



# REPORT

**Date:** June 12, 2023

**File:** REZ00239

**Item #:** 2023-399

**Subject: Rezoning: 88 Tenth Street (Columbia Square) – Introductory Report**

**THAT** Council direct staff to work with the applicant to revise their proposal to meet the City's Inclusionary Housing Policy and Secured Market Rental expectations, or identify an alternative proposal for achieving inclusionary and secured market housing in the project to the satisfaction of the Director, and report back to Council, prior to advancing the proposal further in the review process.

**THAT** Council direct staff to work with the applicant to secure development of the affordable units either within the first half of the total project build-out or proportional to the overall development build-out.

**THAT** Council direct staff to work with the applicant to complete discussions with School District 40 (SD40) regarding the need for a school site in the area, to the satisfaction of the Director.

To introduce to Council a development proposal for 88 Tenth Street (Columbia Square) and to seek Council direction on key areas of policy misalignment.

An application for rezoning has been received for the creation of a Master Plan for the site at 88 Tenth Street (Columbia Square Plaza Shopping Centre). This master plan would facilitate the multi-phased development of a high-density, complete, mixed use, and transit-oriented community which is intended to include a variety of housing opportunities, office and retail uses and community and public spaces. The proposal is

preliminary in nature, and requires additional details from the applicant, however it is anticipated the site could accommodate 6 to 8 towers with height and overall density dependent on further review of servicing requirements, alignment with City policies and amenities to be delivered through the application. It is expected that as a minimum, the existing retail floor space would be replaced on site and would be consistent with the Retail Strategy currently under development and that a minimum of 11,150 square metres (120,000 square feet) of office space be provided on site.

The proposal is generally consistent with the form and uses anticipated for the area; however, based on the preliminary data provided by the applicant, the proposal does not include enough affordable rental units to meet the City's Inclusionary Housing Policy requirements. The proposed number of secured market rental units is also below the City's expectation for a development of this size. As of yet, the applicant has not provided sufficient information for staff to analyze and provide a recommendation on these components. Given the Council strategic priority for housing across the spectrum, and recently identified gap in meeting the City's 2021-2022 goal for affordable housing units which is a significant community need, staff is seeking Council direction to work with the applicant to refine the proposal such that it satisfies City expectations in this regard, including but not limited to timing of delivery, and report back to Council with a Preliminary Report to launch the application review. That review would generally follow the steps as outlined in the Application Review Process Section of this report.

As this project would bring significant growth to Downtown, staff has indicated to the applicant that they need to work with School District 40 to understand school space needs and determine if there is an opportunity for the project to accommodate an urban school. Staff is seeking Council direction to ensure these discussions are completed to the satisfaction of the City, prior to Council consideration of the application.

## **BACKGROUND**

### **Pre-Application Review**

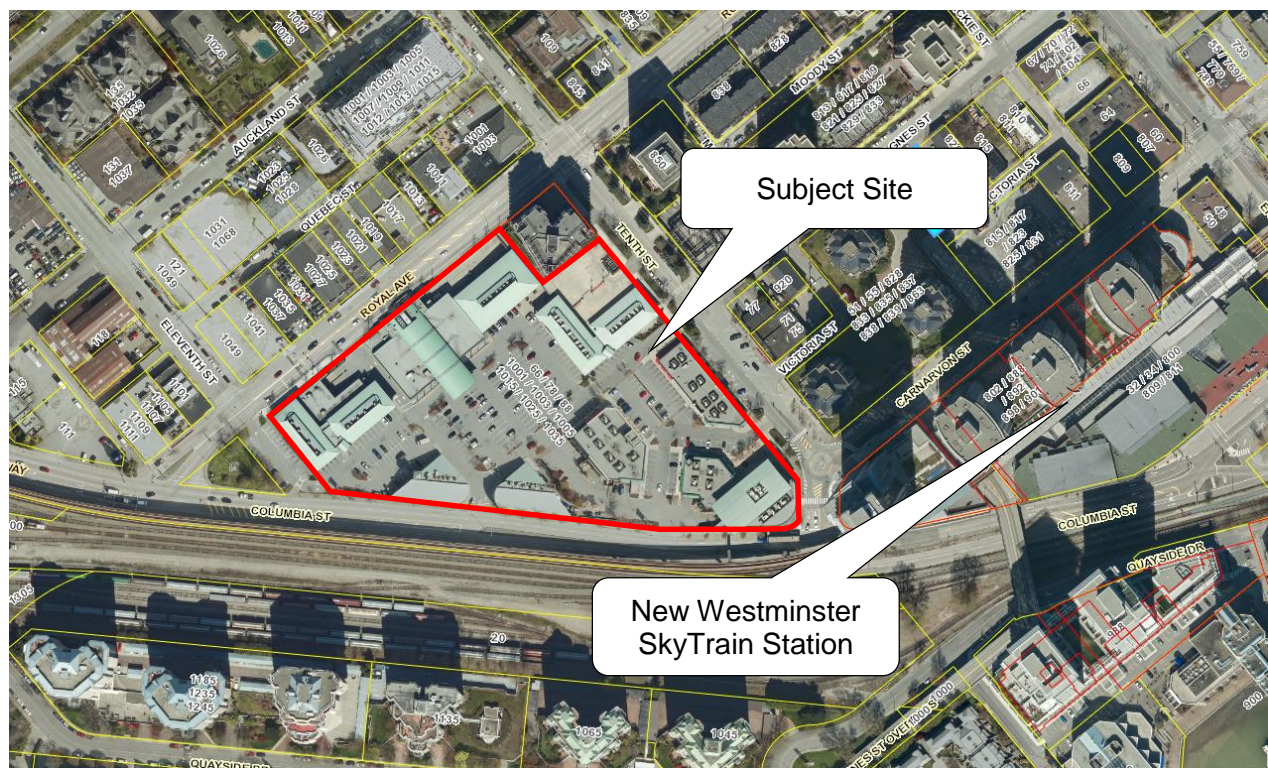
The applicant completed a Pre-Application Review in March 2023 with staff providing initial feedback in a number of key topic areas:

- inclusionary / affordable housing
- secured market rental housing
- commercial retail and office uses
- school and child care needs
- relationship to the City's River Front Vision
- transportation and accessibility
- pedestrian and cycling facilities
- climate action
- reconciliation and First Nations consultation
- heritage and archeology
- parks and open space
- community recreational, cultural and arts needs

At the request of the applicant, to expedite the overall timeline, the PAR was limited to staff feedback, with Council's initial feedback now being sought as part of a full rezoning application.

### Site Characteristics and Context

The subject site is a large (29,084 square metres / 313,062 sq. ft. / 7.2 acre) triangular shaped lot located in the Downtown neighbourhood bounded by Royal Avenue and Columbia and Tenth Streets. The site is relatively flat and the majority of it is located within the flood plain. The site is proximate to New Westminster SkyTrain Station; the closest edge of the site is located about 100 metres (328 feet) away and the furthest edge is about 380 metres (1,248 feet) away.



More site characteristics and context is provided in [Attachment 1](#).

### **POLICY AND REGULATIONS**

The overall intent of the application is consistent with the Downtown Community Plan (DCP) land use designation for the subject property, which is Mixed Use High Density. The site is zoned C-4 – Downtown Mixed Use District (High Density) (C-4), however a rezoning would be necessary to allow for towers and to maximize potential of the DCP designation. [Attachment 2](#) provides more information on policy and regulation context and the Inclusionary Housing Policy is included as [Attachment 3](#).

## **PROPOSAL**

An application for rezoning has been received for the creation of a Master Plan for the site at 88 Tenth Street (Columbia Square Plaza Shopping Centre). This master plan would facilitate the multi-phased development of a high-density, complete, mixed use, and transit-oriented community which is intended to include a variety of housing opportunities, office and retail uses and community and public spaces.

This is a large site located at the western gateway in the downtown and which represents a significant and unique development opportunity with the ability to address a number of key City strategic objectives and community needs through the application of City policies and regulations.

The subject site is designated Mixed Use High Density within the Downtown Community Plan (DCP) and the general form of development is expected to be tower residential with a mix of retail, office and residential podiums interfacing with grade. Based on key tower planning principles and design guidelines it is anticipated the site could accommodate 6 to 8 towers. Height and overall density would be dependent on further review of servicing requirements, alignment with City policies and amenities to be delivered through the application. It is expected that as a minimum, the existing retail floor space would be replaced on site and would be consistent with the Retail Strategy currently under development. A minimum of 11,150 square metres (120,000 square feet) of office is expected to be provided on site.

Significant residential density is anticipated consistent with the DCP designation. Depending on the provision of amenities the amount of residential floor space could be between 155,000 to 279,000 square metres (1.7 million to 3 million square feet) and could represent an estimated 2,200 to 4,000 residential units for an estimated 4,000 to 7,250 residents.

It is expected that most, if not all functions, related to automobile movement, parking and loading would be conducted below grade, allowing the surface to be prioritized for pedestrians and cyclists.





Conceptual Development Sketch – 88 Tenth Street

## **DISCUSSION**

### **Initial Application Feedback**

Staff has provided the applicant with a feedback on a number of key topic areas both as part of the Pre-Application Review (PAR) and since submission of the formal rezoning application in March 2023, and have been working with the applicant to incorporate that feedback. This application is preliminary and there are number of topic areas for staff and the applicant to continue to work through, including many which are substantial but on which progress is being made. A summary of staff PAR comments and applicant responses to feedback are included in Attachment 4.

However, there two areas of strategic importance in which staff is seeking Council direction to work with the applicant towards resolution before advancing the application in the review process: 1) affordable and market rental housing, and 2) new school needs, as discussed further below.

#### **Affordable and Market Rental Housing:**

As the proposed form of development would exceed the City Density Bonus structure, the Council-adopted Inclusionary Housing Policy targets a minimum 20% inclusionary housing with the specific number and affordability levels subject to discussion with senior government and housing operators.

Based on the preliminary data provided by the applicant, the proposal does not include enough affordable rental units to meet the City's Inclusionary Housing Policy requirements. The application currently proposes 10% Inclusionary Housing without details including those on affordability, ownership or financing of the affordable housing units.

For master planned, multi-family applications, which are generally much larger than a single one-or two-tower development, the City generally seeks a tenure mix that includes about one-third to almost one-half rental units. This is modeled after the tenure mix of the multi-family units in the city as a whole. The application currently proposes 20% rental (including both market and affordable rental).

As of yet, the applicant has not provided sufficient information for staff to analyze and provide a recommendation on these components.

Given the Council strategic priority for housing across the spectrum, and recently identified gap in meeting the City's 2021-2022 goal for affordable housing units which is a significant community need, staff is seeking Council direction to work with the applicant to refine the proposal such that it satisfies City expectations in this regard, including but not limited to timing of delivery, and report back to Council with a Preliminary Report to launch the application review. That review would generally follow the steps as outlined in the Application Review Process Section of this report.

#### Accommodating School Age Population:

With potentially up to 4,000 residential units, the application would represent a meaningful impact on school age population growth in the downtown. Current population estimates for the proposal include an estimated 4,000 to 7,250 residents of which 280 – 530 are estimated to be school aged children.

Given the project would bring significant growth to the downtown, and as the site is large enough to offer a potential opportunity for an urban school location, staff has indicated to the applicant that they need to work with School District 40 to understand school space needs and determine if there is an opportunity for the project to accommodate an urban school. Staff is seeking Council direction to ensure these discussions are completed to the satisfaction of the City, prior to Council consideration of the application.

### **APPLICATION REVIEW PROCESS**

Below is an overall outline of the development review process for this project, which would be implemented after staff reports back to Council with resolution of the housing issues identified in the Discussion Section of this report.

1. Introductory Report to Council seeking direction (June 12, 2023) (**WE ARE HERE**)
2. Report back to Council on affordable and rental housing components in Preliminary Report to launch application review;

3. Interdepartmental Staff Review Toward Suitable Plan of Development;
4. Initiate First Nations Engagement;
5. Applicant-led Consultation #1 on Preliminary Site Concepts;
6. Interdepartmental Thematic Workshops;
7. Creation of Draft Master Plan;
8. Applicant-led Consultation #2 on Draft Master Plan;
9. Presentation to Advisory Planning Commission;
10. City-led public consultation, including the creation of a Be Heard New West webpage and survey;
11. Council Consideration of First, Second Readings of Zoning Amendment Bylaw;
12. Public Hearing and Council Consideration of Third Reading;
13. Completion of Adoption Requirements;
14. Council consideration of adoption of Zoning Amendment Bylaw;
15. Issuance of Special Development Permit(s) by the Director of Climate Action, Planning and Development.

The development review process for this application is intended to expedite City reviews and provide appropriate opportunities for public feedback for a project of this size and magnitude. In particular the process is intended to prioritize advancement of the items needing public and Council review early in the process allowing more technical details to be completed and finalized after third reading but prior to final adoption.

### **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**

Development of 88 Tenth Street (Columbia Square) represents a unique development opportunity to secure amenities to help finance growth. Financial considerations will be evaluated as part of the application review process and detailed in the comprehensive report to Council.

### **OPTIONS**

The following options are available for Council's consideration:

1. That Council direct staff to work with the applicant to revise their proposal to meet the City's Inclusionary Housing Policy and Secured Market Rental expectations, or identify an alternative proposal for achieving inclusionary and secured market housing in the project to the satisfaction of the Director, and report back to Council, prior to advancing the proposal further in the review process.

2. That Council direct staff to work with the applicant to secure development of the affordable units either within the first half of the total project build-out or proportional to the overall development build-out.
3. That Council direct staff to work with the applicant to complete discussions with School District 40 (SD40) regarding the need for a school site in the area, to the satisfaction of the Director.
4. That Council provide staff with alternative direction.

Staff recommend Options 1, 2 and 3.

### **ATTACHMENTS**

Attachment 1 - Site Characteristics and Context  
Attachment 2 - Policy and Regulation Context  
Attachment 3 - Inclusionary Housing Policy  
Attachment 4 - Summary of Staff PAR Comments

### **APPROVALS**

This report was prepared by:  
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