

REPORT

Climate Action, Planning and Development

To: Mayor Johnstone and Members of Council
Date: June 12, 2023

From: Jackie Teed, Acting Director of Climate Action, Planning and Development
File: REZ00240
DP001040

Item #: 2023-392

Subject: Rezoning and Development Permit (145 to 209 East Columbia Street) – Preliminary Report

RECOMMENDATION

THAT Council direct staff to work with the applicant to prepare a plan of development for the subject property suitable for consideration of First and Second Readings, as outlined in the “Application Review Process” section of this report.

THAT Council endorse in principle that no Public Hearing be held for this application in accordance with the Local Government Act.

PURPOSE

To seek Council’s approval to process the rezoning application for a six-storey mixed use development at 145 to 209 East Columbia Street as outlined within this report, and Council’s endorsement in principle that no Public Hearing be held for the application.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Rezoning and Development Permit applications have been received to allow the proposed development of a six storey mixed use building with an overall density of approximately 3.7 Floor Space Ratio (FSR). The proposal includes 92 secured market rental units; 1,686 sq.m. (18,149 sq. ft.) of office space on the second floor; and 1,338 sq.m. (14,402 sq. ft.) of at grade retail space.

BACKGROUND

Site Characteristics and Context

Located in the Sapperton neighborhood, the proposed development site consists of five lots, with a combined area of 2,481 square meters (26,705 square feet) and a frontage of approximately 76 meters (249 feet). The subject site is bounded by East Columbia Street, Alberta Street and Strand Avenue as well as a lane in the rear. The site is located approximately 350 metres (1,148 feet) from the Royal Columbian Hospital, 450 metres (1,476 feet) from the Sapperton SkyTrain Station, and 450 metres (1,476 feet) from Sapperton Park.



Further details on site characteristics and context is provided in Attachment 1.

POLICY AND REGULATIONS

The application is consistent with the Official Community Plan (OCP) land use designation for the subject property, which is Mixed Use Low Rise (ML) and with other key City policies including, Family Friendly Housing Policy and Special Employment Area in the Official Community Plan. East Columbia Street is identified as a Great Street in the Master Transportation Plan. Attachment 2 provides more information on policy and regulation context.

PROJECT PROPOSAL

Preliminary submissions have been received for applications for Rezoning and Development Permit for a six storey mixed use development with an overall density of approximately 3.7 Floor Space Ratio (FSR). The proposal includes 92 rental market units, which would be secured by means of a Housing Agreement and residential rental tenure zoning, 1,686 sq.m. (18,149 sq. ft.) of office space on the second floor; and 1,338 sq.m. (14,402 sq. ft.) of at grade retail space.

The proposal includes 197 vehicle parking spaces (96 residential, 10 visitor and 91 commercial spaces) and 144 long term bicycle stalls in an underground parkade accessed off Alberta Street. Vehicle parking minimum requirements are exceeded for both residential and commercial uses. Short term bicycle parking stalls (22) are proposed at key building entrances and exits across the site. Residential and commercial loading is proposed at the back of the building, accessed from the rear lane via Strand Avenue. Select project drawings are included in Attachment 3.

DISCUSSION

Overall Evaluation

This development would provide the benefit of additional secured market rental units for the community in close proximity to transit, as well as streetscape improvements along East Columbia Street. The provision of office on the second floor supports the OCP's vision to locate employment generating uses that support the hospital (e.g. space for medical offices) within a five minute walk of the hospital. As part of the development application review process, staff would continue to work with the applicant to bring the proposal into alignment with key City policies, regulations and design guidelines, in particular:

East Columbia Street Design Guidelines

- *Building Massing and Transition* – the application proposes to build to six-storeys on a site that is very constrained due to its shallow lot depth, slope and adjacency to existing single-detached houses. As such, staff would work with the applicant to create a sensitive interface with the properties at the rear through façade articulation and materials change on the upper storeys.
- *Street wall* – the design guidelines call for the incorporation of a pedestrian scaled street wall with an appropriate relation to the street width.
- *Livability and Outdoor Space* – common amenity space for a development of this scale needs to be sufficient to be programmable for inter-generational activities and uses. In addition to the proposed outdoor amenity space on level three of development, shared outdoor space would need to be provided on the rooftop and trees would need to be provided in both shared outdoor spaces for shade.

Great Street

East Columbia Street is designated as a Great Street in the Master Transportation Plan. East Columbia Street has also been identified as a future protected mobility lane in the Active Transportation Network Plan (ATNP). The proposed development would provide opportunities for streetscape improvements on the East Columbia Frontage and implementation of other MTP and ATNP priorities, including a separated uni-directional bicycle lane as well as upgrades to the existing transit stop on East Columbia Street.

Site Access

The Subdivision and Development Control Bylaw states that for sites located at the intersection of two roads of different hierarchical ranks, vehicular access shall be off the lower ranked road. This would necessitate access be taken off the rear lane. A variance to this bylaw to allow access to be taken from Alberta Street may be reasonable, provided the applicant makes a compelling justification.

Loading

Residential and commercial loading spaces are proposed at the back of the building, accessed from the rear lane off Strand Avenue. Multiple site accesses are not permitted under the Street and Traffic Bylaw. Staff would work with the applicant to further explore locating the loading spaces within the underground parkade; this could also provide opportunities to include trees or soft landscaping along the lane to create a better lane condition and interface the adjacent neighborhood.

Bicycle Parking Variances

Variances for 2 short term residential bicycle stalls and 1 long term commercial bicycle stall are being sought. The variances for the 2 short term residential stalls are reasonable given the surplus of short term commercial bicycle parking, however the applicant will be expected to meet the bylaw requirements for the long term commercial bike parking.

APPLICATION REVIEW PROCESS

Below is an overall outline of the development review process for this project.

1. Preliminary Report to Council (June 12, 2023) **(WE ARE HERE)**;
2. Interdepartmental staff review towards a suitable plan of development (ongoing);
3. Applicant-led public consultation, including dissemination of information through the Sapperton Residents Association;
4. Presentation to the New Westminster Design Panel;
5. Creation of a Be Heard New West webpage;
6. Comprehensive Report to Council;

7. Council consideration of First, Second and Third Readings of the Rezoning Bylaw following issuance of Notice of Public Hearing Not Held;
8. Completion of adoption requirements;
9. Council consideration of adoption of Zoning Amendment Bylaw;
10. Issuance of the Development Permit by the Director of Climate Action, Planning and Development.

As indicated in the review process noted above, public consultation will be held prior to advancing the application for further Council consideration, and staff do not anticipate that a Public Hearing will be required. While staff recommend that Council endorse in principle that no Public Hearing be held, the results of public consultation will be provided to Council in the comprehensive report, at which time Council would have an opportunity to revisit this decision prior to advancing the bylaw for readings.

INTERDEPARTMENTAL LIAISON

The City has a project-based team approach for reviewing development applications, which facilitates interdepartmental review, providing comments to the applicant throughout the development review process. This project-based team includes staff from Engineering; Climate Action, Planning and Development; Parks and Recreation, Electrical and Fire Departments.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Financial considerations will be evaluated as part of the application review process and any relevant details will be included in the comprehensive report.

OPTIONS

The following options are available for Council's consideration:

1. That Council direct staff to work with the applicant to prepare a plan of development for the subject property suitable for consideration of First and Second Readings, as outlined in the "Application Review Process" section of this report.
2. That Council endorse in principle that no Public Hearing be held for this application in accordance with the Local Government Act.
3. That Council provide staff with alternative direction.

Staff recommend Options 1 and 2.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1 - Site Characteristics and Context

Attachment 2 - Policy and Regulation Context

Attachment 3 - Select Project Renderings

APPROVALS

This report was prepared by:

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