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The Corporation of the District of Saanich

Report

To: Mayor and Council
From: Sharon Hvozanski, Director of Planning
Date: April 25, 2019
Subject: Subdivision and Rezoning Application
File: SUB00801; REZ00597 • 3970 Wilkinson Road

RECOMMENDATION

1. That the application to rezone from the A-1 (Rural) Zone to the RS-10 (Single Family Dwelling) Zone be approved subject to the items listed under No. 2 being secured.
2. That Council withhold Final Reading of the Zoning Amendment Bylaw pending registration of a covenant to secure:
 - Lot coverage to be limited to 25% instead of the 40% permitted for the RS-10 Zone;
 - The homes to include the installation of the necessary conduits to be solar ready for future installation of photovoltaic and/or solar hot water systems;
 - All driveways, patios and walkways to have a permeable surface;
 - Protection for trees and other native vegetation along the south and west edge of the site;
 - Invasive species removal throughout the site; and
 - Provision of conceptual house plans and a building scheme for the new dwellings to be constructed on proposed Lots 1 and 2, and proposed Strata Lots 1, 2, and 3.

(Note: The applicant was advised to consider providing house plans or a building scheme to secure the house design for all five proposed homes, however, they are unwilling to do so).

PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to seek direction from Council on the subject application. The application is to rezone the site at 3970 Wilkinson Road from the A-1 (Rural) Zone to the RS-10 (Single Family Dwelling) Zone in order to subdivide to create four additional lots (five lots in total) for single family dwelling use. The applicant is M.H. Johnston & Associates Inc. (Mark Johnston).

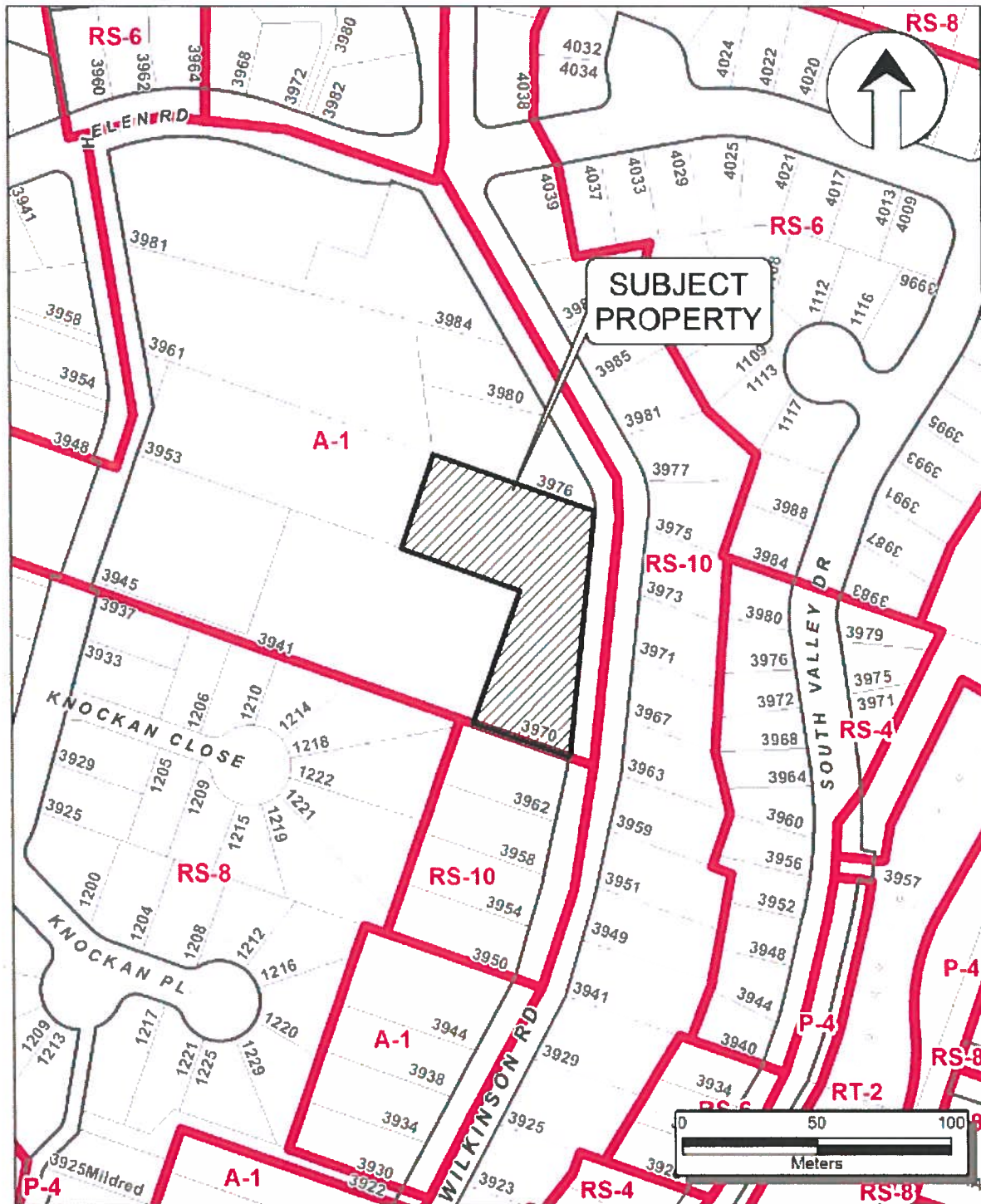


Figure 1: Neighbourhood Context

DISCUSSION

Neighbourhood Context

The 4204.52 m², L-shaped parcel is situated in the Carey Local Area, in the South Wilkinson Valley. It is located on the west side of Wilkinson Road. The neighbourhood is predominantly single family dwellings with a mix of RS-4, RS-6, RS-8 and RS-10 (Single Family Dwelling) zoned parcels, though parcels immediately to the west and north are zoned A-1 (Rural). The parcel is within the Urban Containment Boundary. An existing 1950s house on the site would be removed.

The subject property is relatively close to the Strawberry Vale Village "Centre" which is approximately 730 m away. Nearby parks include South Valley Park (410 m away) and Rosedale Park (630 m away). The closest school is Strawberry Vale Elementary School, located 780 m to the northwest.

Proposed Land Use

The proposed rezoning would accommodate a subdivision to create four additional lots for a total of five lots for single family dwelling use. The lots would range in area from 780 m² to 780.63 m² (see Figure 2). Proposed Lots 1 and 2 would be fee simple lots. Three lots at the north end of the site would be bare land strata lots. The proposed lot areas are consistent with the minimum lot size of 780 m² for the RS-10 Zone and the 780 m² average lot area requirement of the South Wilkinson Valley Action Plan. The proposed lots would be compatible with the pattern of residential development in the surrounding neighbourhood, and would in fact be identical in size to those of the existing lots immediately across the street.

Site and Building Design

The sloping site rises ±17 m from east to west. There is a small rocky ridge on the east-west leg of the property and a rocky bluff at the south end. The north and west parts of the site are heavily treed with the dominant species being Garry Oak and Douglas-fir.

Proposed Lots 1, 2 and Strata Lot 3 would have frontage on Wilkinson Road. Strata Lots 1 and 2 would be located behind Strata Lot 3 on the east-west portion of the site. Access to Lots 1 and 2 would be from a shared driveway parallel to Wilkinson Road at the south end of the site. Access to the strata lots would be from Wilkinson Road via a common road along the north edge of the site. An existing driveway from Wilkinson Road near the mid part of the site would be removed. A concrete retaining wall would be constructed along the Wilkinson Road frontage of proposed Strata Lot 3. All retaining wall surfaces facing Wilkinson Road that are more than 1.0 m above finished grade would be architecturally treated to cover the exposed concrete.

Based on the RS-10 Zone, single family dwellings could have a gross floor area of 390 m² (312 m² non-basement). Secondary suites would be permitted in this zone. While the applicant is unwilling to provide a building scheme or conceptual plans for the proposed houses, a partial streetscape elevation indicating what the three houses fronting Wilkinson Road may look like has been provided (see Figure 3). The applicant has stated that the homes would have a contemporary design similar to other recently constructed homes to the south along Wilkinson Road, but it should be noted that this is not the same as a design principle in a registered building scheme. New homes constructed after June 1, 2019 will be required to achieve Step 1 of the BC Energy Step Code. The applicant is willing to commit to construct the homes to include the installation of the necessary conduits to be solar ready for future installation of

photovoltaic and/or solar hot water systems. All driveways, patios and walkways would have a permeable surface.

Significant tree removals would be required for house and driveway construction. The applicant is agreeable to a covenant to protect trees and other natural vegetation along the south and west edge of the site and to limit lot coverage to 25% instead of the 40% permitted for the RS-10 Zone. Further tree information is provided later in this report.

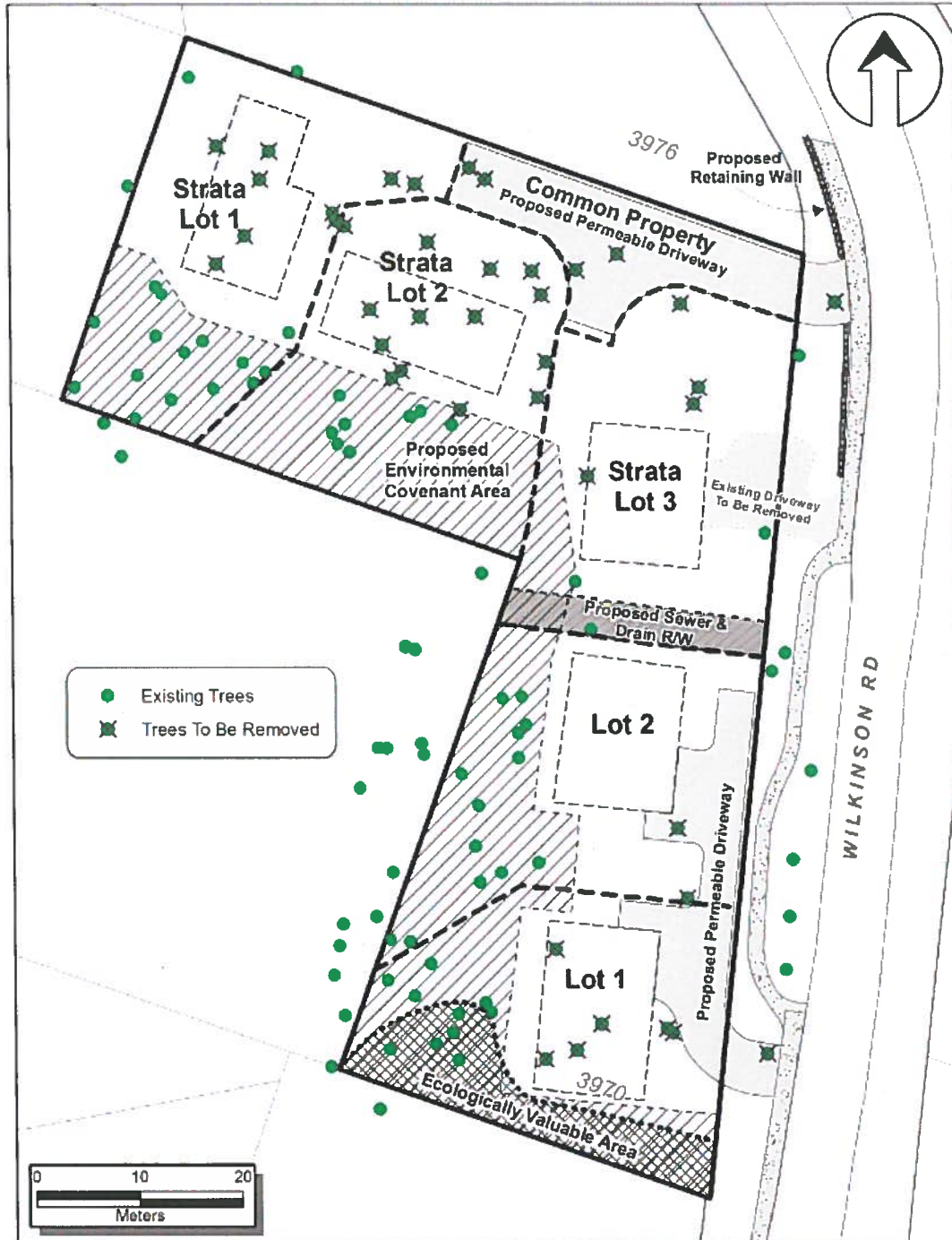


Figure 2: Proposed Subdivision



Figure 3: Partial Wilkinson Road Streetscape Showing Conceptual House Designs

Consultation

The applicant has stated that he has discussed the proposal with nearby neighbours and with the Strawberry Vale Community Association. Planning sent notification about the application to neighbours within 90 m of the site. Five letters have been received from nearby neighbours expressing concerns about tree loss, blasting impacts, traffic and on-street parking, and the need for covenant protection for the natural areas to be retained. At the request of an adjacent neighbour on Helen Road the applicant has stated that he would be willing to provide a right-of-way through the site in favour of the District of Saanich, to permit future sewer and storm drain connections to the existing services on Wilkinson Road. This is addressed as part of the Development Servicing Requirements for the proposed subdivision. Planning also sent a referral to the Strawberry Vale Community Association. To date, no response has been received.

ALTERNATIVES

1. That Council approve the recommendations as outlined in the staff report (Staff Recommend).

The implications of this alternative are outlined within the body of this report.

2. That Council reject the recommendations as outlined in the staff report.

Should Council decide to reject the recommendations contained in this report, the implications are that the proposed rezoning and subdivision would not proceed. The subject property would retain its current A-1 zoning and the one existing single family dwelling would remain on the lot.

3. That Council provide alternate direction to Staff.

Should Council provide alternate direction to staff, such as a redesign of the subdivision for example, the implications are that staff would work with the applicant to address comments from Council. The applicant would undertake any necessary revisions to the plans, and would resubmit their proposal, for review by staff and ultimately consideration by Council. This alternative would result in a delay in Council's decision regarding the rezoning application.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The proposal has no immediate implications related to the District of Saanich Financial Plan.

STRATEGIC PLAN IMPLICATIONS

The proposal has no implications related to the District of Saanich 2015 – 2018 Strategic Plan.

PLANNING IMPLICATIONS

Policy

The following Saanich Planning Policies are most applicable to the subject proposal:

Official Community Plan (2008)

- 4.2.1.1 "Support and implement the eight strategic initiatives of the Regional Growth Strategy, namely: Keep urban settlement compact; Protect the integrity of rural communities; Protect regional green and blue space; Manage natural resources and the environment sustainably; Build complete communities; Improve housing affordability; Increase transportation choice; and Strengthen the regional economy."
- 4.2.1.2 "Maintain the Urban Containment Boundary as the principal tool for growth management in Saanich, and encourage all new development to locate within the Urban Containment Boundary."
- 4.2.1.18 "Encourage new development to achieve higher energy and environmental performance through programmes such as 'Built Green', LEED or similar accreditation systems."
- 4.2.1.20 "Require building and site design that reduce the amount of impervious surfaces and incorporate features that will encourage ground water recharge such as green roofs, vegetated swales and pervious paving material."
- 4.2.4.3 "Support the following building types and land uses in Neighbourhoods:
- single family dwellings;
 - duplexes, tri-plexes, and four-plexes;

- townhouses;
- low-rise residential (up to 4 storeys); and
- mixed-use (commercial/residential) (up to 4 storeys)."

4.2.1.14 "Encourage the use of 'green technologies' in the design of all new buildings."

Carey Local Area Plan (1999)

- 9.1 "Protect and maintain the stability and character of Carey by maintaining single-family housing as the predominant residential land use."
- 9.2 "Support rezoning to the minimum lot sizes as shown in Map 9.2 in areas to be developed." (Map 9.2 designates the subject property as 665m² minimum parcel size. See also South Wilkinson Valley Action Plan policy 9.1(a), below)."
- 9.3 "Consider subdivision and rezoning for single-family infill development in established neighborhoods that is compatible with and contributes to the character and quality of the community and preserves privacy of dwellings."

South Wilkinson Valley Action Plan (2002)

- 7.3 "Require development applications to maintain elements of the Valley's character by incorporating views, maximizing open space, maximizing vegetation, and maintaining the Wilkinson Road streetscape."
- 8.6 "Maximize vegetation retention through careful site design, including road rights-of-way, driveways, site clearing, and building envelopes."
- 8.6.2 "Use conservation and restrictive covenants to protect vegetation on private property, especially the vegetation within the priority vegetation covenant areas identified on Map 6 – Public Open Space & Covenant Areas."
- 8.6.3 "Require replacement trees be planted at a 2:1 ratio on-site to compensate for trees removed to facilitate development (i.e. road rights-of-way, driveways, site clearing, and building envelopes) approved through the subdivision and/or development permit process. Where replacement trees cannot be successfully planted on-site, off-site planting in the boulevard and/or watercourse riparian zone is required. Tree is defined in Tree Bylaw No. 7632."
- 9.1(a) "Support rezoning outside of the ALR properties to the residential land use densities and minimum lot sizes identified on Map 7 – Residential Land Use." (Map 7 designates the subject property as 780 m² Average Lot Size).
- 9.7 "Consider in reviewing applications for rezoning and/or subdivision the use of restrictive covenants and/or building schemes to ensure sensitive scale/massing and design of new single family housing."
- 12.2.1 "Require, where possible, shared access agreements with adjacent properties."
- 12.9 "Improve pedestrian safety, especially safe routes to schools."
- 12.9.2 "Locate a pedestrian walkway on one side of a road if the road is part of the valley trail system or a safe route to school."

Analysis

The proposal is generally consistent with the Official Community Plan (2008) which contemplates limited infill in neighbourhoods inside the Urban Containment Boundary.

The proposed rezoning and subdivision is also consistent with South Wilkinson Valley Action Plan (2002), Policy 9.1(a) and the proposed lots would be compatible with the pattern of residential development in the surrounding neighbourhood. The five proposed lots would range in area from 780 m² to 780.63 m² and would comply with the average lot size of 780 m² specified in the South Wilkinson Valley Action Plan Policy 9.1(a). Proposed lot configurations would comply with the RS-10 Zone requirements and the relevant Subdivision Bylaw regulations.

The Official Community Plan specifically notes the importance of neighbourhood character and the role building style, exterior finish, massing, and height have on the effective integration of new housing stock. The applicant has provided a partial streetscape elevation to indicate what the proposed houses might look like, however is unwilling to secure a building scheme or conceptual house plans. The applicant has stated that the homes would have a contemporary design similar to other recently constructed homes in the neighbourhood, but without house plans or a building scheme secured by covenant there is no way to ensure this would actually occur.

New homes constructed after June 1, 2019 will be required to achieve Step 1 of the BC Energy Step Code. The applicant is willing to covenant to construct the homes to include the installation of the necessary conduits to be solar ready for future installation of photovoltaic and/or solar hot water systems, and to require that all driveways, patios and walkways have a permeable surface.

The subject proposal would add four additional houses and potentially five secondary suites into a neighbourhood that is relatively close to services available at the Strawberry Vale Village "Centre". Nearby parks include South Valley and Rosedale Parks, and Strawberry Vale Elementary School is located 780 m from the subject property. While market housing, the five new houses on smaller lots would increase the stock of single-family dwellings in a more attainable price range within Saanich. The availability of a broad range of services within walking distance, and good access to transit would allow home owners/renters to allocate less monthly expenditures to transportation.

Servicing

Servicing requirements call for property dedication along the entire frontage of the proposed subdivision along Wilkinson Road towards a 20.12 m wide road allowance. The proposed common road to serve the strata lots must be constructed to a minimum width of 6.0 m complete with concrete curb and gutter, street lighting, and turning area. A new driveway drop must be constructed on Wilkinson Road for the proposed shared driveway to Lots 1 and 2. A reciprocal access easement will be required. The existing driveway drop on Wilkinson Road must be replaced with standard section of curb, gutter and sidewalk.

Appropriately sized sewer, storm drain and water connections must be provided to serve this subdivision in accordance with the requirements of Schedule H "Engineering Specifications" of the Subdivision Bylaw. Underground wiring is required to serve all proposed strata lots.

In accordance with the Wilkinson Valley Stormwater Management Plan (2000), stormwater management for South Wilkinson Valley has been provided using Development Cost Charge funds. This stormwater management is a combination of storm drains and natural stormwater management using the watercourse and ponds/wetlands located in South Valley Park. As a result, on-site stormwater management for individual lots within this subdivision is not required.

Environment

Parts of the site are steeply sloping. There is a small rocky ridge on the east-west leg of the property and a rocky bluff at the south end. The north and west parts of the site are heavily treed with the dominant species being Garry Oak and Douglas-fir. A tree inventory and condition survey was undertaken for the site by Talbot Mackenzie & Associates Consulting Arborists. The inventory identified 114 bylaw protected trees of which 25 trees are noted as having poor health or structure. Forty bylaw protected trees on the site (11 noted as having poor health or structure) and two boulevard trees would need to be removed for house and driveway/road construction. The applicant proposes 2:1 replacement for trees removed in accordance with South Wilkinson Valley Action Plan Policy 8.6.3. In addition, the applicant has stated that existing trees and native vegetation in the boulevard would be retained with the exception of some clearing that may be required to maintain adequate sight distance near the driveway. On this basis, Saanich Parks would waive the requirement for Schedule I trees to be planted. Parks has noted that if suitable places to plant all of the replacement trees cannot be found on the site, the applicant could provide a contribution to Saanich's tree planting program of \$300 for every replacement tree that is not planted on the site. Saanich would use the funds to plant and maintain trees in the South Wilkinson Valley Development Permit Area.

In addition to the Talbot Mackenzie & Associates Consulting Arborists tree report, a biological assessment was undertaken by Brian Wilkes and Associates Ltd. to identify the ecologically valuable areas within the site. The report notes that the area of most importance is the rock bluff at the south end of the property, despite the presence of many invasives. A small rocky ridge on the east-west leg of the property might also have been of interest but it is completely overwhelmed by Daphne, blackberry, and other invasives making it of relatively low value. The applicant proposes covenant protection for the trees, native plants and other vegetation along the south and west edges of the site (see Figure 2). The extent of the covenant area would be delineated with a split rail fence. The applicant is prepared to commit to invasive species removal throughout the site. Environmental Services supports the natural state covenant area as proposed and notes that requirements for invasive species removal and re-vegetation in treeless areas should form part of the covenant. The natural state covenant area would complement the existing natural state covenant area on the properties to the south.

Climate Change and Sustainability

The Official Community Plan (OCP) adopted in 2008 highlights the importance of climate change and sustainability. The OCP is broadly broken down into the pillars of sustainability including environmental integrity, social well-being and economic vibrancy. Climate change is addressed under the environmental integrity section of the OCP and through Saanich's Climate Action Plan.

The following is a summary of the Climate Change and Sustainability features and issues related to the proposed development. It is important to note that this summary is not, and cannot be, an exhaustive list of issues nor a detailed discussion on this complex subject matter. This section is simply meant to ensure this important issue is a key part of the deliberations on the subject application.

Climate Change

This section includes the specific features of a proposal related to mitigation and adaptation strategies. Considerations include: 1) Project location and site resilience; 2) Energy and the built environment; 3) Sustainable transportation; 4) Food security; and 5) Waste diversion.

The proposed development includes the following considerations related to mitigation and adaptation:

- The proposal is an infill project located within the Urban Containment Boundary and Sewer Service Area, that is able to use existing roads and infrastructure to service the development;
- Limited infill through the development of new single family housing inside the Urban Containment Boundary provides a much desired housing form within Saanich that people would otherwise have to commute further distances for elsewhere in the region. The number of lots so created are limited, acknowledge longstanding policies of the Official Community Plan and Local Area Plan, and will not result in significant long-term negative impacts, as long as the majority of future growth is focussed in “Centres”, “Villages”, and along key corridors;
- The proposal is located in the South Wilkinson Valley area of the Carey Local Area and within 730 m of the Strawberry Vale Village “Centre” where a range of commercial and personal services are provided, employment opportunities exist, and where the majority of future residential and commercial growth is to be focused as per the Official Community Plan;
- The site is also within 780 m of Strawberry Elementary School, and Marigold Elementary and Spectrum Secondary schools are approximately 1.5 km from the subject property. Nearby parks include Rosedale Park (630 m away), and South Valley Park (410 m away);
- Proximity to public transit is good. Nearby Helmcken Road is on transit route #39 (Westhills/Interurban/ Royal Oak/UVic) and Wilkinson Road is on Route #22 (Vic General/Hillside Mall). Bus stops are located 400 m away on Wilkinson Road just north of the intersection of Helen Road/South Valley Drive with frequencies of about 30 minutes or better during peak times. As a rough measure, in general a walking distance between 400 - 800 m is considered optimal in encouraging the average person to walk to a service or access public transit, instead of driving to their destination. Obviously, health, weather, comfort/ease of use related to alternative transportation, and purpose of the trip all play a role in a person choosing a particular travel mode;
- Sidewalk and cycling infrastructure are typical for a low density neighbourhood in Saanich. Improvements still need to be made to further support and encourage walking and cycling locally and in the Region;
- The applicant has stated a willingness to commit to construct the dwellings to include the installation of the necessary conduits to be solar ready for future installation of photovoltaic and/or solar hot water systems;
- New dwellings constructed after June 1, 2019 will be required to achieve Step 1 of the BC Energy Step Code; and
- The proposed development includes sufficient area for backyard gardening. Long term plans call for a community garden in each Local Planning Area. An Agriculture and Food Security Task Force will be considering ways to improve food security in the community.

Sustainability

Environmental Integrity

This section includes the specific features of a proposal and how it impacts the natural environment. Considerations include: 1) Land disturbance; 2) Nature conservation; and 3) Protecting water resources. The proposed development includes considerations related to the natural environment, such as:

- The proposal is a compact, infill development in an already urbanized area without putting pressures onto rural areas;
- Of the 114 bylaw protected trees on the site and boulevard, 42 trees are proposed to be removed. Two-for-one tree replacement is proposed in accordance with South Wilkinson Valley Action Plan Policy 8.6.3;
- Covenant protection is proposed for trees, native plants and other vegetation along the south and west edges of the site; and
- The applicant is agreeable to a covenant to require invasive species removal throughout the site.

Social Well-being

This section includes the specific features of a proposal and how it impacts the social well-being of our community. Considerations include: 1) Housing diversity; 2) Human-scale pedestrian oriented developments; and 3) Community features. The proposed development includes the following considerations related to social well-being, such as:

- The applicant has provided a partial streetscape elevation, which would be secured by covenant, indicating what the proposed houses might look like but has indicated an unwillingness to commit to specific house designs for each of the new homes to be constructed on the proposed lots;
- Secondary Suites are permitted in this development. This housing option provides for alternative forms of rental accommodation and supportive housing for immediate family members. Suites also work to make a home purchase by young couples/families, and home retention by aging seniors, relatively more affordable; and
- A range of outdoor, community, and recreation opportunities are available within reasonable walking/cycling distance. Nearby parks include Rosedale and South Valley.

Economic Vibrancy

This section includes the specific features of a proposal and how it impacts the economic vibrancy of our community. Considerations include: 1) Employment; 2) Building local economy; and 3) Long-term resiliency. The proposed development includes features related to economic vibrancy, such as:

- The development would create local short-term jobs during the construction period;
- Home based businesses would be permissible in this development;
- The development would site additional residential units within the commercial catchment/employment area for the businesses and services located within the Strawberry Vale Village "Centre"; and
- The site is also within 2.8 km of the Vancouver Island Tech Park and Camosun College Interurban Campus.

CONCLUSION

The application is to rezone the site at 3970 Wilkinson Road from the A-1 (Rural) Zone to the RS-10 (Single Family Dwelling) Zone in order to subdivide to create four additional lots (five lots in total) for single family dwelling use. The existing dwelling would be removed.


The proposed development is consistent with the Official Community Plan which contemplates limited infill in neighbourhoods inside the Urban Containment Boundary. The proposal is also consistent with the Carey Local Area Plan and South Wilkinson Valley Action Plan with respect


to the proposed residential land use and average lot size. The lot sizes and configurations are compatible with the pattern of residential development in the surrounding neighbourhood.


The applicant is willing to commit to a covenant to protect trees and other natural vegetation along the south and west edge of the site and to limit lot coverage to 25% instead of the 40% permitted for the RS-10 Zone. The applicant is also willing to commit to ensuring the new houses would be constructed to include the installation of the necessary conduits to be solar ready for future installation of photovoltaic and/or solar hot water systems, and new homes constructed after June 1, 2019 will be required to achieve Step 1 of the BC Energy Step Code. However, the applicant is not willing to provide a proposed building scheme or conceptual plans for the proposed houses.

The subject proposal would add four additional houses (five new houses in total) and potentially five secondary suites into a neighbourhood that is within convenient walking/cycling distance of schools, parks, commercial services and retail, and public transit. While market housing, the five new houses on smaller lots would increase the stock of single-family dwellings in a more attainable price range within Saanich. The availability of a broad range of services within walking distance, and good access to transit would allow home owners/renters to allocate less monthly expenditures to transportation.

For these reasons, staff recommend that the rezoning and subdivision application be supported, subject to the items listed under No. 2 (of the 'Recommendation' section) being secured.

Prepared by: 
Chuck Bell
Planner

Reviewed by: 
Shari Holmes-Saltzman
Manager of Current Planning

Approved by: 
 Sharon Hvozdzanski
Director of Planning

CWB/jsp

Attachments

ADMINISTRATOR'S COMMENTS:

I endorse the recommendation from the Director of Planning.


Paul Thorkelsson, Administrator