

Attachment 2  
*Background Information*

## **Background Information**

### **Policy and Regulations Summary**

#### *Official Community Plan*

The subject site is located within the Tower Precinct in the Downtown Community Plan (DCP) which is intended to continue to develop as a high-density employment and housing area. Building on its current employment base and on the presence of SkyTrain, this precinct is well positioned to capture region-serving office employers seeking to locate in New Westminster. The DCP envisions and encourages the expansion of existing anchor institutions in the Downtown, such as Douglas College, and expects these institutions to continue to play a role in the Downtown being a regional destination.

The subject site is designated “School / Institutional” in the DCP. This designation allows for:

- Public, private and post-secondary schools;
- Public institutional uses, such as libraries, law courts and civic facilities; and
- Parks.

As the site is designated for “School / Institutional” it is not included in the Density Bonus Phase 2 Policy.

The form of the proposed development is generally consistent with the “School / Institutional” land use designation in the DCP.

#### *Development Permit Area*

The site is within the D1 Downtown Development and Special Development Permit Area (DPA). The DPA seeks to support Downtown’s Regional Town Centre designation in the Regional Growth Strategy. This DPA outlines objectives and guidelines for:

- The form and character of commercial, multifamily, institutional and intensive residential development.
- Protection of the natural environment, its ecosystems and biological diversity.
- Revitalization of an area in which a commercial use is permitted.
- Objectives to promote energy and water conservation and reduction of greenhouse gas emissions.

A Special Development Permit (SDP) is required before doing any work that would result in development or alteration to the lands or exterior of buildings on the lands within this portion of the Downtown. SDPs function similar to a regular Development Permit, but under the New Westminster Redevelopment Act, the City was given special authority to regulate urban redevelopment within this area. SDPs can be issued by the Director of Climate Action, Planning and Development.

### *Downtown Building and Public Realm Design Guidelines and Master Plan*

The Downtown Building and Public Realm Design Guidelines and Master Plan provides guidance in achieving a high quality, cohesive Downtown that honours the historical and cultural context of New Westminster. This document serves as a toolkit to inform public realm improvements both on and off-site within the Downtown area.

The subject site is located within the Tower Precinct in the Downtown Building and Public Realm Design Guidelines. The guidelines describe this area as follows:

*The Tower Precinct will continue to develop as a highly urbanized component of New Westminster's Downtown with the SkyTrain Station at its core. Serving as a regional destination, it is anchored by existing and developing education and commercial destinations, including Douglas College, Plaza 88 and the retail mall at the foot of Royal Ave. It is anticipated that the area will accommodate a significant share of Downtown's residential and commercial growth.*

### *Economic Development Plan*

The City's Economic Development Plan (EDP) focuses on three key sectors - education, healthcare, and technology and creative, for economic growth. A key goal of the EDP is to focus "activities on these target growth sectors, to ensure the city is well positioned to capitalize on Metro Vancouver's pull and will attract interest, investment and long-term sustainability for local business". These sectors all share well-paying jobs and strong growth potential—critical factors for a robust local economy in the larger Metro Vancouver regional context.

In particular, the EDP seeks to leverage the city's existing strengths and advantages in these sectors to facilitate growth and draw young talent – the workers of the future. Education is the fourth largest employment sector locally, and continues to offer one of the city's strongest economic competitive advantages, grounded by Douglas College, the Justice Institute of British Columbia and several private colleges. This proposal would be in line with these objectives.

### *Zoning Bylaw*

The site is currently zoned Downtown Mixed Use Districts (C-4) which permits a mixed use building with a height of 12.2 m. (40 ft.) and a total density of 5.2 Floor Space Ratio (FSR).

The site would be rezoned to a site-specific Comprehensive Development (CD) District. The zone incorporates specifications tailored to the proposed project, including the following: residential rental tenure; parking variances; bicycle, loading, electric vehicle and building performance specifications in excess of City requirements; and, building use, density, siting and massing restrictions. Per the City's typical practice, minor density, siting, and massing allowances have been incorporated into the CD zone.

## *Downtown Transportation Plan*

Eighth Street carries a high volume of pedestrians, is part of the frequent transit network, and is a key connector to the Downtown and historic Columbia Street. It also serves as a front door to New Westminster SkyTrain Station, Shops at New West, and is the main pedestrian connection to the newly constructed Anvil Centre and Tower, and Douglas College's two existing campuses.

The Downtown Transportation Plan (DTP) identifies Eighth Street as a Complete Street with enhanced pedestrian amenities, dedicated cycling facilities, road diet and reallocation of road space, greening and activation, and transit priority opportunities. Eighth Street and Royal Avenue intersection is a gateway to Downtown. Royal Avenue is part of the Major Road Network with connections to the Pattullo Bridge.

The Royal Avenue corridor experiences peak period congestion and delays, and as a designated truck route carries significant amount of regional traffic. Considerations within the DTP prioritize access and crossings for the most vulnerable road users by exploring measures to improve comfort and safety at the intersections.

## **Family Friendly Housing Bylaw and Design Guidelines**

The Family Friendly Housing Policy applies to multiple dwelling buildings in which more than 10 dwelling units are proposed. Per the Zoning Bylaw, the proposed single- and double-bed units are not considered dwelling units, given that they do not contain a "facility for cooking, sleeping facilities and a bathroom." The proposed 9 four-bed units would be considered dwelling units under the Zoning Bylaw, however as fewer than 10 units are proposed, the Family Friendly Housing Policy would not apply.

## **Pre-Application Review**

A Preliminary Application Review (PAR) was presented to the Land Use Planning Committee (LUPC) on March 29, 2021. Discussion and comments at that meeting related to the perceived building mass, street activation, maintenance of privacy between the development and adjacent residential buildings, and the building's visual impact on key view corridors. The March 29, 2021 LUPC meeting minutes can be accessed via the City's website:

[https://www.newwestcity.ca/database/files/library/LUPC\\_2021\\_Mar\\_29\\_Minutes.pdf](https://www.newwestcity.ca/database/files/library/LUPC_2021_Mar_29_Minutes.pdf)

## **Site Characteristics and Context**

The subject site is 3,641.2 sq. m. (39,193.6 sq. ft.) and is located in the Downtown neighbourhood, at the intersection of Royal Avenue at Eighth Street. The lot is steeply sloped, with an approximate grade change of 15 m. (49.2 ft.) from the northeast corner to the southwest corner. The site is largely vacant.

To the north of the site, across Royal Avenue are two City-owned parks: Simcoe Park and Toronto Place Park. West of the site are several 15 to 16 storey multiple-unit residential towers. Development applications for two sites southwest of the subject site, across Agnes Street, have been submitted and propose multiple-unit residential buildings of between 33 to 44 storeys. A site context map is provided below.

Figure 1: Site Context Map with 808 Royal Avenue in blue



### Proximity to Transit Service and Other Sustainable Transportation Options

The subject site is located on Eighth Street, which is a Frequent Transit Network route and identified as a primary cycling route and “Great Street” in the Master and Downtown Transportation Plans. The site is approximately 130 m. (426.5 ft.) from Phase 2 of the Agnes Street Greenway on Carnarvon Street, with future links to the BC Parkway and Central Valley Greenway on Columbia Street and Quayside Drive. The site is approximately 175 m. (574 ft.) from New Westminster SkyTrain Station.

Transit Service	Frequency	Approximate Distance
New Westminster SkyTrain Station	2 to 5 minutes	175 m. (574 ft.)
#123	15 minutes	50 m. (165 ft.) to Royal Ave. at Eighth St.

## Project Statistics

	Permitted / Required Under C-4 Zoning	Proposed
Lot Area	-	3,641.2 sq. m. (39,193.6 sq. ft.)
Site Frontage	-	40.2 m. (132.0 ft.)
Average Lot Depth	-	90.5 m. (296.9 ft.)
Total FSR	5.2 FSR	10.53 FSR
Building Height	12.19 m. (40.0 ft.)	75.34 m. (247.2 ft.)
Residential Units	-	244 student housing units
Off-Street Parking		
Residential	81 <sup>1</sup>	18
Institutional	35 <sup>1</sup>	36
Loading	1	2
Total	117	56
Accessible Parking		
Standard	5	5
Van	2	2
Total	7	7
Bicycle Parking		
Long-term	75	105
Short-term	63	18

<sup>1</sup> Reflects reductions for transit proximity, bicycle storage, and end-of-trip facilities