



January 28, 2022

Alex Tang, Planner  
Development Services  
Township of Esquimalt  
1229 Esquimalt Road  
Esquimalt, BC V9A 3P1



Dear Alex Tang:

**Re: Review – 602/608/612 Nelson Street, Township of Esquimalt OCP Amendment**

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Township of Esquimalt OCP Amendment for 606, 608, and 612 Nelson Street. The past few years have seen significant advances in linking urban planning with a variety of health outcomes.

These include outcomes such as: the encouragement of physical activity, healthier eating, greater safety, cleaner air and healthier living environments, access to health services, food security, age friendly communities, and improved social interaction amongst other potential health criteria.

Island Health appreciates the opportunity to provide evidence based recommendations and comments for this referral. Highlights as well as recommendations are itemized below:

### **Highlights**

- The proponent is requesting to amend the land use designation to commercial/mixed-use commercial to allow for the addition of a café within in the multi-unit proposed development complex. The café will provide residents with opportunities for social engagement that will help foster social connectedness and sense of belonging.
- This proposed development will be located near an existing commercial services centre which includes a local retail food store. An increase in access to healthy food is associated with an increase in the purchase and consumption of healthy foods (such as fruits and vegetables). The availability and accessibility of food retail outlets that sell a variety of fresh produce and whole foods at affordable prices (e.g. supermarkets) is linked to decreased obesity rates.
- The proposed application is an infill development for a 12 storey, mixed-use building. Infill development helps lessen the negative impact of sprawl, such as effects on air quality and commute times. It will also reduce vehicle dependency and encourage alternate modes of transportation such as walking, cycling and public transit that will encourage participation in active, healthy lifestyles. Health evidence shows that people who live in walkable neighbourhoods are two times more likely to meet the physical activity standards than those who don't. In

---

#### **Gateway Village Health Unit**

201 - 771 Vernon Avenue | Victoria, BC V8X 5A7  
Email: [Gateway\\_office@viha.ca](mailto:Gateway_office@viha.ca)

Tel: 250.519.3401 | Fax: 250.519.3402  
[www.islandhealth.ca](http://www.islandhealth.ca)

Excellent health and care, for everyone, everywhere, every time.

addition, the proposed residential complex is located in close proximity to transit, cycling and pedestrian infrastructure and other various amenities, which makes active transportation more convenient. Providing convenient access to public transit enhances mobility among a wide range of groups.

### **Regulatory Considerations**

#### **Food Premises**

- The Health Protection and Environmental Services (HPES) department in Island Health has a regulatory role in food premises from construction to operation. The possible construction of new food premises must be undertaken with the appropriate construction and operating permits.

### **Recommendations under Island Health's Healthy Built Environment Initiative**

- Due to limited outdoor greenspace on the property, the inclusion of a rooftop garden will support positive health outcomes. The proposed plan includes a rooftop patio. The addition of greenery or garden space will provide some exposure to nature. Research supports a strong relationship between exposure to nature and the reduction of stress, chronic disease, depression, anxiety, improved concentration and cognitive functioning. Local garden spaces have the added benefit of providing a space that encourages neighbourly interactions. Studies have shown the more socially connected a person felt, the better they perceived their mental and physical health to be.
- Recommend prioritizing housing for the vulnerable populations such as the, elderly, low income groups, people with disabilities. Access to permanent, safe, and health housing for vulnerable populations helps to keep them safe from violence, reduces the risk of injury and communicable diseases. Healthy affordable housing also allows for more income to go towards affording basic sustaining health needs such as healthy food for nourishment and accessing health services, thereby improving general health and quality of life.
- Mobility accessible options, such as provisions within the units for wheelchairs will provide housing options that meet housing standards for people of all abilities.

If you have any questions or comments please do not hesitate to contact the undersigned for further clarification or to discuss further.

Sincerely,

  
Angela Wheeler, CPHI(C)  
Built Environment Consultant

AW/cmd

cc: William Johnston, Environmental Health Officer