



THE MARIN



## Rental Apartments Rezoning

Community Engagement Summary, December 2021

### Project Objective: Consistency with Official Community Plan

Development planning for The Marin began with an interest in the Township of Esquimalt and its unique setting within the region's urban core. Esquimalt has a distinct small-town feel benefiting from a strong sense of place, yet offers proximity to downtown Victoria and a number of significant commercial, civic and employment centres in the Capital region. The recent revitalization of Esquimalt's own town core through the development of the Esquimalt Town Square project is reflective of the community's investment in a more compact urban form with new mixed-use and municipal amenities strategically located to contribute to Esquimalt's economic and social vibrancy.

The Township of Esquimalt's 2018 Official Community Plan (OCP) provides insight into the community's long range goals and aspirations and identifies lands, including The Marin site, designated for similar redevelopment to meet the community's vision.

### OCP Vision:

- *Esquimalt is a caring and welcoming community that has strong relationships with our neighbours, the Esquimalt and Songhees Nations, regional municipalities, and the naval base.*
- *Our vibrant economy is supported by an engaged community.*
- *As a coastal community, we are stewards of our environment and value our past, present and future.*

Early discussions with Development Services staff at the Township informed initial conceptual planning through the fall and winter of 2020/2021. The Marin proposal has been shaped to be in alignment with goals and objectives of the OCP and is presented as a project facilitating the implementation of the plan. The property is designated for Medium Density Residential Development and the proposal is consistent with the multi-unit residential use and 2.0 Floor Area Ratio (FAR) density directions of the OCP, and is proposing 5 storey buildings where the OCP allows up to 6 storeys.



## Community Engagement and Feedback

With a foundation of preliminary planning information and an early site concept plan, the team began a more focused program of community and stakeholder engagement in the spring of 2021. Due to public health restrictions, engagement activities centred around online information sharing through the launching of a project information website and hosting a series of virtual presentations with stakeholders and community members. The discussion forums provided insight into the key topics of interest and issues of concern, and helped the development planning team identify areas for further refinement of the conceptual plans in preparation for the rezoning application. Following submission of the application and with the easing of public health restrictions over the summer of 2021, the project team hosted a Public Open House on August 12, 2021. The following is a summary of the key themes that emerged through stakeholder engagement, the Neighbourhood Information Sessions held in April 2021 and the Open House held in August 2021.

### What We Heard: Key Themes

#### Parking and Traffic

- We heard concern about increasing demand for parking in the neighbourhood and a need for the development to provide adequate parking in the proposed underground parking areas, including parking for visitors.
- Streetscape design to provide on-street parking for neighbourhood use will also be important, as well as considering how the streets are used by the Fire and Police Departments.
- We heard support for the project providing bicycle parking and considering strategies to encourage other modes of transportation (ie, car share).

#### Public Amenities

- We heard support for the planned Art Walk extension as a public amenity that will encourage community use and neighbourhood walkability.
- There were questions about how the public art will be selected, with interest in further community engagement with local artists, First Nations and arts organizations.
- We also heard support for the proposed public plaza at the corner of Carlisle and Fraser as a positive addition to the public realm.

#### Building and Resident Amenities

- We heard encouragement to include a range of amenities for resident use to help relieve pressure on existing municipal facilities (parks, rec centre).
- The proposed on-site fitness studio, meeting/social room, dog-run, and rooftop amenity spaces being discussed as positive features of the proposal.

#### Building Form and Height

- We heard support for the stepped building form, and the inclusion of ground-level units with their own walk-up entries from the street and public walkway.
- We heard concerns about the proposed 5 storey buildings, potential loss of views from the Esquimalt Town Square buildings to the north, shadow impacts and privacy/overlook concerns from adjacent neighbours.

#### OCP Designation and Development Potential

- We heard concerns from a number of residents that they were not aware of the site's development potential, having received misinformation about the site's future development relative to the OCP.
- Some residents of the Town Square buildings were told the site was limited to 4 storeys or that it would remain single-family residential as it is now.

#### Rental Housing and Mix

- We heard an understanding of the need for rental housing, and questions about the anticipated rental rates for new market housing.
- We received some questions about including a mix of condominiums, market rental and non-market housing to support greater affordability, but understanding that as a market rental housing provider, the project is not proposing any strata/condominiums or subsidized housing.

#### Commercial Uses

- We heard some interest in the project including ground-floor commercial space to contribute new shops, cafes, delis or a daycare to the growing Esquimalt core area.
- We heard an understanding that because the OCP does not designate the property for commercial mixed-use development, the project is not proposing any commercial uses.

#### Trees and Landscaping

- We heard interest in retaining existing mature trees where possible and protecting street trees during the construction process.
- We also heard support for including significant landscaping and fencing along the site's perimeter to provide screening and buffering to neighbours.

#### Existing Site Maintenance

- We heard some concerns about the existing site and the need for ongoing maintenance and management of the properties.
- We committed to working with the property management company to address any concerns as they arise.

#### Rezoning Process

- We received questions about the rezoning process and the application timeline, and interest in application materials being made available through the project information website.

#### Construction Planning

- We received encouragement to ensure construction plans are developed and are shared with the neighbourhood in advance of significant blasting or construction activities that may be disruptive to residents.





## Neighbourhood Information Session #1, April 21, 2021

The first Neighbourhood Information Session was held on Wednesday, April 21, 2021 through a Zoom meeting, with invitations distributed by hand to neighbourhood properties. A total of 26 individuals / households responded with RSVPs to attend the Zoom meeting.

The team introduced the project and provided an overview of the preliminary planning directions and then opened the meeting to an interactive discussion, and questions and answers session. Participants were encouraged to ask their questions or to type their questions into the Zoom chat, with the team then reading and responding to each question or comment individually.



The key themes that emerged from the questions and comments centred around building amenities, parking and traffic, building design and rental housing, construction planning, and landscaping and privacy. The purpose of this summary is not intended as detailed meeting minutes, nor to attribute specific questions to any individuals, but rather, the summary addresses the key topics raised during the Q&A session and includes an overview of the team's responses.

### Amenities

*What type amenities will be offered within the building to help lessen the strain on existing civic facilities (i.e. Recreation Centre).*

- On-site amenities for resident use are proposed, including a fitness studio, meeting room/party room and outdoor gathering spaces on the rooftop with a BBQ area and raised planters for urban agriculture.

*Will a child care/daycare facility be included?*

- The project is envisioned as a residential building only, with no commercial space planned, as the OCP does not designate the site for mixed-use or commercial/residential development.

### Parking and Traffic

*How much parking is going to be provided?*

- A parking study is currently being prepared to help advise us on the demand for parking and the appropriate ratio of parking spaces per unit. At present, we are looking at providing 1 parking space per unit. As a rental building, allocation of the parking spaces can be managed to ensure efficient use of all provided spaces.

*Will visitor parking be provided? There is concern about demand for on-street parking, given neighbourhood amenities and facilities that already attract street parking.*

- Yes, visitor parking will be provided in the underground parking area.

*Have you considered the impact of parking and number of trips on the Police and Fire Departments?*

- All parking is proposed to be accommodated underground and a traffic study is being completed to assess the traffic impacts and trip generation of the project. We will be working with the Township of Esquimalt through the application process to understand infrastructure needs and streetscape design for any on-street parking to be retained.

- We will also work with the Fire Department to review the buildings relative to fire flows for sprinklering, and with the Police Department when designing public spaces to meet Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) standards.

*Will the units with their own walk-up entries from the street have access to the underground parking?*

- Yes, the ground level units with their own entries from the street or public walkway will also have another doorway to/from their unit to the interior common hallways, with access to the elevators/stairs and underground parking levels.

*Will bike parking be provided?*

- Yes, bicycle parking will be provided, with residents having access to a secure bicycle lock-up room, and at-grade visitor bike racks will be located at the entry to the buildings.

*Will there be a car share program?*

- We are currently completing our traffic and parking study, and will be able to consider transportation issues more fully once the number of units and plan details are confirmed.

## Who is the Project Geared Toward?

*What type of rent will the project be offering? Will any affordable housing be included?*

- The Marin is proposed as a market rental building, with a range of unit sizes to meet a diversity of household needs. The project is not proposing any non-market housing and is not being proposed in partnership with any non-market housing providers.

*What will happen to the individuals displaced by the redevelopment?*

- The demand for housing in the region is high and we see each project as making a contribution to help relieve that pressure. The proposed purpose-built rental housing will help address housing needs. The properties have all been purchased to pursue this redevelopment; however, many of the former owners and tenants remain occupying the homes until such time as the project advances.

## Building Design

*What is the access to the upper level units?*

- The buildings will have elevators and stairways, with central common corridors to provide access to all units internally, in addition to the units that have at-grade accesses from the street or the internal Art Walk. The main building entrances are planned to be located off of Carlisle where the proposed Art Walk connects through the site.

*Will the upper storeys of the building step back along all frontages, or just along the streetscape.*

- The conceptual design has the upper two storeys step back along the public street frontages.

*What will the setback be to the eastern property line?*

- The conceptual design looks to the guidelines of other multi-unit planning regulations, but we are currently planning for slightly larger setbacks to be sensitive to our existing neighbours, allowing approximately 6 m. The parkade below ground is also planned to be pulled back from the property lines to allow the depth of soil necessary for significant planting of trees and landscaping along the edges as buffering.

*How many units are proposed?*

- The conceptual design has about 80 in one building and 120 - 125 in the second building, with roughly around 200 units overall.

*What is Floor Area Ratio and is 200 units consistent with "medium density residential" as defined by the OCP or generally?*

- Floor Area Ratio (FAR) is a measure of the amount of floor area built divided by the amount of site area or land area upon which the building is constructed. The OCP designates the site for Medium Density Residential development up to 2.0 FAR, which means that two times the site area can be built as residential floor area. The proposal is consistent with the OCP's density directions. The proposal is for five storey buildings, while the OCP allows up to six storeys in Medium Density Residential designation.

*What type of art will be included in the Art Walk and will there be consultation about the type of art?*

- We hope to work with local arts organizations and stakeholders to develop the public art concept for the Art Walk extension.

## Construction Plan

*Will there be a construction plan to manage and mitigate construction impacts on the neighbourhood? Will there be blasting insurance?*

- Yes, we would prepare a construction management plan and plan to communicate with neighbours about the timelines and what to expect. With respect to blasting, it is typical to have a pre-blasting inspection followed by a post-blasting inspection to manage potential impacts and to have the project fully insured.

*Will the project be improving the street? Moving the overhead lines underground?*

- Yes, the project will be responsible for frontage improvements and we understand that Esquimalt is interested in having the overhead lines moved underground. We will be working with the Township to prepare the plans as part of the application.

## Existing Site

*Is there a plan to do any kind of recycling of the existing houses, moving them or salvaging materials?*

- We have not yet considered the demolition/construction approach, but have experience with recycling or relocating heritage houses where relevant, and will develop our plans as we get to the construction phase of the project.

*What will be done to manage the existing housing? - one property was noted as having a rodent problem.*

- We are working with the local property manager to address this and appreciate having this concern brought to our attention.



## Trees, Landscaping and Privacy

*Are you able to save any of the largest trees, ie. the mature pear tree on the eastern side of the property?*

- The project will have an arborist report prepared to review and study the existing trees to determine which ones could be retained. The underground parkade structure is also conceptually designed to be pulled away from the property lines to help, where possible, with tree retention, and to allow for new landscaping and stormwater management

*Concern was noted about privacy, loss of sunlight and overlook into neighbouring back yards, and a preference for the project not to proceed.*

- The conceptual designs are consistent with the guiding policies of the OCP, and we are trying to balance housing needs with site design opportunities to arrive at a contextual and well-integrated project that will fit within the neighbourhood.

*Will fences be built around the property? High quality fencing and tall fencing for privacy were noted as being preferred.*

- The conceptual landscape plan includes fencing and landscaping along the interior property lines for privacy and screening. As the long-term owners, we would be investing in high-quality fencing as part of the project.





## Neighbourhood Information Session #2, April 28, 2021

In preparation for the first Neighbourhood Information session, we discovered that a number of the invitation cards were not able to be delivered to the residents of the new Town Square buildings, and therefore scheduled a second meeting with invitations hand delivered into each of the individual buildings. We acknowledge that the invitation to the second meeting was received by some residents with short notice of the session, and have made all of the presentation materials available on the project information website for viewing by anyone who was unable to attend either of the meetings.

The second Neighbourhood Information Session was held on Wednesday, April 28, 2021, again using a Zoom meeting platform. A total of 25 individuals / households responded with RSVPs to attend the Zoom meeting.

The key themes that emerged from the second meeting focused on building design and height, concerning misinformation about the development designation and development potential of the site and the height proposed for the site, concern about view impacts and loss of views for the residents of the Town Square buildings, parking and traffic, amenities for residents, and potential construction impacts. The summary below groups questions by key theme and is presented as an overview of the discussion forum and the team's responses to questions and comments, and is not intended as meeting minutes attributing specific questions to individual participants.



### Who is this Project Geared Towards?

*What demographics will you try to attract? What type of rents will you be anticipating?*

- We strive to meet the community's needs, with housing suitable for singles, couples and families. As a purpose-built rental project, we want to appeal to many different types of residents, with a range of studio, 1 bedroom, 2 bedroom and 3 bedroom units in many different formats. The focus will be on 1 and 2 bedrooms, which are in highest demand.
- The project is proposed as a market rental building so the rents will be set at market rates, which are currently in the \$2.50 - \$3.00 per square foot range.

*Will you be providing rentals to lower income? Why not include some lower income as integrated housing? See Dockside Green as an example.*

- The proposal is not for a funded, affordable housing project. The proposal to build market rental housing will be filling a need in the region for new rental accommodation. One way to create more affordability is to build more housing that then opens vacancies in the market, creating openings at all levels of pricing across new and older rental buildings. Other master planned projects may have provided affordable housing in response to a density bonus or other policy directions.

### Building Design

*Has the site already been approved for 6 storeys? Does the OCP limit the site to 4 storeys?*

- The OCP designates the site for Medium Density Residential use, with buildings up to 6 storeys in height. The site is currently not zoned for 6 storey buildings. The rezoning application is required to rezone the site to be consistent with the OCP. The plan proposes 5 storey buildings, below the OCP maximum of 6. Limiting the height to 5 storeys, and stepping the upper storeys back, are design responses in recognition of the neighbourhood context, and preserving view corridors from the Esquimalt Town Square buildings.

*There was concern noted about the information provided to owners and residents of the new Town Square buildings, with some indicating they were told there was a limit of 4 storeys on the Marin project site, or that the developer was only proposing 4 storeys, and others were told that it was to remain single-family as it is now.*

- The OCP designation gives guidance to a rezoning process and the project is aiming to be consistent with the OCP. The development team has been in discussions with Esquimalt for about a year, and has always been looking at 5 storeys, so we are unclear where the reference to 4 storeys came from. While the site is currently zoned for single family residential, the OCP provides the guiding direction about what the community anticipates being built in the future.



*There was concern noted about the loss of views from the upper floors of the Town Square buildings.*

- The project has tried to balance OCP guidance within the community context, and is proposing 5 storey buildings instead of reaching up to 6 storeys. The upper storeys are proposed to be stepped back, to try to preserve some of the view corridors from the Town Square buildings.

*What will the shadow impacts on the new Esquimalt Town Square project be?*

- Shadow studies will be prepared, but with the buildings oriented in a north-south direction, shadow impacts can be minimized relative to what they would be if the buildings were oriented east-west.
- At 5 storeys, the buildings are 1 storey shorter than the buildings to the north and the shadow impacts will be less than if there were 6 storey buildings on both sides of the street corridor.

*What are the proposed ceiling heights?*

- The ceiling heights per floor are currently targeting a standard floor to floor height of 10'3", with 8'6" ceilings in the units. We are not including any extra height, beyond a conventional building.

*Why is rooftop amenity space proposed - will it add to the building height?*

- Rooftop amenities will not add to the building height. They will be similar to the Esquimalt Town Square buildings with outdoor bbq areas and raised garden areas for use by the residents.

*How many units are proposed?*

- At this early stage in the design and rezoning process, we are in the order of 200 - 210 units.

*Why only rental - why not a mix of rental and condominiums as in Esquimalt Town Square?*

- As owners and operators of rental housing across Canada, it is not in Boardwalk's core business to build condominiums.

*There were comments about a need for more shops, cafes and delis in the neighbourhood. Why is there no commercial space on the ground floor?*

- Commercial space is not included in the proposal because the property is not designated in the OCP for commercial use.

*Current zoning allows how many storeys?*

- The current zoning is for the existing single family homes and the proposed rezoning is how the building heights up to 5 storeys in alignment with the OCP would be considered.

*There were concerns noted about building height and changes to the neighbourhood feel, a desire to see the site planned within the community scale and preferences for 3 storeys or 3 storeys with a 4th storey stepped back, instead of 5 storeys.*

- The project is responding to the OCP and the neighbourhood context and aims to provide the transition between the Town Square project to the north and the residential neighbourhood to the south. The stepped building and the design of units with individual entries on the ground floor are architectural responses to the context and will contribute to the neighbourhood feel.

*What is the minimum/maximum amount of rental suites required for a community plan for a population and land mass the size of Esquimalt? Is there enough land in Esquimalt already zoned for this type of development?*

- The OCP provides an overview of the housing needs of the community based on anticipated population growth and designates lands suitable for new housing, including this site as a Medium Density Residential development site. The OCP notes that Esquimalt has adequate lands designated to accommodate the anticipated population growth, assuming that rezoning approvals achieve the maximum development potential allowed in the OCP.

## **Construction Plan**

*Should you get approval, when would you begin demolition and what is your construction/project timeline?*

- The project's next steps include preparation of a rezoning application later this spring, followed by the Township regulatory review process. A decision on the rezoning could be anticipated in the winter of 2021/2022. After the rezoning, a detailed Development Permit process would be advanced, and then Building Permitting. With all of the approvals in place, construction is then anticipated to be an approximately 2 year process.

*How will you mitigate construction impacts on neighbours?*

- The project team will develop a construction plan and will communicate with neighbours throughout the construction process, and provide notice about key timelines and events.

*Will there be subsurface impacts? Geothermal?*

- The project is not currently looking at any geothermal systems, so there would not be deep subsurface impacts beyond excavation for the underground parking area and foundations.

## Rezoning Process

*Will you be having focus groups?*

- There may be opportunities for specific topics to be addressed through focus group discussions. For example, we would like to engage with local artists and the arts community when planning for the Art Walk extension, and we welcome ideas for other topics to be addressed.

*Will community input and the comments from tonight be part of the development application?*

- While we don't plan to provide detailed meeting minutes, or to attribute specific comments to individuals, we will be summarizing the questions and discussion as part of our application materials.

*Were the residents of the homes surrounding the project invited to attend this information meeting? There were suggestions about mailing the invitations in the future, instead of hand delivering them.*

- A first Neighbourhood Information Session was held on April 21st and invitations were delivered to the immediate neighbours. Because of the challenges we had getting the postcard invitations to the residents

of the Town Square buildings, we decided to host this second meeting.

- We can look at using Canada Post in the future to have the invitations be included in the mail.

*Will the application be posted to the website?*

- The application documents will be posted to the project information website.

*There was concern about the project having a negative impact on property values and a question about whether land values are considered by the Township of Esquimalt in the application review process.*

- Implementation of the OCP can bring positive benefits, by realizing the community's long range vision. The proposal aims to contribute to the quality of the neighbourhood already realized through the Esquimalt Town Square project and the team is working to achieve a positive result for the neighbourhood.
- The properties were purchased at market value and it was noted that discussion with the Township would be required to understand if and how they might consider land values in their process.

## Existing Site

*Do you own all of the lots?*

- All 14 of the properties are owned by the development group; some of the original owners remain as tenants on site.

*What effort will be made to protect the large trees on Carlisle?*

- An arborist report has just been completed to survey all of the trees on site and along the street. The trees on public property will be protected through the construction process.

## Parking

*How many levels of underground parking are planned? Will there be parking for all tenants in the building? How many visitor stalls?*

- The plans include 2 levels of underground parking, with 1 parking space for every unit in the building, including an allocation for visitors at a ratio of 0.1 space per unit.
- Parking and traffic studies are being completed to provide recommendations on the parking demand.

*Will renters be asked to pay for extra parking or will parking be included in the rent to discourage on-street parking?*

- The pricing strategy has not yet been finalized, but generally, we aim to provide adequate parking to meet resident needs and can manage the parking demand more efficiently than in a strata building, so that all of the parking spaces provided get utilized.

*Are you planning to account for the loss of/ increased demand for on street parking?*

- We will be working with the Township to provide frontage improvements. There is potential for an increase in street parking spaces as the project will be reducing the number of individual driveways that take away from the potential for on-street parking.

## Amenities

*What amenities will you be providing your renters (families, dog owners, cyclists) to ensure the current resources are not overwhelmed?*

- There will be a number of on-site amenities for the tenants, including the rooftop amenity area with bbq and garden plots, a fitness studio and meeting/social room for residents to use, as well as bike parking and a dog run area.

*How do you see your company contributing to the Esquimalt community beyond just renting units?*

- Boardwalk aims to be part of the community from the outset of the process, by seeking community input and guidance through these sessions, by designing a project with community amenities, and by being active in the community where our buildings are located. The project will be proposing a public gathering plaza, and an extension to the Art Walk and will be contributing art to the public realm.





THE MARIN



## Community Open House, August 12, 2021

The project team hosted a Community Open House session on Thursday, August 12, 2021. The meeting was held at the Esquimalt Recreation Centre between 6:00 pm and 8:00 pm.

Over the course of the evening, approximately 50 community members attended and had an opportunity to view the project information boards and ask questions of the project team. Comment forms were provided to welcome community feedback. A total of 2 comment forms were returned that evening.

To facilitate broad community engagement, a Virtual Open House was also hosted on the project website, with the same presentation materials available for online viewing. A total of 3 comments were submitted online. The comments received during the 30-day comment period have been shared with the Township of Esquimalt.

Many of the discussions during the Community Open House echoed the key themes of previous community engagement, including comments on building height and design, relationship to adjacent development, parking and traffic, trees, and construction impact management.

