

## Attachment 3

### *Applicant's Project Summary Letter*

June 05, 2023

**City of New Westminster**

511 Royal Avenue

New Westminster, BC – V3L 1H9

**Subject: Project Summary - Zoning Bylaw Amendment Request**

I am writing to provide a comprehensive summary of our project and to present the case for a Zoning Bylaw Amendment. The proposed rezoning is crucial for the success and viability of our development, and we believe it aligns with relevant policies and will bring significant benefits to the neighborhood and community. Below, you will find detailed information regarding each aspect:

**Project Concept:**

Our project, as initially conceived in 2016, was to be a 5-storey building on East Columbia Street. The building was designed to have six ground-level commercial retail spaces and four stories of purpose-built rental housing. The original plan evolved during the 2017 OCP review when the City requested the addition of a second floor for professional offices, to which we agreed. The four stories of purpose-built rental housing have been rented and occupied by and large since shortly after the building received its occupancy permit in July 2022, and the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor office space has been sold to a large eye clinic. However, the challenge lies in finding buyers for the remaining two ground floor commercial retail units.

**Reason for Zoning Bylaw Amendment:**

A Zoning Bylaw Amendment is required to expand the permitted uses of one of the two vacant commercial retail units to include a dental clinic (CRU #4). Presently, the zoning regulations only allow for medical or dental uses on the ground floor not exceeding 30% of the net occupiable area and having no more than 26' of frontage. Our proposal seeks to modify these restrictions to accommodate the demand in the local community for health and wellness services, and specifically dental care, in a street front location, similar to what is happening across Metro Vancouver.

**Rationale for Proposed Rezoning:**

The proposed rezoning is justified for several reasons. Firstly, it would align with the current market trends that prioritize health and wellness services. The rise of online retail and the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic have significantly affected traditional brick-and-mortar businesses. By allowing a dental clinic, we would be responding to the increasing demand for such services while adapting to the evolving retail landscape.

Additionally, the rezoning would support policies related to community vitality and economic development. Dark storefronts convey a negative message about the retail viability of an area, hampering new business openings and reducing the value of nearby properties. By filling these

vacant spaces with a viable business such as a dental clinic, we would help animate the street, generate customer traffic, and support the surrounding businesses. This would contribute to a safer, more vibrant, and prosperous neighborhood.

**Proposed Variances and Consistency with Policies:**

We acknowledge that the proposed rezoning may involve variances to existing zoning requirements and could be inconsistent with certain policy provisions. However, we believe these inconsistencies are justified considering the changing dynamics of the retail market, the need for adaptability, and the desire to meet the demands of the community.

The rezoning would be consistent with policies promoting community health and wellness, supporting the growth of health-related services accessible to the public. It would also align with the objectives of revitalizing commercial areas, enhancing economic activity, and promoting pedestrian-oriented streets.

**Benefits to the Neighborhood and Community:**

The proposed rezoning and subsequent occupation of the vacant unit by a dental clinic would bring several benefits to the neighborhood and community. Firstly, it would attract pedestrian traffic, drawing people north of Sherbrooke and revitalizing the area. This increased foot traffic would not only benefit the dental clinic but also support existing businesses by generating customers and promoting a sense of community.

Furthermore, filling the vacant spaces with a health and wellness business, like a dental clinic, would meet the evolving needs of the public and provide convenient access to essential services. This would contribute to community well-being, promote healthy living, and create a positive environment for residents.

In conclusion, the Zoning Bylaw Amendment is crucial to address the challenges in selling the remaining ground floor commercial retail units. The proposed rezoning for a dental clinic aligns with market trends, supports community vitality, and promotes economic development. Despite potential variances and inconsistencies with existing policies, the amendment will animate the street, generate foot traffic, and support surrounding businesses, revitalizing the area and providing essential health and wellness services. The amendment brings significant benefits to the neighborhood and community, and we kindly request support for its approval.

Yours truly,

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