

## Attachment 2

### *Applicant's Rationale for Condensed Application Review Process*

June 10, 2025

*City of New Westminster*  
*511 Royal Avenue*  
*New Westminster, BC V3L 1H9*

**To:** Wendee Lang, Senior Development Manager

**From:** Pooni Group Inc.

**RE: Royal Towers - Condensed Application Review Rationale**

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The following memo summarizes Vintop's actions on 140 Sixth Street (Royal Towers) since the site was purchased in 2017, the progress on the Master Plan rezoning application that was submitted in May 2024, and the need for a condensed application review process.

### **Pre-Application**

Following purchase of the site, an initial pre-application was made in 2018, where the maximum building height was limited to 30-storeys. A second pre-application was submitted in 2021 in response to City staff's directions for increased affordable housing, non-profit housing provider selection, and reduced commercial space.

### **Master Plan Rezoning Application**

A Master Plan rezoning application was formally submitted in April 2024, with the application fee paid on May 28, 2024. In September 2024, City staff provided a review memo in response to the application. In October 2024, Council approved additional building height up to 40-storeys.

Since then, Vintop has been working on refining the proposal and design for the site, including a phasing approach, and engaging with potential non-profit organizations (NPOs). In March 2025, Vintop signed a Letter of Interest (LOI) with Lookout Housing and Health Society (Lookout) to be the potential owner and operator of Phase 1, which consists of two buildings: one with rental replacement/inclusionary units and the other with market rentals. In April 2025, a rationale letter was signed between Vintop and Lookout that summarizes considerations and benefits of the partnership, and recognizes the opportunity to deliver housing to the City of New Westminster.

Between March and May 2025, Vintop has been working with City staff on a Phasing, Tenant Assistance Plan, and Public Benefit Package proposal. The proposal was developed with input from Lookout, who Vintop has selected to be the third-party Tenant Assistance Coordinator, subject to approval by the City. The draft proposal, including Lookout vetting as the NPO and TAC, will be discussed with Council in a closed session in early June.



### **Lookout Funding & Timing Requirements**

Lookout requires confirmation from the City that they have been selected as the NPO for this project to be able to source funding opportunities, potentially including both government programs and traditional lending partners. Based on a preliminary review of available programs, the Province's Community Housing Fund (CHF) and BC Builds programs may be funding opportunities that have time sensitive application deadlines. To be competitive in these applications, a transfer of land title for the non-profit site and the ability to start construction within a window of time (i.e., 24 months) - in Lookout's experience, this timeline is typically achievable once the zoning bylaw has received Third Reading by Council.

The first CHF call was launched on May 30, 2025 with an expected four rounds of intake. The final intake is anticipated to be in Spring 2026; however, funding calls will only be offered until funds are depleted. Therefore, Lookout would like to be able to submit for funding within the last quarter of 2025 to ensure their application is considered within the 2025 funding budget.

### **Vintop's Lending Conditions**

Vintop's land loan expired last year due to the length of time it has taken to get to a formal application submission. A bridge loan was secured until October 2025, which will need to be replaced by a new land loan based on a subdivision of Phase 1 from the parent parcel. Failure to meet the timeline will jeopardize Phase 1 being able to be developed separately under the selected NPO's ownership and financing structure, which may lead to either a significant delay for the whole project or cancellation of the entire project if the NPO walks away.

Vintop has owned the land for close to a decade and has been working diligently to address staff's feedback and meet the vision the City has for the site. If Third Reading is unable to be achieved by the end of 2025, there could be a risk to the project's financial commitments - resulting in further delays both to the existing tenants receiving a new unit and the delivery of public benefits to the City including below market and market rental homes, retail space and streetscape improvements along Royal Avenue, and potential new office space for the City.

### **Subdivision of Phase 1**

A key aspect of both the selected NPO's funding application and Vintop's loan renewal is the subdivision of Phase 1 from the parent parcel. Vintop would like to work with the City to explore methods of achieving a subdivision or air space parcel for Phase 1 in advance of the zoning bylaw approval.

Given the uniqueness of the site, Vintop has taken time to develop a proposal that phases the site in a way that minimizes disruption to existing tenants and provides significant public benefits to the City. An expedited review timeline will help both Vintop and the selected NPO secure the financing required to make this project a reality.