units and 495.9 m<sup>2</sup> gross floor area of ground floor office commercial. No Zoning Bylaw variances are requested.

As Council is aware, the initial rezoning and "master" development permit process set in place the permitted land uses, and the general design parameters for the Nigel Valley. The subject Development Permit Amendment simply outlines in greater detail what will be built on this particular site within the Nigel Valley.

The application also includes a request to waive the Development Cost Charges due on this project. The applicant is Greater Victoria Housing Society (James Munro).

## DISCUSSION

### Neighbourhood Context

The 2840 m<sup>2</sup> site is located within Nigel Valley on the north side of the planned extension of Nigel Avenue east of Nigel Gate (see Figure 1). The site was recently cleared of all buildings and structures as the first step toward realization of the Nigel Valley vision which includes provision of 800+ units of affordable/supportive non-market and market housing and related programs and services within Nigel Valley. The process to subdivide Nigel Valley to create nine individual development sites, close existing roads and dedicate new roads, provide new and

upgraded services, dedicate and develop land for a park and a plaza, and construct new multi-family rental housing to replace the existing housing is ongoing and will be phased over a number of years.

Nigel Valley is part of the Uptown Major "Centre" which includes a diverse range of regional commercial uses as well as the municipal administrative precinct. The Lochside Regional Trail is 280 m west of the site with the municipal precinct across the trail. Saanich Plaza shopping centre is to the south across Vernon Avenue. Swan Lake Nature Sanctuary is northwest of the site.

A range of services are available within the Uptown Major "Centre", including the Emily Carr Library. Cedar Hill Community Recreation Centre is approximately 3 km travel distance.

### **Proposed Land Use**

Greater Victoria Housing Society currently operates 18 family townhouses in the Nigel Valley at 821 Nigel Avenue. These townhouses will eventually be demolished to realize a future phase of the Nigel Valley development. The new building to be located to the east of the current site along Nigel Avenue will include 70 residential units ranging from studios to four-bedrooms, as well as office commercial on the ground floor. The building will host a wide variety of tenants earning low to moderate incomes including families, working individuals, adults with disabilities, and seniors. Residents from 821 Nigel Avenue would be given the opportunity to relocate to the new building.

### **Site and Building Design**

The 2840 m<sup>2</sup> site is long and shallow with its long side to the street. It rises in elevation about 2.7 m from southeast to northwest. This grade change allows for a partial parking level accessed at grade behind the street oriented commercial with a second full subgrade level below, accessed via an internal ramp. The building would have 6228.9 m<sup>2</sup> gross floor area, 2.197 Floor Space Ratio, 50.47% site coverage and a maximum height of 38.75 m geodetic which is consistent with the requirements of the CD-6NV (Comprehensive Development Nigel Valley) Zone. All units would exceed Saanich's accessibility guidelines including full universal design and the inclusion of four fully accessible units.

The five-storey mixed-use building would include four floors of wood frame construction over a one level concrete podium. The building would be setback a minimum 3.079 m from Nigel Avenue along the majority of the street frontage and inset further near the middle to indicate the main entry and activity hub. The frontage on Nigel Avenue would include large commercial storefronts, with generous hardscape partially covered by continuous canopies. The fully glazed entrance lobby, central staircase, level 3 laundry room, and level 4 and 5 glazed corridors are located to help animate the street elevation and allow the tenants to engage with the activity on the street.

The central activity hub would include two common rooms on the north side of the building. The level 2 common room would provide access to the rear yard outdoor spaces which are designed to be used for resident events, or for quiet private use.

A high quality and durable materials palette is proposed for the building and surrounding landscaping consistent with the Nigel Valley Urban Design Guidelines. The predominant cladding material for the upper residential floors is prefinished vertically oriented corrugated sheet metal. Below is predominantly glazed commercial storefront, bookended by thick walls of large format tiles with the look and feel of concrete, to emphasize the mass of the first floor

concrete structure. A full height, copper coloured metal clad curved volume would accent the inset main entry and activity hub. The predominantly dark grey coloured building would be punctuated with red window frames. The soffits of the cable supported, continuous projections along the south and wrapping the sides of the building, would be clad in a warm, wood-finished material.

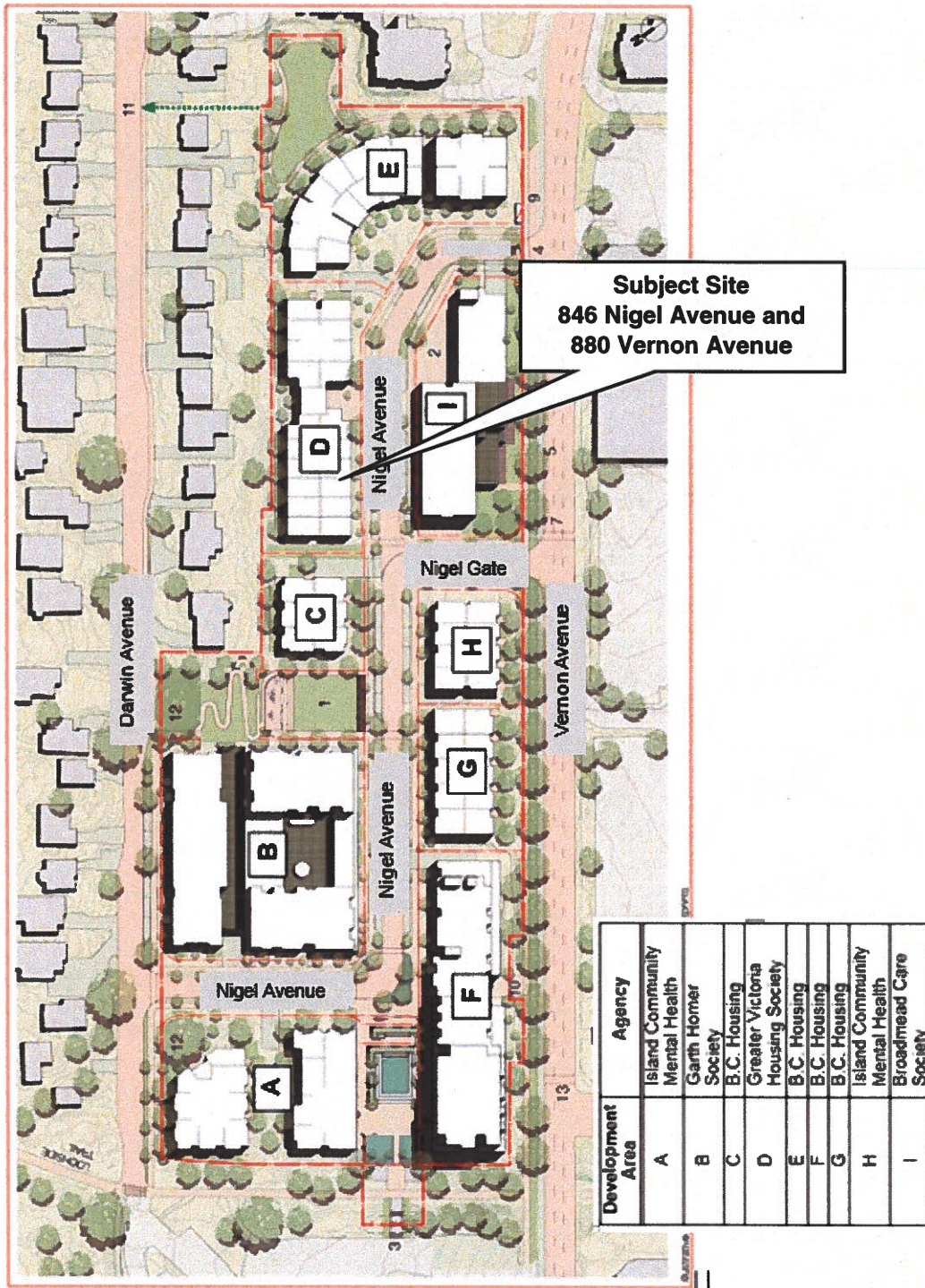
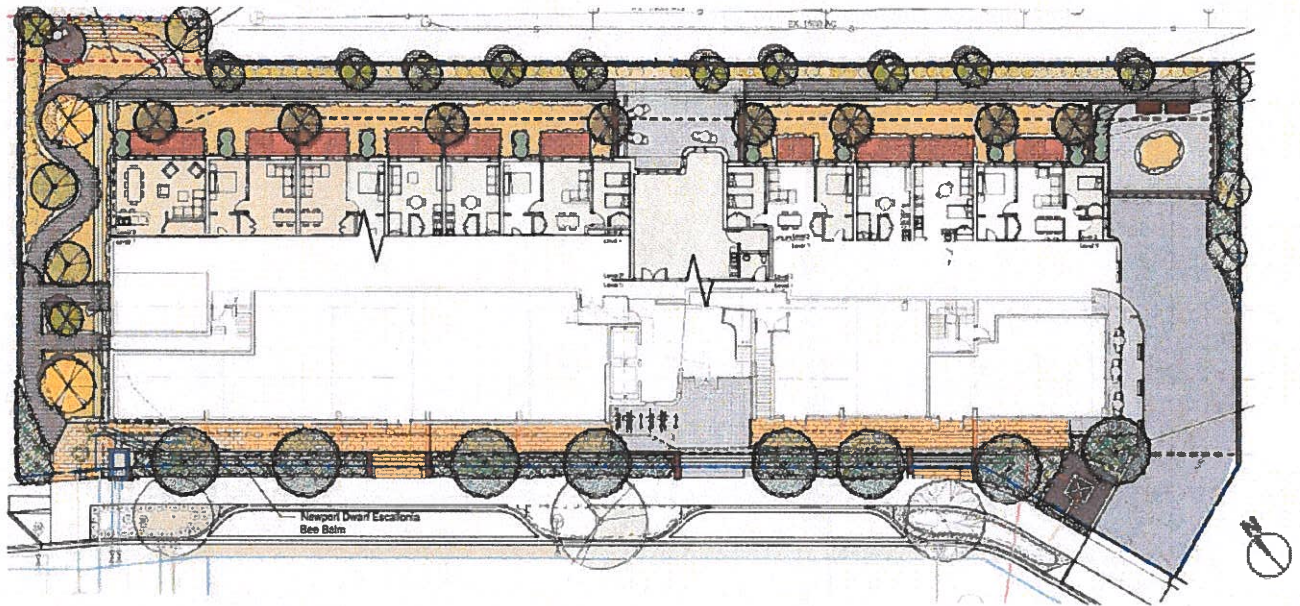


Figure 1: Nigel Valley Illustrative Site Plan (from plans by Cascadia Architects Inc.)



**Figure 2: Proposed Site Plan** (from plans by Cascadia Architects Inc.)

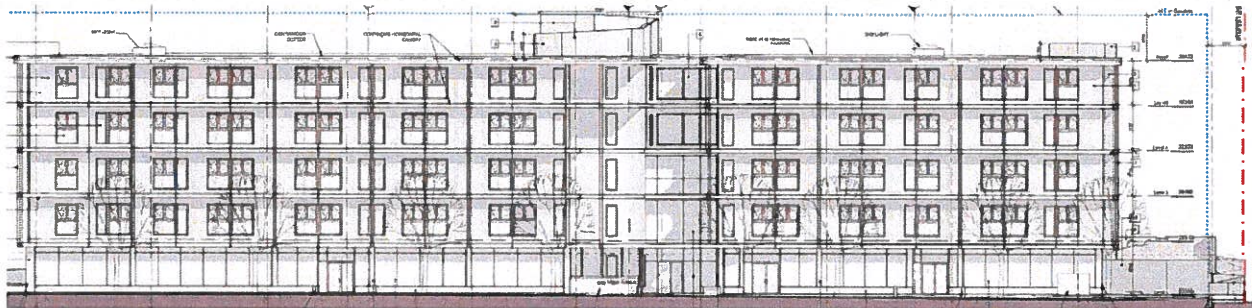
In 2018, Council adopted BC Energy Step Code. The Building Bylaw requires all new Part 3 buildings to achieve Step 3 of the BC Energy Step Code. The proposed building is targeting BC Step Code Level 4 energy performance and would use Passive House design and construction methods to achieve a high level of envelope performance and durability.



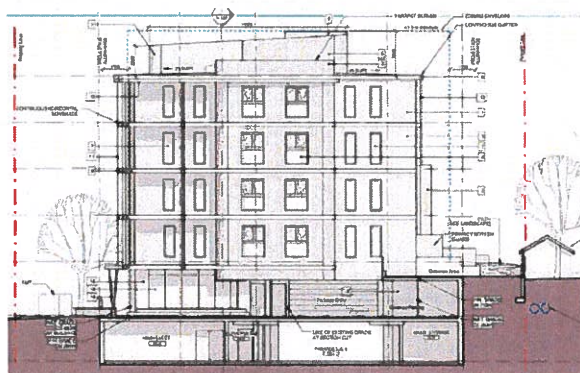
**Figure 3: Perspective View of Proposed Building from Nigel Avenue** (from plans by Cascadia Architects Inc.)



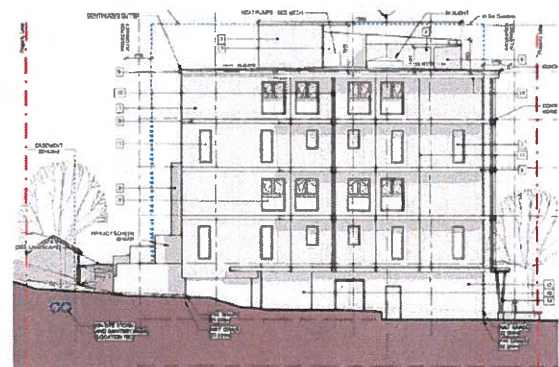
North Elevation



South Elevation



East Elevation



West Elevation

**Figure 4: Proposed Elevations** (from plans by Cascadia Architects Inc.)

**Consultation**

The applicant has stated that on-going liaison has been maintained with the community association and with tenants and families of Greater Victoria Housing Society since 2015. This includes multiple community open houses and information sessions.

It is important to note that the subject application is an amendment to a Form and Character Development Permit. Extensive community consultation about the Nigel Valley Redevelopment took place as part of the rezoning and development permit process.

Community Association

Planning sent a referral to the Mount View Colquitz Community Association. A response was received indicating full support for the project and encouraging that the application be processed in a timely manner. A copy of the detailed referral comments from the Mount View Colquitz Community Association is included in the agenda package.

### Advisory Design Panel

The Advisory Design Panel considered the application. The Panel resolved as follows:

“That it be recommended that the design to construct a five-storey affordable housing apartment comprising a total of 70 residential units and 495.9 m<sup>2</sup> gross floor area of ground floor office commercial at 880 Vernon Avenue be approved subject to consideration of:

1. Creation of a sense of entry and more privacy in each unit entryway;
2. Break-up of the long corridors;
3. Potential of ponding water on the adjacent properties on the project-north property line; and
4. Installation of support backing for ceiling tracking in the bathrooms of the accessible units.”

The applicant has stated that these requests would be considered at the Building Permit stage.

### **ALTERNATIVES**

1. That Council approve the recommendation as outlined in the staff report (Staff Recommend).
2. That Council reject the recommendations as outlined in the staff report.
3. That Council provide alternate direction to Staff.

### **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

The applicant has requested a Development Cost Charge (DCC) waiver (100%) for the Nigel House Redevelopment project. A DCC waiver would have financial implications for the District as the District is responsible for making up for any DCC revenue resulting from the implementation of a Development Cost Charge Reduction Bylaw through secure alternate (i.e. non-DCC) revenue sources. Making-up the loss of potential DCC income is one of the primary concerns with waiving or reducing DCCs for developments.

Depending on when the Building Permit is issued for the subject development, the total value of DCC's due for the residential portion of this development would be approximately: \$68,650.40 based on the current DCC Bylaw; or \$452,340 based on the proposed new DCC bylaw, year one. DCC reductions are not applicable to the commercial component of the project.

### **STRATEGIC PLAN IMPLICATIONS**

The subject proposal works towards achieving one of Council's key Strategic Plan goals, namely; the development of "**Affordable and diverse housing that meets our residents' needs now and in the future**".

The development also addresses other Strategic Plan goals, such as:

- Increasing housing supply and diversity to support more affordable, vibrant and inclusive communities;
- Seeking opportunities to work with partners to build purpose-built and non-market housing;
- Integrating sustainable modes of transportation with land use planning;
- Building connected neighbourhoods with a focus on active transportation and accessible services;

- Ensuring land use decisions are consistent with our community-supported plans; and
- Supporting land use planning which recognizes and protects our rural and urban character while encouraging a suitable mix of housing in our neighbourhoods.

## **PLANNING IMPLICATIONS**

### **Policy**

The following Saanich Planning Policies are most applicable to the subject proposal:

#### Official Community Plan (2008)

- 4.2.1.1 “Support and implement the eight strategic initiatives of the Regional Growth Strategy, namely: Keep urban settlement compact; Protect the integrity of rural communities; Protect regional green and blue space; Manage natural resources and the environment sustainably; Build complete communities; Improve housing affordability; Increase transportation choice; and Strengthen the regional economy.”
- 4.2.1.2 “Maintain the Urban Containment Boundary as the principal tool for growth management in Saanich, and encourage all new development to locate within the Urban Containment Boundary.”
- 4.2.1.16 “Encourage “green” development practices by considering variances, density bonusing, modified/alternative development standards or other appropriate mechanisms when reviewing development applications.”
- 4.2.1.18 “Encourage new development to achieve higher energy and environmental performance through programmes such as ‘Built Green’, LEED or similar accreditation systems.”
- 4.2.1.20 “Require building and site design that reduce the amount of impervious surfaces and incorporate features that will encourage ground water recharge such as green roofs, vegetated swales and pervious paving material.”
- 4.2.2.1 “Support quality architectural and urban design that: uses local, durable and eco-friendly building materials; works with the topography and protects the natural environment; reflects our west coast design; enhances a “Sense of Place”; respects local history and heritage structures and landscapes; creates pedestrian friendly and safe streets and neighbourhoods; incorporates and supports the use of alternative transportation; and ensures that our community is physically accessible.”
- 4.2.2.3 “Consider the use of variances to development control bylaws where they would achieve a more appropriate development in terms of streetscape, pedestrian environment, view protection, overall site design, and compatibility with neighbourhood character and adjoining properties.”
- 4.2.2.9 “Implement the initiatives outlined in the “Access to Transit” study.”
- 4.2.2.10 “Liaise with private and public agencies to address the needs of people with physical challenges.”
- 4.2.3.1 “Focus new multiple family residential, commercial, institutional and civic development in Major and Neighbourhood “Centres”, as indicated on Map 4.”

- 4.2.3.3 “Through the development review process consider the use of variances, housing agreements, covenants, phased development agreements and density bonusing to secure public amenities such as; open space, playgrounds, landmarks, focal points, activity centres or cultural features.”
- 4.2.3.7 “Support the following building types and land uses in Major and Neighbourhood “Centres”:
- Townhouses (up to 3 storeys)
  - Low-rise residential (up to 4 storeys)
  - Mixed-use residential (up to 8 storeys)
  - Live/work studio & Office (up to 8 storeys)
  - Civic and institutional (generally up to 8 storeys)
  - Commercial and Mixed-Use (generally up to 8 storeys).”
- 4.2.9.10 “Encourage publicly accessible open spaces in new developments, such as plazas, walkways or small park nodes.”
- 4.2.9.6 “Encourage and support non-vehicular transportation by providing a safe, interconnected, accessible and visually appealing cycling and walking network.”
- 5.1.2.2 “Evaluate applications for multi-family developments on the basis of neighbourhood context, site size, scale, density, parking capacity and availability, underground services capacity, school capacity, adequacy of parkland, contributions to housing affordability, and visual and traffic/pedestrian impact.”
- 5.1.2.16 “Integrate seniors and special needs housing into the community where there is good access to public transit and basic support services.”

#### Saanich Core Local Area Plan (1999)

- 6.1 “Encourage protection of indigenous vegetation, wildlife habitat, and riparian environments within Saanich Core when considering applications for change in land use.”
- 6.5 “Seek opportunities to use native species for landscaping boulevards and other public lands to reduce maintenance costs.”

#### Draft Uptown-Douglas Corridor Plan

The draft Uptown-Douglas Corridor Plan (September, 2019) designates the site for mid-rise residential development up to five-storeys, consistent with the Nigel Valley Illustrative Site Plan (see Figure 1). Nigel Valley is part of the Nigel Valley – Municipal Campus Neighbourhood. Nigel Valley is envisioned to be a vibrant, inclusive neighbourhood that is fully integrated with the broader community and provides a range of housing and services that contribute to a healthy community.

#### Development Permit Area Guidelines

The Nigel Valley Master Development Permit includes urban and architectural design guidelines to guide the form and character of future development. Specific guidelines respecting the subject site (Development Area I) include ground floor activity that relates to the street and vehicle access and main entrance oriented to Nigel Avenue.



**Policy Analysis**

The proposal is consistent with the Official Community Plan which focuses the majority of future growth to “Centres” and “Villages” and supports the establishment of more compact, walkable neighbourhoods that address a variety of local resident needs. The Nigel Valley is part of the Uptown Major “Centre” which includes a diverse range of regional commercial uses as well as the municipal administrative precinct. In accordance with the OCP, the proposed development would provide a range of housing types that can accommodate people of different ages, income, and physical and social needs. It would allow people with special needs to become or remain part of the community in new, customized accommodations. This proposal fosters the development of a community that is safe, diverse and inclusive and where social interaction, physical activity, sense of place, and neighbourliness are actively promoted and supported.

The proposal is also consistent with the draft Uptown-Douglas Corridor Plan which designates the site for mid-rise residential development up to five-storeys, consistent with the Nigel Valley Illustrative Site Plan (see Figure 1). In accordance with the Nigel Valley Urban Design Guidelines, the development would contribute to a vibrant, inclusive neighbourhood that is fully integrated with the broader community and that provides a range of housing and services that contribute to a healthy community.

**Servicing**

The provision of new and upgraded roads and services for Nigel Valley is being undertaken in phases in accordance with the Master Development Agreement. Servicing requirements specific to this development include the provision of new or upgraded sanitary sewer, water and storm drain connections and construction/improvement to Nigel Avenue fronting this development. Stormwater management must be provided in accordance with the requirements of Schedule H “Engineering Specifications” of the Subdivision Bylaw. This development is in a Type 1 watershed area which requires stormwater storage, construction of a treatment train and sediment basin.

**Mobility**

A total of 62 parking stalls would be provided in accordance with the Zoning Bylaw requirement. Four residential parking stalls and four commercial parking stalls would be provided with electric vehicle recharging stations. Conduit would be provided in the concrete for the remaining stalls to be easily retrofitted in the future to provide the same electric charging service. Class 1 and Class 2 bicycle parking would be provided in excess of the Zoning Bylaw requirement. In addition, a room to hold up to 10 electric personal mobility scooters would also be provided at the lower parkade level.

**Environment**

As part of the overall redevelopment of Nigel Valley nearly all of the existing trees will need to be removed and replacement trees will be required. A revised Arborist Report and Tree Replacement Strategy was prepared for the Nigel Valley Project by Talbot Mackenzie & Associates Consulting Arborists. Based on this strategy, the subject site requires 16 replacement trees. The proposed landscape plans show 37 replacement trees of which 29 meet the Bylaw requirements for size and species. Of the 37 proposed trees, 15 are native species to B.C.

In 2010 Saanich Council adopted the Urban Forest Strategy. A key goal is “To Protect and Enhance the Urban Forest”. Further to this goal is the “No Net Loss” canopy policy. The policy will ensure that every public or protected private tree removed is replaced with a minimum of one tree. The current proposal achieves the intent of this important policy.

In 2018, Council adopted BC Energy Step Code. As of June 1, 2019, the Building Bylaw required all new Part 3 buildings to achieve Step 1 of the BC Energy Step Code and moving to Step 3 as of January 2020. The proposed building is targeting BC Step Code Level 4 energy performance and would use Passive House design and construction methods to achieve a high level of envelope performance and durability. The hot water system is proposed to be an electric air source heat pump system. The roof has been designed to support solar panels and conduits would be run to the roof for future solar photovoltaic and domestic hot water.

### **Development Cost Charge Waiver**

The applicant has requested a Development Cost Charge (DCC) waiver (100%) for the Nigel House Redevelopment project. As a not-for-profit provider of housing services, Greater Victoria Housing Society is making a significant financial commitment with this project and there is concern about rising construction costs. A waiver from DCCs would help mitigate these rising costs and would make a significant positive difference to the project budget.

It has not been Saanich's practice to provide DCC relief for individual projects that advance Municipal objectives, however, as part of the Development Cost Charge Bylaw review process, Council requested staff to give consideration to waivers and reductions for not-for-profit and affordable housing.

### Interim Measures

As part of the Development Cost Charge Reduction Bylaw report that came before Council on February 10, 2020, staff indicated that applicants proposing development application that include supportive or affordable housing units can legally request a "project specific" DCC reduction in advance of Council adopting a District wide bylaw. It was noted that any such requests would be included in the Staff Report on the relevant development application, for Council's review and deliberation. In that report, Staff recommended a 50% reduction in DCCs for not-for-profit rental housing, including supportive living housing.

Current DCCs would be \$980.72 per unit with the total amount for the 70 units included in this project totaling \$68,650.40. DCCs are payable at the time of Building Permit issuance. In January, 2020 Council gave third reading to a revised DCC Bylaw and the Bylaw has been referred to the Inspector of Municipalities for approval. Based on the proposed bylaw, DCCs would increase to \$6462 per unit (\$452,340 total) at the date of Bylaw adoption and increase annually to a high of \$7605 per unit (\$532,350 total) four years following Bylaw adoption.

In an effort to assist with the development of much needed supportive housing while also addressing the financial obligations of the District to replace this reduced DCC revenue through a secure alternate (i.e. non-DCC) revenue source, staff recommend that Council approve a 50% reduction in the DCC due for this specific development.

### **CONCLUSION**

The proposal is consistent with the Official Community Plan which focuses the majority of future growth to "Centres" and "Villages" and supports the establishment of more compact, walkable neighbourhoods that address a variety of local resident needs. In accordance with the Official Community Plan, the proposed development would provide housing for a variety of tenants earning low to moderate incomes including families, working individuals, adults with disabilities, and seniors. This proposal fosters the development of a community that is safe, diverse and

inclusive and where social interaction, physical activity, sense of place, and neighbourliness are actively promoted and supported.

The proposal is also consistent with the draft Uptown-Douglas Corridor Plan which designates the site for mid-rise residential development up to five-storeys. In accordance with the Nigel Valley Urban Design Guidelines, the development would contribute to a vibrant, inclusive neighbourhood that is fully integrated with the broader community and that provides a range of housing and services that contribute to a healthy community.

The applicant has also requested a Development Cost Charge waiver for this affordable housing project. Staff are recommending a 50% reduction in Development Cost Charges which is consistent with Development Cost Charge Reduction Bylaw Report that came before Council on February 10, 2020.

Prepared by: shsoltzman  
for Neil Findlow  
Senior Planner

Reviewed by: shsoltzman  
Shari Holmes-Saltzman  
Manager of Current Planning

Approved by: Hvozanski  
Sharon Hvozanski  
Director of Planning

NDF/jsp

Attachments

cc Valla Tinney, Director of Finance

**ADMINISTRATOR'S COMMENTS:**

I endorse the recommendation from the Director of Planning.

[Signature]  
Paul Thorkelsson, Administrator