



The Yates on Yates development by Vancouver-based Chard Development envisions two 21-storey condominiums at the site located at 848 and 852-856 Yates Street and 845 and 849 Johnson Street. Dawn Gibson/Victoria News

‘Model’ housing project in the works for downtown Victoria

Development offers affordable housing, dog park, space for urban food production

KENDRA WONG / Thu Apr 13th, 2017 8:10am /

It's a housing development Victoria Mayor Lisa Helps believes is a model project.

It includes affordable home ownership, a dog park and space for urban food production — many things that young families living in the city are in need of. Now the public will have the chance to voice their opinion on a proposal to build two, 21-storey condominiums in the Harris Green neighbourhood.

Vancouver-based Chard Development recently brought forward the proposal for the site at 848 and 852-856 Yates Street and 845 and 849 Johnson Street. The project includes 224 residential units of one, two and three-bedroom apartments, three levels of underground parking, 228 secure bike racks, and communal roof top patios and habitat gardens, each containing children's play areas, dining and lounge areas,

dog runs and spaces for urban food production.

The developer is also working on a partnership with B.C. Housing for the second tower fronting Johnson Street to establish an affordable housing program. While discussions are still on-going, Byron Chard, chief financial and acquisitions officer, said the program will benefit those within defined household income brackets who are looking to live in downtown Victoria.

One bedroom suites will be available to those with a household income below \$69,360 and two bedroom suites to those with a household income below \$99,910. A minimum 10 per cent deposit will be required, as will proof of pre-approval.

“We see an opportunity to further diversify the housing types available and to continue to grow the community in a sustainable way,” Chard said in an email.

It’s the type of project Helps hopes to see more of in the future.

“To me this is a model project — affordable home ownership, a dog park, etc. This is the kind of development that we need to support and foster. It’s setting the bar really high,” said Helps during a meeting in which council voted to send the proposal to public comment.

But not everyone is on board with the project.

Coun. Ben Isitt voted against the motion, as he wanted to see a firm commitment to housing affordability and without that the development becomes “a leap of faith.” He brought up the example of the Fernwood Co-housing Project, which was meant to be a multi-generational, co-housing community at the corner of Chamber and North Park streets. The project is no longer following that model and has become a strata-based building, he said.

“Unless I see something binding that indicates there is the promise of housing affordability, I can’t support this,” he said. “I believe this building is too high for downtown or for the city.”

Coun. Charlayne Thornton-Joe was in favour of the development, but noted the site was a challenge, considering the building would take away more surface parking, adding to the city’s existing parking crunch.

Chard Development is also responsible for eight developments in Victoria, including the Escher on Broughton Street.

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