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Nelson CARES Society | Lakeside Place Redevelopment Affordable Seniors Housing Project

Rezoning Application Summary



NSDA
ARCHITECTS

C I T Y  S P A C E S



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1. Introduction and Overview

1.1. Project Description

NSDA Architects, on behalf of the Nelson CARES Society, is applying to the City of Nelson, for a CD-1 Rezoning of Lakeside Place, an affordable housing development operated by the Nelson CARES Society at 805 Nelson Avenue in Nelson, BC. The proposed redevelopment is for a 47-unit four-storey wood frame project. The redevelopment will remove 20 units of housing in a former motel, which are functionally and physically obsolete, and replace them with a modern and affordable 47-unit housing complex. The redevelopment will be primarily for seniors, providing a mix of 42 one- and two-bedroom units for seniors of low-to-moderate incomes; it will also include five new studio units to replace a block of four existing substandard supportive units for homeless-at-risk adults with disabilities.

1.2. About the Nelson CARES Society

Nelson CARES Society is an established charitable organization that has served the community for over 40 years. Through community collaboration and service excellence, the Society works to build a healthy

and inclusive community where respect for all individuals is an ordinary, everyday occurrence. Nelson CARES Society works toward a socially just society by providing advocacy, housing, employment and support services. The Society is funded through government, private foundations, and the generous donations of countless individual Nelson residents.

The Society has grown into one of Nelson's largest and most diverse non-profit organizations, acting as a catalyst for community and program development, and advocates for people living in poverty. Today Nelson CARES Society provides hundreds of jobs and generates significant economic activity in the community.

1.3. Affordable Housing Needs

The need for affordable housing for seniors in Nelson has been well documented. The City of Nelson produced its first *Affordable Housing Strategy* in 2010, which indicated a need for more market and non-market housing options that were appropriate to the needs of seniors.¹

The City of Nelson produced an updated *Affordable Housing Strategy* in 2014,² which found that the demand for affordable housing



¹ City of Nelson, 2010. *Affordable Housing Strategy: Report 2 - Housing Strategy*. Available at <http://nelson.ca/DocumentCenter/View/1802>.

² City of Nelson, 2014. *Affordable Housing Strategy: Report 1 - Housing Needs Update*. Available at <http://nelson.ca/DocumentCenter/View/684>.

for seniors had significantly increased over the past 8 years and the number of seniors in Nelson is projected to grow over the coming decade. The report found:

- Seniors earning a fixed income (i.e. pension) are particularly challenged to afford the average market rental prices in Nelson;
- Many seniors living in rural areas in Nelson are experiencing difficulties managing their rural properties, and are also challenged with transportation, and are looking to downsize into smaller units in the urban areas of Nelson; and
- There is an overall shortage of age-friendly rental apartments that are safe, accessible, and affordable for seniors.

More recent data also indicate a significant need for more seniors housing in Nelson. A report by the Columbia Basin Rural Development Institute indicated that Nelson is the fastest growing community of the 28 communities in the Columbia Basin, with a growth rate of over 4% between 2011-2015.³ This growth trend is predicted to be consistent over the next 20 years, with the senior population projected to grow by 42% over the next 20 years.

1.4. Budget and Funding Commitments

The total capital cost is estimated at \$11,342,000, including \$8,110,000 in construction costs and \$2,682,000 in soft costs.

Nelson CARES Society has secured a number of significant funding commitments to redevelop the Lakeside Place site, including commitments from BC Housing, the Columbia Basin Trust, and the Canada Housing and Mortgage Company (CMHC).

In 2017, the Society submitted the Lakeside Place redevelopment proposal to BC Housing under the competitive Provincial Investment in Affordable Housing. BC Housing provided Provisional Project Approval, providing funds to advance the design of the building and seek municipal approvals for the project. Once BC Housing requirements have been met, including the approval of this rezoning request by the City of Nelson, BC Housing will provide Final Project Commitment, which includes a \$6.6 million equity contribution to the project and take-out financing, which will allow construction to commence.

Previous funding commitments that have contributed to the project include a \$10,000 Seed Funding Grant from CMHC to explore the feasibility of the project, and a \$20,000 grant to provide pre-development services to advance the building concept and preliminary design by the Columbia Basin Trust. The Columbia Basin Trust subsequently provide an additional

\$200,000 equity commitment towards capital cost of the project, which will reduce the amount of take out financing required which will help promote rental affordability. Recently, the Regional District of Central Kootenay committed \$5,000 to support the project, following a successful grant application from Electoral Area E Director Ramona Faust.

The Nelson CARES Society is also making a significant investment in the redevelopment, providing land valued at \$304,000 and providing an additional equity contribution of \$220,000.

1.5. Project Team

Client	Nelson CARES Society
Architect	NSDA Architects
Project Manager	CitySpaces Consulting
Construction Manager	Scuka Enterprises
Structural Engineer	MacLeod Nine Consultants
Electrical Engineer	Smith + Andersen
Mechanical Engineer	Smith + Andersen
Civil Engineer	Ward Engineering
Geotechnical Engineer	SNT Geotechnical
Building Envelope	WSP Group
Landscape Architect	Durante Kreuk
Building Code Consultant	LMDG Consultants
Energy Modelling	Footprint

³ Columbia Basin Rural Development Institute, 2016. *Trends Analysis: Population by Age and Gender*. Available at http://www.cbrdi.ca/wp-content/uploads/TA_Population_2016.pdf.

Current Site Conditions



2. Proposed Site

2.1. Current Use

The redevelopment site of Lakeside Place is 805 Nelson Avenue at Kokanee Avenue, to the east of the north end of Lakeside Park. The site was formerly a motel constructed in stages with the earliest buildings dating to the 1920s. It currently comprises 20 units that are functionally and physically obsolete. It is adjacent to 813 Nelson Avenue, which comprises an eight-unit building that was constructed in 2001 and is operated by Nelson CARES under an agreement with BC Housing to serve homeless-at-risk adults with physical and/or mental health disabilities.

The site comprises what was originally eight 30 foot x 120 foot lots and totals approximately 2,868 square metres (29,912 square feet) in area. There are effectively two sub-sites that, although composing two municipal addresses, have not been consolidated. The southern site to be redeveloped has four separate buildings on five lots. The four buildings have 20 units, including 2 studio units, 16 one-bedroom units, and 2 two-bedroom units.

2.2. Neighbourhood Context

The site for Lakeside Place is ideal for an affordable housing project, within walking distance to stores, services, and other

amenities, as well as with close proximity to Lakeside Park. The location also provides a 15 minute walk to downtown Nelson, and a local bus stop is located at the corner of Nelson and Kokanee Avenues. The neighbourhood around the proposed building features a range of diverse building forms, including a mix of single detached homes, duplexes, and several small to mid-sized multi-unit residential buildings.

There are several buildings in the neighbourhood of similar size and scale of the proposed building. This includes the 18-unit, three-storey Fairview Heritage Strata at 620 Second Street built in 1979; and the 61-unit, four-storey Valahalla Apartments at 505 Second Street built in 1973.

2.3. Zoning Context

The site is currently zoned MU5 under Bylaw 3199 in 2013 by the City of Nelson, allowing a mixture of commercial and residential uses and the maximum height allowed is 10 metres or three storeys. Due to the proposed height of the building, a rezoning is required. Reductions to the number of required parking spaces is also requested. This project will also require a subdivision and consolidation of the individual parcels.

3. Proposed Building

3.1. Size and Number of Units

The Redeveloped Lakeside Place will feature a mix of units. The units feature efficient layouts, and each unit provides access to private outdoor space, either in the form of a balcony or ground-level patio.

The proposed building will have a total of 47 units, including:

- 36 one-bedroom units sized for mobility impairment or for two person occupancy;
- 6 two-bedroom units are for two-person households where one person may be ill or disabled; and
- 5 studio units will house adults with physical and/or mental health disabilities at risk of homelessness, replacing four of the existing units that will be demolished for the redevelopment.

One-bedroom units range from 50 square metres (538 square feet) to 59 square metres (635 square feet). Two-bedroom units range from 72 square metres (775 square feet) to 83 square metres. Studio units are 31 square metres (334 square feet).

3.2. Housing Concept and Target Population

The one- and two-bedroom rental housing units, comprising nearly 90% of the units in the proposed building, are intended to house low-to-moderate income seniors (55 plus) who are

able to live independently. Rents will be varied, based on household income. Rents for 18 of the one-bedroom units are expected to be at a low-income/affordable range of \$550 - \$600 per month, and rents for the remaining 18 one-bedroom are expected to be at a low-end-of-market rate of \$800 - \$850 per month. Rents for the two-bedroom units will be at a low-end-of-market range of \$900 - \$950 per month. These rates are subject to change and will be finalized following the completion of the building. BC Housing's Shelter Aid For Elderly Renters (SAFER) program may also be used to help promote affordability for low income seniors and ensure that residents do not spend more than 30% of their household income on housing.

The 5 studio units intended to house adults with physical and/or mental health disabilities at risk of homelessness will be subsidized as part of the Homeless at Risk program under an existing operating agreement between the Nelson CARES Society and BC Housing. Rent for these units will be set at the income assistance shelter rate.

3.3. Resident Amenities

The building will feature a number of amenities for residents, including:

- A 111 square metre (1,200 square foot) amenity room with residential kitchen;

- Common laundry facilities in sun-room lounges, as well as space for individual laundry appliances roughed in for each apartment;
- A terrace in the rear of the building will provide an outdoor amenity space for residents; and
- A greenhouse for tenant use is also being considered.

The City of Nelson Zoning Bylaw requires a minimum amenity area for multi-unit residential developments based on the type and number of units. For the proposed Lakeside Place project, this would calculate to 650 square metres (7,000 square feet). The proposed building and site will provide 814 square metres (8,760 square feet) of amenity space. This includes 171 square metres (1,840 square feet) of common indoor recreation space, 137 square metres (1,475 square feet) of common outdoor recreation space, and 506 square metres (5,446 square feet) of private balconies and ground level patios intended for private recreation use. The calculations exclude areas of the project occupied by entrance hallways, driveways, parking areas, dwelling units, and storage areas.

BC Housing typically targets 1.9 square metres (20 square feet) of indoor amenity space per unit. For the proposed building, this would be 87 square metres (940 square feet). The proposed building will exceed this target by 84

square metres (904 square feet). The amount of amenity space provided by the proposed project surpasses that typical of other social housing project built in BC.

Additionally, the building location, with its proximity to public space, such as Lakeside Park, allows residents easy access to additional outdoor amenities. The potentially improved and landscaped portion of the closed Nelson Avenue to the east of the site could also serve as an amenity for residents.

3.4. Other Building Features

One level of underground parking will make efficient use of the site and avoid unsightly surface parking and will reduce the need for extensive snow clearing in winter. Underground parking will be accessed by a ramp off of Kokanee Avenue.

Scooter parking is also included in the basement of the project. The use of scooters as a mobility assistance device is growing and permits independence for people with physical disabilities.

There may be an opportunity to landscape the closed section of Nelson Avenue to the northeast of the site. Any landscaping improvements in this area would be subject to approval of the Ministry of Transportation.

However, the Nelson CARES Society has expressed interest in potentially partnering with the City of Nelson to improve and maintain this area for recreational use by both the public and residents of the building.

4. Community Consultation

4.1. Tenant Consultation and Relocation

Nelson CARES Society has been committed to ensuring that current residents of Lakeside Place have been consulted at each stage of the redevelopment process, and are rehoused in appropriate housing in the community. A Tenant Relocation Plan was developed by the Society in the fall of 2016, following initial project approval by BC Housing. Since that time, the Society has successfully relocated 17 of the 20 original tenants to new housing units. The Society expects to move the last 3 residents over the next few months.

4.2. Neighbourhood Walk

In September, board members and staff of the Nelson CARES Society conducted a neighbourhood walk and went door-to-door to neighbours with civic addresses within 60 metres of property line. Neighbours were provided with a brochure about the proposed project, which included a summary of the number of units in the proposed building, intended tenant population, and summary of

building features, as well as renderings of the proposed building. Neighbours were also provided with an invitation to attend a community open house in late September.

4.3. Community Open House

An open house to solicit community feedback for the proposed building was held on Wednesday, September 27 from 4:00 to 7:00 pm at the Best Western Plus Baker Street Inn at 153 Baker Street in Nelson, BC. A total of 45 individuals were recorded signing-in to participate in the open house. A total of 12 comment forms were received.

Generally, comments indicated support for the project. Of the comment forms received, 10 were supportive and 2 were opposed to the proposal. Several comment forms expressed strong support for the proposal based on the need for seniors housing in the community. However, two of the comment forms indicated concern that the proposed building's size and scope is incompatible with the existing character of the neighbourhood, or that the building would generate negative impacts for the community. Highlights from the comment forms are included in this report, and detailed feedback of all comments received (with personal identifying information redacted) is attached.

Many open house participants also expressed interest in being a tenant in the new building. Nelson CARES Society is currently maintaining a list of prospective tenants, which currently includes 14 individuals. A waitlist maintained by Nelson CARES Society for seniors housing at other Society operated buildings currently includes 63 individuals.

5. Changes from Current Zoning

5.1. Parking

The proposed building will require a variance for required off-street parking stalls. The City of Nelson Off-Street Parking Bylaw requires 1 parking stall per unit, plus 0.2 visitor parking stalls per unit, for studio and one-bedroom units and 1.5 parking stall per unit, plus 0.2 visitor parking stalls, for two-bedroom units. This would require 60 parking stalls.

Because of site constraints, parking at Lakeside Place is required underground. Soil conditions and the high cost of excavation and construction would make providing multiple levels of underground parking unfeasible. (The cost of constructing for underground structured parking is typically around \$40,000 per stall, plus ongoing maintenance costs).

The Society currently operates 152 units of affordable housing in Nelson. All of the units

are for low-to-moderate income individuals. The total parking stalls for all these units is 61, or 0.4 parking stalls per unit. This includes staff and service provider parking, such as home help services for the seniors. This is also typical of other housing providers in the community, such as Anderson Gardens which has 37 units and 12 parking stalls (0.32 stalls per unit versus 1.7 stalls per unit as required by the parking development bylaw).

The majority of the people housed in Nelson CARES Society affordable housing units do not own vehicles. The Society has made accommodation for scooter and bike parking in these buildings, which is a common transportation choice for the Society's senior tenants, and most use public transportation. The seniors oriented tenant base for the new Lakeside Place building is expected to have similar rates of automobile ownership as other Nelson CARES Society operated facilities, and it is anticipated that fewer than one third will own and operate vehicles. The proposed building will have 47 units and 19 parking stalls, or 0.4 parking stalls per unit. The proposed building will also have excellent access to public transportation and has easy walking access to shopping and amenities, such as Lakeside Park. Sheltered bike and scooter parking will also be provided. The Society may also explore the feasibility of

dedicating the use of one of the parking stalls for a carshare service, which could further reduce the need for individually owned vehicles.

5.2. Height

The proposed building will require a variance for height. The current zoning allows for a building up to three storeys. To accommodate the number of housing units required to support the project's business case, the proposed building includes four storeys to allow 47 units. This business case relies on income provided by the 47 units to provide for operating cost and service the mortgage that will be secured following completion of the project. The provision of 47 units of affordable housing is also a requirement of construction funding and financing by BC Housing. The four storeys will make efficient use of land owned by Nelson CARES Society, and will maximize the impact of capital contributions provided by funders.

6. Community Benefits

6.1. Secure Affordable Housing

The proposed project would provide 47 units of affordable housing in Nelson. These housing units would be secured with a Section 219 restrictive covenant registered on the property

to ensure that the units remain affordable in the long-term.

The creation of 47 units of affordable housing will provide a significant addition to Nelson's stock of affordable housing. It will also create a stock of housing designed specifically for the housing needs of seniors, with features that will allow seniors to age in place and accommodate the needs of seniors with a wide range of mobility constraints and other needs.

6.2. Improved Streetscape

The proposed design for the Lakeside Place Redevelopment is intended to improve the streetscape of the neighbourhood. The proposed building will present windows, balconies, and doors to both Kokanee and Nelson Avenues, making it pleasant to walk past and providing "eyes on the street."

The building has been designed to complement the surrounding buildings. Building materials will be in warm colours, including wood and red brick, and designed to integrate with the neighbourhood.

The opportunity to improve and landscape the closed road portion of Nelson Avenue could provide a significant improvement to the neighbourhood. Landscaping of this area, which is currently uninviting, could provide

interest to pedestrians and an attractive entrance to Nelson for traffic entering the city from the bridge.

6.3. Seniors Programming Space

Nelson CARES Society is interested in exploring opportunities for seniors programming and activities in the proposed amenity room. These programs could be open to the public, and provide seniors living in the neighbourhood with a new source of supportive services in the community. It could also serve as a way of connecting tenants with seniors and others in the local community.

6.4. Other Social and Economic Benefits

There are a number of other associated social and economic benefits that may be provided to the community through the redevelopment of Lakeside Place.

Although the direct impact of the redevelopment will create more housing for seniors in the community, there may be a secondary housing impact that could benefit the community. Seniors who move to the redeveloped Lakeside Place, taking advantage of the senior-friendly design, may leave dwellings that can instead house other households in need of housing, such as young families. Previous research indicates that there is a sizeable population of seniors who are

interested in downsizing to more senior-friendly housing, but are prevented from doing so because of limited availability.

The project will have a direct economic impact in Nelson. The project has currently engaged with three Nelson-based design firms, including Ward Engineering and Land Surveying as the civil engineer and surveyor, MacLeod Nine Consultants as the structural engineer, and SNT Geotechnical as the geotechnical engineer. As the project moves from the design development to the construction phase, there will be additional opportunities for local trades and business to be considered for various construction related roles. Although the project is required to seek competitive bidding during the tendering, we expect that local firms may be at an advantage due to their proximity to the site and knowledge of the local construction sector.