

From: ["Mochrie, Paul" <Paul.Mochrie@vancouver.ca>](mailto:Paul.Mochrie@vancouver.ca)

To: ["Direct to Mayor and Council - DL"](#)

Date: 5/12/2022 6:06:21 PM

Subject: 325 Keefer Street – Chau Luen Society

Attachments: Memo to Mayor & Council - 325 Keefer Street – Chau Luen Society.pdf

Dear Mayor and Council,

Please find enclosed a memo in response to correspondence from Council on May 5, 2022, regarding the Chau Luen Society's ability to redevelop 325 Keefer Street and the adjacent City owned Right-of-Way to provide housing for low-income seniors. Staff were asked what building design and height options exist for redeveloping the site to support seniors housing while continuing to replace and grow the tree canopy.

- No rezoning enquiry or application has been received to rezone the subject site. Staff have only engaged in very preliminary conversations with the applicant team.
- The site is located within the Strathcona sub-area of the Downtown Eastside Plan (DTES Plan) which encourages affordable housing and is supportive of rezoning to increase Social Housing use.
- The Strathcona neighbourhood has the lowest tree canopy cover in the City at 8%, significantly below the city-wide average of 23% canopy cover and Parks Board target of 30%.
- Staff look forward to working with the applicant team to try to find a balance between the goals of developing affordable housing and greenspace and have reached out to them to better understand their plans for the site.

Should you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact Theresa O'Donnell (theresa.o'donnell@vancouver.ca).

Best,
Paul

Paul Mochrie (he/him)
City Manager
City of Vancouver
paul.mochrie@vancouver.ca



The City of Vancouver acknowledges that it is situated on the unceded traditional territories of the xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish), and səlilwətaʔ (Tsleil-Waututh) Nations.

MEMORANDUM

May 12, 2022

TO: Mayor and Council

CC: Paul Mochrie, City Manager
Karen Levitt, Deputy City Manager
Armin Amrolia, Deputy City Manager
Katrina Leckovic, City Clerk
Lynda Graves, Administration Services Manager, City Manager's Office
Maria Pontikis, Director, Civic Engagement and Communications
Anita Zaenker, Chief of Staff, Mayor's Office
Neil Monckton, Chief of Staff, Mayor's Office
Alvin Singh, Communications Director, Mayor's Office
Templar Tsang-Trinaistich, Issues Manager, Planning Urban Design and Sustainability
Yardley McNeill, Assistant Director, Rezoning Centre, Planning, Urban Design and Sustainability

FROM: Theresa O'Donnell
General Manager, Planning, Urban Design and Sustainability

SUBJECT: 325 Keefer Street – Chau Luen Society

The following information is offered in response to correspondence from Council on May 5, 2022, regarding the Chau Luen Society's ability to redevelop 325 Keefer Street and the adjacent City owned Right-of-Way to provide housing for low-income seniors. Staff were asked what building design and height options exist for redeveloping the site to support seniors housing while continuing to replace and grow the tree canopy.

No rezoning enquiry or application has been received to rezone the subject site. Staff have only engaged in very preliminary conversations with the applicant team. Once a rezoning application is submitted, staff will work with the applicant team to evaluate their proposal and building design against applicable City policies and guidelines.

The site is located within the Strathcona sub-area of the Downtown Eastside Plan (DTES Plan) which encourages affordable housing and is supportive of rezoning to increase Social Housing use. The site is currently zoned CD-1 (52B) which permits a number of uses, including senior citizens housing, apartments, and townhouses and personal care home ([https://cd1-bylaws.vancouver.ca/cd-1\(052B\).PDF](https://cd1-bylaws.vancouver.ca/cd-1(052B).PDF)). Under the DTES Plan, there is no height limit in non-RT zones being considered through a rezoning application in Strathcona.

The Strathcona neighbourhood has the lowest tree canopy cover in the City at 8%, significantly below the city-wide average of 23% canopy cover and Park Board's target of 30%. The Right-of-Way on Gore Street falls within an equity initiative zone that seeks to protect and retain existing tree canopy, especially the mature trees found at this location that are increasingly rare in the DTES. Details of this initiative are available online here: <https://vancouver.ca/parks-recreation-culture/equity-in-parks-and-recreation.aspx>. Tree retention and enhancement of street tree canopy is also a goal identified in section 12.4 of the DTES Plan, which is available online here: <https://vancouver.ca/files/cov/downtown-eastside-plan.pdf>. The proposed Vancouver Plan also reinforces the need to protect and enhance existing tree canopy to reduce heat island, improve air quality and better manage increasing rain events. Adding one new tree in the DTES costs the City approximately \$30,000 and it will take many years for a young tree to provide the benefits found with mature trees. The DTES has less indoor air conditioning than the rest of Vancouver; therefore people rely on shaded public spaces to seek cooling during heat events.

Staff look forward to working with the applicant team to try to find a balance between the goals of developing affordable housing and greenspace and have reached out to them to better understand their plans for the site.

Given this proposal is at pre-application stages, while listening to and discussing the details or merits of an application with members of the public, the applicant, or their representatives is not legally prohibited and will not necessarily result in a future public hearing being invalid, Council should avoid actively supporting or opposing the application at this stage in order to better preserve the integrity, fairness and validity of any public hearing. The extent and nature of Council's comments about and involvement with respect to a specific application in advance of the public hearing raises issues about the fairness of the public hearing process, and whether individual Councillors had an open mind when voting on an application following a public hearing. Once an application is submitted, reviewed by staff, and is referred to public hearing, Council will have the opportunity to determine its merits at the public hearing and ultimately express their support or opposition to the application.

Should you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact me.



Theresa O'Donnell
General Manager, Planning, Urban Design and Sustainability
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