

June 5, 2025



DESIGN RATIONALE

1005 Tillicum Rd, Esquimalt, BC

The primary objective for this site is to introduce new housing and essential commercial space along Tillicum corridor, while prioritizing the preservation of existing trees and the integration of a substantial green open space.

Site Context

This project is located along Tillicum Road, immediately adjacent to the well-connected intersection of Tillicum and Craigflower, in close proximity to George Vale Golf Club. It is located walking distance to all levels of schools, Esquimalt Gorge Park, Saanich Gorge Park, Lampson Park, Anderson Park, Highrock Park, Banfield park, and other green space amenities. It is within a 10-minute walk to a grocery store, a bank, a pharmacy, and a 20-minute walk to Tillicum mall. It is within a 10-minute walk to a variety of restaurants such as Thai Green Elephant, Kizuna Ramen, and Driftwood Brewery. It is within a 10minute walk to exercise opportunities for adults and children, such as VanIsle Jiu Jitsu, Island Elite Cheerleading, Wild Roots Dance & Yoga, Crossfit Taranis, and a running track at Esquimalt High.

The site is well-served by public transit, with a 10-minute bus ride providing direct access to key community amenities, including the Archie Browning Centre, Esquimalt Recreation Centre, Esquimalt Public Library, Esquimalt Farmers Market, and the Township's parade route. It also takes advantage of newly completed bike lanes. This location supports a vibrant, active, and community-oriented lifestyle with strong connections to both daily necessities and leisure activities.

This area is undergoing a significant transformation, characterized by a wave of new residential and mixed-use developments that are contributing to increased density, housing diversity, and urban revitalization. Within 400 meters to the north, Abstract Developments is currently constructing a six-story, 99-unit mixed-use project, complemented by the recently completed 10-unit townhouse development by Large & Co.

Approximately 200 meters to the south, multiple developments are advancing through various stages of the planning and permitting process, as well as construction including Lida Homes' six-story, 119-unit residential project, Method Built's 45-unit Fleming development, and the Greater Victoria Housing Society's 117-unit residential project.

To the west, within 100 meters of the site, Denciti Developments is delivering a six-story, 134-unit mixed-use building. Collectively, these projects reflect the area's ongoing urban renewal and reinforce its role as a growing, well-connected residential and commercial hub.

There are also many existing multi-family projects, 4 storey 14-unit development directly across, a townhome project 200m to the east, as well as two 4 storey condo buildings 350 meters to the east, and Gorge Point condos 400m to the north.

This project is immediately on the bus 14 and bus 26 routes, therefore easily connected to such prominent locations and employment centres such as the University of Victoria, Victoria General Hospital, Uptown Mall, Canadian Forces Base, and others.

We think that this development would be well-suited for just about any demographic due to its location, and the variety of proposed unit plans. There is a layout here for everyone! Some of the one-bedroom units can be a great spot for young professionals, well-connected to major employment centres via transit, as well as to the hustle and bustle of downtown Victoria (12-minute bike-ride away!) Project's larger 3-bedroom units together with proposed outdoors amenity could be a perfect starter home for families with young children. A few studio units would accommodate students with direct transit connections to Camosun and UVic, and a 22-minute bike ride to Royal Roads University. Proximity to the highway would be ideal for those who depend on their car for work and to get around.

Site Description

The subject site is 14,904 square feet in size, over 68 feet wide and 223 feet long. It has a pedestrian path running along its entire southern property line, connecting Tillicum Road and Inskip Street which is a huge asset to this development offering accessibility not usually available on the inner city lots.

The lot is moderately sloped, with 4 meters elevation gain from front to the rear, or an overall slope of 5%.

The lot has many mature trees a lot of which we intend to retain.

3 meters right-of-way is proposed along the entire frontage of the lot, to improve the pedestrian realm along Tillicum Rd.

Substantial green space is proposed at the back of the lot, preserving existing trees and proposing new ones that will be able to mature to full size due to there being no parkade structure underneath.

Project Description

This proposed Project will consist of a four storey (3 residential storeys over parking) mixed-use building with 32 residential units and 482 square feet of ground floor commercial space, and a gym for the residents.

The unit mix consists of 2 (6%) Studio units, 18 (56%) 1-bedroom units, 9 (29%) 2-bedrooms units, and 3 (9%) 3-bedroom units.

The project proposes a total of 18,523 square feet (gross) of buildable area, an FAR of 1.30.

Due to its condensed massing, the project's site coverage is 53.5% (more similar to a townhome project than to a condo building, which typically come with 75-80% coverage due to underground parkades,) allowing for substantial amenity area, appropriate soil volumes for planting new trees, and most importantly - retaining the existing trees.

Vehicular access to parking is from Tillicum Rd, and primary entrance to the residential lobby is accessible from the pedestrian path (Transfer Trail.) More detailed design will come at Development Permit stage, should Council approve this rezoning.

Total of 22 parking stalls are located at surface level, shielded away from view by the building mass and landscaping. While the site could have accommodated approximately 10 additional surface stalls, the decision was made to prioritize the preservation of trees and the integration of additional tree planting. This approach aligns with best practices in urban design and sustainability by balancing parking supply with environmental conservation and site aesthetics.

Class I (50) and Class II (12) bike storage and racks will be provided within the designated secure bike room (including space for 10 cargo bikes.)

Landscape buffer surrounds the entire site, to ensure the feeling of greenery and nature is prominent.

Form and Character

Building massing runs east-west with the site, and is condensed into the most compact shape possible to allow for significant mature tree retention and ample open space at ground level.

The building is pushed forward, towards Tillicum Road per request from Planning to ensure visibility for the commercial unit at the front of the building. The building is also pushed towards the southern property line as much as possible to allow for a larger setback from the single-family homes on the north, and for a more direct interface with the pedestrian path.

Proposed ground floor programming is street oriented following best practices of urban design, activating the public path. The commercial unit and residential lobby are strategically positioned at the corner of Tillicum Road, contributing to a more dynamic and accessible streetscape. This design supports the Township's ongoing efforts to transition Tillicum Road from a predominantly car-oriented corridor to a more pedestrian- and cyclist-friendly environment. As part of the development, the public pathway and street frontage along Tillicum Road will undergo significant upgrades, including repaving, enhanced landscaping, and the planting of a new street tree, further contributing to the public realm improvements. The pedestrian path will be widened to 6', repaved and new path lighting installed to increase nighttime safety to address feedback received during public consultation.

Building massing breaks up the façade into separate volumes for visual interest. The longer horizontal elevation along the public path is treated as a street-facing elevation, as we expect it to remain visible from behind the gas station for a number of years. Larger mass is broken down to smaller 'pieces' to somewhat mimic townhome shape. A variety of materials, textures, and colours further aid at breaking up the building massing and adding dynamism.

To summarize, this mixed-use project will provide homes for 32 families, along with new commercial space, in a well-connected area of Esquimalt. The project will retain a lot of mature trees and plant new ones to create a substantial pocket of green space. Public pedestrian path will be upgraded to compliment the newly completed bike network. Tillicum road frontage will be upgraded and secured through land dedication.

The building will consist of a thoughtful design, built with high-quality durable materials, and generous landscaping.

I trust this rationale together with the rest of the application helps you understand our proposal for this lot. Please do not hesitate to contact us if you have any questions or further requirements.

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