



The Corporation of the District of Saanich

Report

To: Mayor and Council

From: Lindsay Chase, Director of Planning

Date: April 11, 2025

Subject: 3383 Harriet Road and 3442 and 3444 Whittier Avenue - Rezoning and Development Permit Application

File: REZ00762; DPR01063

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That the application to rezone 3383 Harriet Road and 3442 and 3444 Whittier Avenue from the RS-6 (Single Family Dwelling) Zone to the RA-11 (Apartment) Zone be approved.
2. That Development Permit DPR01063 be approved.
3. That prior to Final Reading of the Zoning Bylaw Amendment and Ratification of the Development Permit:
 - a. Registration of a Housing Agreement to secure 100% of the units in the development to be maintained as rental units for 50 years, or the life of the building;
 - b. Registration of a covenant to secure the Transportation Demand Management measures as outlined in the Transportation Review and Parking Variance Study dated November 12, 2024; and,
 - c. Registration of a covenant to secure a 1.6 m Statutory-Right-of-Way along the eastern property boundary to accommodate a public pathway.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this Report is to seek Council's decision on a rezoning/development permit application to rezone 3383 Harriet Road and 3442 and 3444 Whittier Avenue from single-family dwelling zoning to a low-rise apartment building zone to construct a 6-storey residential building containing 68 dwelling units. The applicant is Rizzo Developments Ltd. (Vincent Rizzo).

DISCUSSION

Land Use and Neighbourhood Context

The approximately 2495 m² site (post-dedication for road allowance on Whittier Avenue) is on the western side of the Uptown Douglas Plan (UDP) area fronting onto both Harriet Road and Whittier Avenue (See Figure 1). Whittier Avenue curves and becomes Culduthel Road in front of the subject site. The site is designated as "Uptown Core" in the Official Community Plan (OCP) and "Neighbourhood Apartment Residential" in the UDP. The site is located within a Provincial Transit-Oriented Area (District of Saanich Transit-Oriented Area Designation Bylaw, 2024, No.10015) and is eligible for the minimum density requirements and parking relaxations associated with provincial TOAs between 201- 400 metres (six storeys and/or an FSR of 2.5, no residential parking).

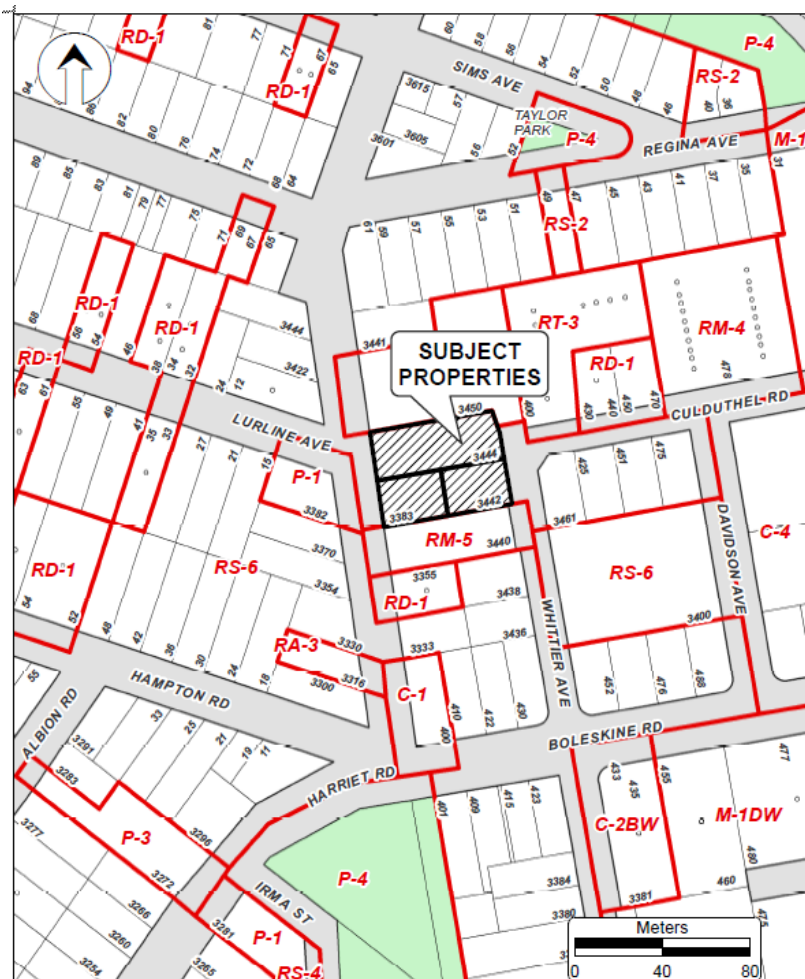


Figure 1: Neighbourhood Context

In general, the immediate area is experiencing land use change with a mix of uses in proximity. Surrounding land uses include a new 23-unit townhouse development to the north, a smaller multiplex development to the south, a church and single detached housing immediately across Harriet Road, and single detached housing and a government office building across Whittier Avenue. A small commercial complex and Rudd Park are located at the intersection of Harriet Road with Boleskine Road (130 m south). Hampton Park is approximately 600 m away with the Uptown shopping area approximately 800 m away. Both Tillicum Centre and Tillicum Elementary School are approximately 1.2 km away. The school board offices and Tennyson industrial area are located between the subject site and the Uptown shopping district. The site is approximately 110 m from the Frequent Transit Network along Harriet Road (OCP Map 4) and its Whittier Avenue/Culduthel Road frontage is part of the long-term bicycle network (OCP Map 10).

Proposed Development

The proposed development is a 6-storey residential building with 68 secured rental units and one level of underground parking. Table 1 summarizes key project data.

Table 1: Project Data	
Lot Area	2,495 m ²
Gross Floor Area	5,375 m ²

Floor Space Ratio (FSR)	2.15
Unit Total/Mix	68-units (31% 2+ bedrooms) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Studio = 6 units (9%) • 1 bedroom = 41 units (60%) • 2 bedroom = 15 units (22 %) • 3 bedroom = 6 units (9%)
Common Amenity Space for Residents	~85 m ² outdoor shared garden area
Site Coverage	42%
Height	6-storeys with a 3-storey wing (maximum height = 19.0 m)
Setbacks	Harriet Road: 4 m (variance required) Whittier Road: 5.14 m North Interior Lot Line: 4.6 m South Interior Lot Line: 3.09 m (variance required)
Vehicle Parking	43 parking stalls (includes 5 visitor spaces) MODO car-share purchase and on-street stall
Loading	1 on-street loading space (variance required)
Bicycle Parking	Class 1: 68 spaces (7 cargo) Class 2: 9 spaces

Policy Analysis

The following District of Saanich Planning policy considerations are most applicable to the subject proposal.

Official Community Plan

7.2.18 Implement Transit Oriented Areas adjacent to the existing or future transit exchanges at:
f. Multi-modal Uptown Transit Hub (Provincial)

7.2.19 Further to Policy, 7.2.18, support minimum heights, up to 10-storeys on any lot, or portion of a lot, within 200 metres of a Provincial transit exchange/hub and 6-storeys between 201 metres and 400 metres from a Provincial transit exchange/hub.

7.3.1 Direct the majority of Saanich's residential and employment growth into Primary Growth Areas and support these areas with higher levels of investment in infrastructure, community services, parks, recreation facilities, and public spaces.

7.3.17 Support the following forms of development in the Uptown Core as per the Uptown-Douglas Plans:
b. Mid-rise buildings (up to 11-storeys).

8.2.2 Support the development of rental housing in all Primary Growth Areas as a key priority for residential intensification.

8.4.4 Support family-friendly housing by encouraging that new multi-unit residential developments contain a minimum of 30% units with two bedrooms or more, and that at least 10% of all units have three or more bedrooms.

Uptown Douglas Plan

- Map 5.1 designates identifies the subject site as "Neighbourhood Apartment Residential." Figure 5.1 provides details on this designation:
 - Supports multi-unit residential buildings including stacked townhomes, courtyard housing, and apartments.

- Envisions 4-5-storeys as the base height with the potential for up to 6 storey maximum height provided the conditions in UDP policy 5.1.3 are met.
- Identifies a street wall height of 2-3-storeys with buildings stepping back a minimum of 3 metres at street wall height (Figure 5.1).
- Section 5.13 identifies the subject site in the Tolmie Quarter neighborhood sub-area. Sub-Area Objective “supports a mix of uses and housing options that enhance the area’s vitality.”
- Map 4.2 identifies Whittier Avenue/Culduthel Road as a Green Corridor. Policy 4.5.4 provides details on what this means, including planting additional trees in the right-of-way, integrating stormwater management features; and reducing impervious surfaces within the right-of-way and on adjacent properties.

Analysis

This application aligns with the OCP and UDP in terms of land use, building form, and housing objectives. As the site is located within a Provincial Transit-Oriented Area (District of Saanich Transit-Oriented Area Designation Bylaw, 2024, No.10015) the project is eligible for the minimum density requirements and parking relaxations associated with provincial TOAs between 201- 400 metres (six storeys and/or an FSR of 2.5, no residential parking).

The TOA designation overrides UDP policy 5.1.3 outlining how a project can move from the base height of 4-5 storeys in the “Neighbourhood Apartment Residential” designation to the maximum height of 6-storeys. The project provides secured rental housing within a Primary Growth Area and meets the family-friendly housing target overall and almost meets the three-bedroom target (31% 2+ bedrooms, with 9% 3-bedrooms, all bedrooms have windows). On balance, the site and building design conforms with the intent of design-related policies in the UDP (discussed further below).

Site and Building Design The project is a 6-storey rental apartment building with a 3-storey wing, shaped to give more definition to the Harriet Road frontage while taking a more informal, landscaped approach to Whittier Avenue (Figure 2).



Figure 2: Site / Landscape Plan

The main lobby access is from Harriet Road with a secondary access from Whittier Avenue. Ground-floor units facing Harriet Road have direct access to the street. Access to the

underground parkade is taken off Whittier Avenue with a dedicated 10 m loading space and a car share parking space located just off-site on the Harriet Road frontage. The building is stepped back above the third floor as guided by the UDP “Neighbourhood Apartment Residential” designation. A public pathway requiring a 1.6 m wide Statutory Right-of-Way runs along the northern/eastern property lines to connect Harriet Road with Whittier Avenue (links in with the portion of the pathway secured through the redevelopment of the property to the north at 3450 Whittier Avenue).

The project includes an outdoor landscaped courtyard for residents, several raised garden bed planters, and rain garden features. Figures 2 – 6 show the project Site Plan/landscape concept and building elevations.



Figure 3: West Elevation (Harriet Road)



Figure 4: East Elevation (Whittier Avenue)



Figure 5: South Elevation (Interior Lot Line)



Figure 6: North Elevation (Facing the Public Pathway)

Design Review

On balance this project meets the intent of the Development Permit Area Guidelines (DPAG). Table 2 speaks to key design elements where there is alignment with the DPAG.

Table 2: Alignment with Development Permit Area Guidelines	
Site Design & Layout	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Responds to local context through the placement of the massing on the site, building step backs, and landscape features. • Includes open space and landscape plantings to frame prominent street end views from Culduthel Road and Lurline Avenue.
Scale and Massing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creates a 3-storey podium along the Harriet Road frontage by stepping back floors 4-6. • Limits the scale of the building by including a 3-storey wing located adjacent to existing single detached homes. • Uses balconies and windows to provide visual interest and enhanced livability (all units have balconies > 6 m²).
Relationship to the street	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Incorporates distinct residential entries off both frontages with additional architectural details on the more visible Harriet Road frontage. • Provides direct connections from ground-floor units located adjacent to Harriet Road.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uses landscaping and site layout to clearly distinguish and frame public and private space. • Limits blank walls along street frontages.
Building Materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uses material textures and different shades to distinguish different building elements.
Landscaping	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Utilizes landscaping to provide privacy between adjacent properties and to frame the street and public pathway. • Incorporates rain gardens along the north and west sides which capture rainwater from the building's roof.
Site Servicing, Access, and Parking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Locates all vehicle parking underground. • Locates waste staging area away from adjacent properties. • Meets guidelines in general for long-term bike room design while also including some covered short-term spaces.

Key areas where the project does not align with the DPAG are outlined below.

- As part of the initial submission an outdoor courtyard was provided instead of an indoor amenity space (along with balconies for all units). The DPAG, which speak to both indoor and outdoor amenities spaces, were adopted while this project was in-stream.
- UDP Policy 9.2.10.v seeks a 3 m upper floor step back while the design uses a 2.4 m setback. This approach was taken to optimize the structural bearing between the 3-storey and 6-storey portions. The impact is mitigated by the limited length of the 6-storey portion and by the balcony recesses.
- Access from Harriet Road was preferred by staff over access from Whittier Avenue to better support the green street concept (UDP Policy 4.5.4). The applicant identified constraints related to site layout, frontage design, and building efficiency with the desired Whittier Avenue access which were found acceptable. The applicant has worked to respect the UDP Green Corridor policy through decreased massing along the Whittier Avenue frontage combined with increased landscaping framing the entrance to the pedestrian connection.

Advisory Design Panel Review

This project was reviewed by the Advisory Design Panel (ADP) on August 21, 2024 (Minutes included as Attachment 4). ADP recommended support for the project; no additional considerations were identified in the motion. ADP review was completed after the first submission at a time when the proposal included a ground-floor bicycle parking space which ADP members were encouraged to see; this feature however was not included in the final submission. Staff however note that the project still complies with Zoning Bylaw, 2003, requirements for bicycle parking. The project was also in a 5-storey form at the time of ADP review, though the proposal retained the same footprint and general massing approach as the final iteration referenced in this report. The extra storey was added to respond to the Uptown TOA guidance and desire for increased numbers of housing units in these strategic locations that are well serviced with frequent transit.

Variances

Four variances are requested to support this project (Table 2). When assessing the supportability of variances, staff consider the rationale for the variance as well as the impact of the variance on the public realm and adjacent properties and the potential impact/hardship for the project if the proposed variance is not supported.

Table 3: Proposed Variances			
	REQUIRED	PROPOSED	VARIANCE REQUIRED

Setback: Harriet Road	5.0 m	4.0 m	1.0 m
Setback: Interior Site Lot Line (south)	4.0 m	3.09 m	0.91 m
On-site Residential Loading space	1 Type B	0	1 space
Transportation Demand Plan (TDM) Requirements	TDM Plan A – Transit Package + one additional package from Zoning Bylaw Table 7.5	TDM Plan C TDM Plan D Components of TDM Plan B *	TDM Plan A (Requirement in the Uptown Core)
*TDM Plan B elements include Bike Maintenance Area and 7 large Class 1 bike stalls.			

Setback Variances

Setback: Harriet Road

While the setback from a street frontage in the RA-11 (Apartment) Zone is 5 m, the UDP identifies a 4 m front yard setback under the Street Interface Guidelines for the Neighbourhood Apartment Residential designation (Figure 5.1). The proposed Variance reflects the UDP policy direction and is supportable.

Setback: Interior Site Lot Line (South)

The applicant strategically positioned most of the building's mass (6-storeys) towards the multi-family lot to the north of the property. This design choice minimizes the impact on the single-family lot to the south, where the three-story street wall configuration reduces the visual massing and allows a tighter setback. This Variance is supportable.

On-site Residential Loading Space

The project design incorporates an on-street loading space off the Harriet Road frontage (requested by staff prior to the new regulations). The Zoning Bylaw, 2003, requirement for this to be an on-site space was adopted by Council on November 18, 2024, and only came into effect on March 10, 2025. The applicant identified several challenges with transferring the loading space from on-street to on-site late in the application process including:

- The location of the drive access and Pad Mounted Transformer (PMT) in the south-west corner limited available space along Whittier Avenue, making it difficult to accommodate the Type B stall without encroaching on the neighboring drive access to the north.
- Positioning the stall along Whittier Avenue would present challenges for maneuvering a vehicle of that size and reduce landscaping and take away from the intent of the Green Corridor along this street; and,
- Locating the loading stall in the parkade would be problematic as height clearance is an issue. As the ramp starts on the higher side of the site, the ramp's length would need to be increased to accommodate the ceiling height, which would reduce efficiency with the parking layout. Additionally, cost would be a factor due to the need for deeper excavation.

Given an on-street loading space was previously required by staff and provided by the applicant and the timing of the new loading regulations, staff support this variance.

TDM Requirements

The applicant has provided a Transportation Review and Parking Variance to rationalize their TDM measures and proposed parking ratios based on their unit mix and location (note: the project is exempt from residential parking requirements as it is in the Uptown TOA). The Transportation Review was updated after Council adopted new TDM regulations on November 18, 2024 (these came into effect for in-stream projects on March 10, 2025). The proposed TDM measures as updated in the Report are supportable given the in-stream nature of the application and the analysis of the measures in the context of the proposed project and its location within the Uptown Core.

Consultation

The applicant presented the project to the Mt. View Colquitz Community Association (MVCCA) on September 19, 2023. The applicant indicated the project was generally well-received with two additional emails from neighbours expressing concerns about traffic impacts from the project and disruption to the neighbourhood during construction.

District of Saanich staff also referred the project to the MVCCA on two occasions; response letters are included as Attachment 5. The project was generally supported by the MVCCA with road safety as the main concern identified for neighbours. The MVCCA also noted the needed for public realm improvements considering the level of change in the area while also recognizing the funding gap for new amenities created with rental projects exempted from Community Amenity Contributions. In addition, the MVCCA indicated a preference for vehicle access to be off Harriet Road.

Community Amenity Contribution

As a secured purpose-built rental project, this application is exempt from the Community Amenity Contributions and Inclusionary Housing Policy (Section 6.0, point 3). The rental tenure for all units will be secured through a Housing Agreement for a period of 50 years or the life of the building as a condition to final reading of the rezoning and ratification of the Development Permit.

PROCEDURES

As this application is consistent with the Official Community Plan, notice of the bylaws will be provided pursuant to Section 464(3) of the *Local Government Act* in advance of the Council meeting. This facilitates Council being able to consider the recommendations included in this Report.

Should Council decide to approve the recommendations, the following procedures will occur:

1. At the initial meeting, approval of the application, first three readings of the Zoning Bylaw Amendment and approval of the Development Permit.
2. After all conditions have been met, the application will come before Council for Final Reading of the Zoning Bylaw Amendment and ratification of the Development Permit.

In 2023, the Province enacted legislation establishing Transit-Oriented Areas (TOAs) near major transit exchanges, which limits municipal authority over development in these areas. Under this legislation, municipalities cannot deny applications based on height or density if they meet the provincial policies. While local governments retain control over design and form through tools like development permits, they must permit residential development that aligns with the Province's prescribed height and density thresholds within TOAs. Staff advise that in this application, the proposal meets the intent of Provincial policies, and the above noted restrictions in Council's decision making would apply.

COUNCIL OPTIONS

1. That Council approve the recommendations in the staff Report.
2. That Council reject the recommendations as outlined in the staff Report.
3. That Council provide alternate direction to staff.

STRATEGIC PLAN IMPLICATIONS

The subject proposal aligns with the Housing theme in the District of Saanich's 2023 - 2027 Strategic Plan by improving the supply of diverse forms of housing in the community.

CONCLUSION

The proposed development, located in the Uptown TOA area, is consistent with the land use policies in the OCP and the UDP. It provides 68 secured rental housing units, including 31% family-sized units in a Primary Growth Area near the Frequent Transit Network and on the Long-Term Bicycle Network. The completion of the pedestrian connection to the north of this site as part of this project provides an important active transportation connection for the Tolmie Quarter neighbourhood. Requested variances for siting, loading, and TDM measures create limited impact and are supported by sound rationale. On balance, the Development Permit Area Guidelines are achieved. For the above noted reasons, staff support the Rezoning and Development Permit Applications.

Prepared by: Amber Walker, Senior Planner

Reviewed by: Carl Purvis, Manager – Current Planning

Approved by: Lindsay Chase, Director of Planning

AW/kb

Attachments: Attachment 1 - Development Permit
Attachment 2 - Bylaw
Attachment 3 - Engineering Servicing Requirements – April 1, 2025
Attachment 4 - Advisory Design Panel Memo – August 21, 2025
Attachment 5 - Community Association Response - January 12, 2025
Attachment 6 - Plans – March 18, 2025 (Architecture) / April 9, 2025 (Landscape)

ADMINISTRATOR'S COMMENTS:

I endorse the recommendation from the Director of Planning.

Brent Reems, Chief Administrative Officer