

FAIRFIELD GONZALES COMUNITY ASSOCIATION LAND USE COMMITTEE (CALUC)

Public Meeting for 220, 214, 212 Cook St. and 1041 Oliphant Ave.

December 7, 2015; 7pm – 10:30pm (223 people in attendance with 62 speakers)

Normally a CALUC letter would be one or two pages, but we don't normally have such a response to a development proposal. It would be disrespectful to all those who have given up their time and shown passion for their community and the village and to you, if we deprive council of the unique and different perspectives that have been expressed towards this rezoning application.

It took a considerable amount of time to go through several very detailed accounts of what was said at this meeting and to transcribe and summarize each person's two minutes remarks and express them **as spoken** into a few lines. We hope that you please take the time to read through this letter in its entirety, for it is through information that we are able to make informed decisions.

We were told by the city that the Density Bonus Land Lift Analysis would be available for this meeting, but it has not been released. Therefore, we have been deprived of our right to comment on what if any fiscal return there is for the city or our community in consideration for requested increased density.

CALUC Comments

Although this project appears to conform to the parts of the OCP that allows up to (6) stories and a density up to (2.5) for Large Urban Villages (LUV), which is what the Cook Street Village (CSV) has been designated, it is the complete lack of other information in the OCP around LUV's that is deeply concerning. What would make (5) or (4) or (3) stories appropriate for this site? It doesn't talk about, design guidelines, setback, environmental standards, parking, transportation and green spaces.

The previous OCP incorporated documents that were much more detailed on what was appropriate for the Cook Street Village. It talked about established domestic character and scale. If the ground floor was commercial it permitted up to two floors of residential on top. It talked about 3 meter setbacks, attractive shop fronts, open markets and cafes along Cook Street, green features and other such details. The absence of this information in the new OCP makes very difficult for the developer, the community, city planning department and council, to agree on what is appropriate for this site.

This proposal is a drastic change from what we are used to and everything is being taken to the maximum in height and density and the minimum in other areas. When talking about a village we imagine a social area where people gather and talk. So providing setbacks on Cook and Oliphant is essential to allow this to happen, especially with the city's new Street Café Policy,

The chestnut trees in the village butt up against the narrow sidewalks, making the only unobstructed transportation corridor for pedestrians and scooters the current sidewalk and the 1 meter of public space adjacent. Under the current design of the building, that public space will be used for outdoor seating and or displays. Why should people be forced off into the boulevards, creating an unsafe and unsocial environment to provide space for this development? Giving up public space should not be consideration with new construction.

We spent 5 years with the development at 240 Cook Street and determined the importance of terracing back the third and fourth floor to allow the sunlight into the village and avoid the appearance of a wall.

This is a dramatic parking reduction request to go from 106 to 73. It's nice to see people walking to work and elsewhere, but it doesn't mean they don't own vehicles to use for other purposes.

Are there any environmental standards for this building such as LEED standards, green features, such as a green roof, rainwater management and waste retention?

There appears to be no provision for scooter parking, but you talk about aging in place. Why are there so few rentals and why are they only for 10 years and in the smallest units.

Under the City's definition of transition it says; "to ensure that the design of a new building and the improvement of the public realm located on the edges, consider the scale or location, setbacks, mass building height to provide a sense of transition to its surrounding district".

Community Comments

James Bay

I'm here to speak in support of the 5-story project. I'm 31, this project makes it possible for more people my age to own a condo. When you talked earlier about ageing-in-place, people don't have to leave the Village as they get older. This is the type of project really keeps the character together but it also plans for our future. I'm happy with the things that they've done to make it fit the Village.

James Bay

So I'm in support of this because it gives you a chance to move into this area if you're not a millionaire. This fulfills the need for the community for first time homeowners. With this type of project people don't have to leave the Village as they get older.

Oliphant

I'm very impressed by all the passion around this one development. I think it's important to have density and parking problems are just a part of growth. In terms of height 50 ft. or 60 ft. does not make a difference to me. It's really important to see the building code change that allows for a 6-story wood frame. I think it's fine; it makes it more viable, more affordable.

Tyee Road, Dockside Green

The question I'm going to ask everybody is, if the naysayers for that particular project won, what would still be there? So I really want folks to slow down and think about ___ the first gentleman talked about how we want affordability to live in Cook St Village and I think this project offers that as well as being a great place for people with families.

Linden Ave

I'm concerned about landscaping and the environmental aspect related to the urban forest. The proposed open space is a mere 7% and still almost 100% of the site will be covered in concrete by buildings, parking lot or walkway. This proposal does not take into account the ecological value of greenspace. If the proposal is accepted as is, no tree with substantial canopy will ever be able to grow on this site. The OCP calls for the development of urban centres alongside of healthy and productive green infrastructure. The proposal calls for the removal of 7 mature trees; one is protected by city by-law. Have you considered a setback on Cook St. to minimize the risk of damage to the roots boulevard trees?

May St

I'm here in support of this development. I like this design, and I have a great deal of respect for this architect and the team that Mr. Kohl has put around here. I've seen what they've done in other parts of the city and they've done great work. Young people can't afford a home in Fairfield, but they can afford with something like this. I could say that this project meets my needs as I age in place, as well as my kids.

Richardson St

I think it's an outstanding development. There have been a number of requests for setbacks, but I never experience traffic problems walking up and down the sidewalks. The developer is keeping in mind not to create setbacks that would provide an overhang that all of a sudden creates 5 spots for homeless to sleep overnight. So you've created space that allows businesses to have a patio area, but not too large and avoid overhangs.

Park Ave.

I'd like to personally state to the 2 gentlemen from James Bay that this is not affordable housing. I'm part of a group that thinks change is inevitable, but I don't think that change should solely be driven by the desire to maximise density. I feel that this particular design aims to maximize mass and density at the expense of all concerns, such as design, environment, security, scale and character. With almost the entire property being covered in concrete I have real concern about the stormwater management issues. I certainly don't see how any of the existing trees can survive.

Yates Street

I think this is a great project overall giving a place here for first time homebuyers, Aesthetically, it provides a contemporary look for the Cook St Village with all its charms.

John Heywood

I'm against this project. To me it seems like an elephant sitting in our little bathtub community. Secondly, we hear a lot about affordable housing, affordable renting, I don't see any affordable-ness in this project.

Howe Street

This may be a contemporary building in its design, but it's in no way a modern development. A modern development would have significant environmental considerations. Looking to the future has to mean more than density. I don't think this is a good example.

Heywood

I was born in this neighbourhood 63 years ago. Whoever called this a Large Urban Village and allow the envelope to be pushed this far failed us. I am not opposed to developing this property, but I am concerned about the parking, parking is a problem, and further reductions just create a greater problem and I worried about the significant impact to our skyline this building will create, it's just too high. Thank you.

Oliphant

Like virtually all of my neighbours I support development at the corner of Cook and Oliphant that would truly tie in with the character and scale of the village and still provide respectfully increase in density. I'm deeply concerned that even the recommendations from the city planning department appeared to be ignored, when they state that "the building will be a major landmark for Cook Street Village" and request reducing the planned building height, stepping back the upper storeys, introducing additional public open space, provide for opportunities for sidewalk cafés, increasing/enhancing landscaping at the rear of the

property to create a buffer zone and provide a more detailed street context elevation to demonstrate how the proposal fits in with the neighbourhood.

Howe St

It seems that up to 6 stories and a density of 2.5 are the only items being extracted from the OCP and suits our needs and disregard the rest. The Cook St Village guidelines, which is also part of the OCP, says that the buildings should reinforce and enhance the character of Cook St. Village and that the design should respond to local features. I fail to see where these sections have been incorporated into this project along with many other sections covered in these and other documents, including setbacks.

Cook St.

I live in building... with commercial underneath and residential on top for about 12 of the 14 years. I'm a prime example of a ...young professional that wanted to live in Cook St. Village. I see this new project and development as another way to enhance our community. I think that this building provides more opportunity, more businesses and allows first time homeowners or a renter to be part of our community and a welcome addition, so thank you very much Len.

Fairfield

I've lived in Fairfield for 37 years. I own businesses and employ residents of Fairfield and I have to say that I oppose this development as it's currently set up. Think about a portrait view of the Cook Street Village with walls of six story building lining the property line on both sides. Given the current opportunity in the village such a reality could already be in the works. Really at \$600-700,000 for a two bedroom is this really an affordable starter home for a small family? Council with the OCP and the idea of LUV showed you the door and said drive through and you did with the biggest truck available.

McClure

I'm not used to talking in front of people so I apologize I'm a little nervous. I've lived in Victoria all my life as have my parents. I have two daughters, they're in their early 20s, they both want to stay in Fairfield and this is a reasonably affordable project. It will bring more businesses and attract more people and more interest and make it into a real vibrant village. So I support this project.

Sutlej St

I live across from the last development in the CSV and I really worry about the lack of environmental initiatives with regards to this new development. There is nothing in this building that is forward looking at all. No water preservation or solar energy, green roof. It looks like nothing else in Cook St Village. I also really have a great deal of despair about rising amount of delivery trucks and the lack of space for them. Even though there is still and continue to be a growing amount of empty commercial space within the village.

Fairfield

I was born in St. Joe's hospital and went to school and in this neighbourhood. I have a daughter who works in the village and I worry about where she going to live in the future. Affordable housing is a really important issue not only in our city but across the country and that needs to be addressed.

I know people that own businesses that struggle to make it because of all the people who drive to Langford to buy their goods there. I would rather have no parking stalls in the building to be quite honest with you. I applaud the fact that this developer put himself in a position to hear the community.

South Avenue Rd

I moved to Victoria about 5 years to work in the tech industry. I strongly support any development like this, Victoria is growing. It is very difficult to find places to live in Victoria that meets our needs and our generation that we don't want to own a house and take care of the garden

Linden

I encourage Council to ask for a permanent covenant on the rental units. This is a unique location where the village transitions into Beacon Hill Park. There are mostly 1 to 2 stories and a few 3 to 4 stories in the CSV. This is a massive 6 stories development for the lot size. Six stories will cause this building to loom like a canyon wall. The third floor should be terraced back and setbacks on both Cook and Oliphant to allow for outside seating and clear and wider sidewalks. It should have generous landscaping that reflects the neighbouring buildings. The bulk would be lightened by a midblock walkway.

Moss St

The large scale buildings downtown on average are 8 to 12 stories. It is unrealistic that we should be promoting the height of our LUVs to be 50% that of the downtown core. When you can walk from most places in Fairfield to downtown in one second to twenty minutes, I believe in most places in the world this would already be considered a walkable community. Without a setback for the building there will be compounding of the problem that has been created in front of the pizzeria and the coffee shop

Burdett

The condominium where I live has 62 units, we have 95 parking stalls and we barely manage. We have no service field vehicle as well. To consider 73 for 60 units plus commercial leaves me speechless. This development is too big for the site; It expands to the to the property lines on both sides. You only have to drive Foul Bay Rd to Oak Bay Ave to see what impact a zero setback development can have on a community. I support good development, but I don't think this is one.

Park Blvd

I'm under 25, talk about this from a young person's perspective. The real important part is, to me, it's the people and the community make up the character of the village. I really don't care the year that that building was built. I think we're finding a real sticking point when it comes to height. This isn't some dangerous precedence. This project allows young professionals like me to move into the village who are a part of the good character of the village.

Richardson

I've lived in this village for a very long time and I like the energy and I love spending time down there. I support this project because I don't see retired, semi-retired, and young professionals, all being able to enjoy as much as I do. But with the amount of renting and lack of spots out there, you can't get people to move in. So it's a great opportunity for new people to come and enjoy this...

Park

The proposed development will be 64% higher than my condo building next-door. Our building measures 41feet from the sidewalk the proposed building is 67 feet, making the proposed building 26 feet or 64% higher. With zero setbacks and the massive frontage of this building this is a drastic change in how this project is being projected both verbally and in the illustrations to the public. Why do we always seem to be focus on building single housing when the demographics clearly show the need for family housing? You can accommodate 15 families of 4, which would be 60 people in 2-3 bedroom 1000 ft² home and you would do away with the long list of variances that are being requested.

King George

I'm part owner of several businesses within CSV which include Beagle Pub and the Moka House. Without business there is not CSV and all of this is for nothing. It's been really tough business wise and what we need is density so I'm very happy with this proposal. The business might seem charming to all the people in the neighbourhood and in this room, but without change, without an increase in density, we die. And these fades away, all these discussions are for nought. ..It's the most important topic.

Oliphant St

We have lived here for 31 years and support respectful development, but we feel that this development wanting it all is wrong in so many ways, especially in regards to its size, mass, height, setbacks, environment, parking and design. It doesn't fit the village. Yes, it's 2015, but we've got to keep our understanding that a compromise goes both ways, but we seem to be the only ones willing to make any. When you separate the 6 visitor parking from the required residential parking, you will find they are requesting a 46% reduction in the residential parking. Underground parking access is required to be three meters from neighbouring property lines theirs is on the property line.

Oliphant

I lived there for 20 years, I have a vested interest in all the upcoming developments that will either enhance or destroy the character of CSV. The Developer seemed to have made little or no effort to respond to any of the community concerns and also ignoring the Feb. 11th concerns from the city Planning Dept. The proposed structure is a huge, square, box-shaped, solid mass, filling close to an entire block. I ask that you consider a midblock walkway to break this large mass. I ask that you honour the present guidelines and zoning that states that the south side of Oliphant stay residential.

Howe Street

I've been a resident in this area for a half a century. This is an application for a 6 story building by the same definition all other developments have been following for the last 20/30+ years. So let's stop trying to make it sound like it's a 5 or 4 story building. The OPC doesn't say that 6 stories and density of 2.5 is permitted as its being interpreted. The OCP says, "up to" 6 stories, density of 2.5 "may be" considered. If this was permissible anywhere in a LUV, why would they specify it only being permitted in "strategic location". We try and achieve a balance in our lives why should this project be different.

Moss

A set of green building standards should be a basic requirement for all new development, including rainwater management and true green spaces not just planters over concrete. All new homes should be highly energy efficient to certain standards. We need a village to be attracting a more diverse demographic to the creation of truly affordable housing and focus on housing to accommodate families. We need people to sustain a community. Your price point and sizes are not conducive to the diverse features for our community.

Park Blvd

I've been around CSV going on to 7 years. I am in support of this project for all the reasons that the young people who stood up here before me spoke about. It's a way for young people to live in the village and not have move to Vancouver. I like the proposal, I like the new commercial and I'm in the village every day. I love the building, it's fabulous. I've already said that I support this project, partly because of the young people ahead of me. I like to live with the vibrancy. I like commercial and we need more of this project. So I am 100% in favour of this project.

Park

I share that lady's dining room window and I too am in favour of it. I think this is the building of the future. I am ageing in place in this neighbourhood. I see a lot of people who are young that are driving to the neighbourhood and they see how vibrant it is and want to own a place here. I'm not too worried about the height, and I'm not worried about the parking. Our units run around 1000 ft² and we have 27 parking spots for 27 units. If you take 500 ft² or 700 ft² you're not going to have 2 cars per unit, you're only going to have one. So you may not have to worry about the parking as much as others.

McKenzie St

I am 100% in favour of this beautiful development. I'm an old lady who's thinking young. And I'm thinking about those young people that are coming along after us that us and want to own their own home. Thank you very much Mr. Cole for your vision, thank you for your team.

McKenzie St

I love Cook St Village area just as much as you do, while I think the architectural integrity of the entire village is similar to a dog's breakfast. The buildings there with the exception of 204 are totally worthless. So here's someone who's trying put up something that is of value and significant in bold structure and looks. So what makes the ambience, the charm? The trees, the business frontage with the outdoor seating, none of those things will be affected by this building. The development on Sutlej and Oliphant a few years ago was a major controversial project nobody wanted it, my goodness now it's the best thing since apple pie. This will help make the City of Victoria, world class city.

Sutlej

I'm pleased to see this site being developed; I'm pleased to see the commercial section. I only have one reservation, and that's parking. There are 60 units, there's 6 visitors' parking for a total of 66, and only 52 parking spaces being provided. I live in Essence Verde which is a new unit, new condominium. We have 42 units, 43 spots and they are all full. In the 240 Cook building, all those people have cars as well. That's my only concern. Otherwise, we should do something with this site.

McKenzie

I think the added housing is a good thing. But I am opposed for two reasons. The first is the commercial space on the ground floor, especially in the situation today where there is an increase in vacant retail spaces. I'm particularly opposed to the current configuration because of its height and just the mass of the building itself. I'm also a professional planner and I believe this creates what I call a zoning cliff between this 6 story structure and the buildings adjacent. I think generally this project looms over the streetscape and could benefit from lower height, and lower mass and density on the property.

Linden Avenue

(Q) What accommodation have you made for freight coming and going? Are we going to see more trucks parked in the middle of Cook St. loading and unloading? Is it suitable for a semi-trailer truck?

(A) We have a loading area at the rear of the building, but it's not suitable for semi-trailer truck.

(Q) but that's what we see delivering in Cook St Village, so what are you going to do about that?

(A) The last development in the CSV doesn't have a loading zone and that's created a serious problem for that particular area. (Q) What is to stop it from being a problem in your area if you can't accommodate semi-trailer truck?

Dallas Rd

I came very negatively oriented to this whole project, but mainly on the. I believe a lot of current businesses in the CSV are in a fragile state. Mr. Cole is trying to move towards putting commercial into this project, I think leaving out may help resolve some of the issues. I don't think CSV is not by any common sense definition a LUV it never should have been designated that.

Oliphant

I've lived here for 17 years; we own a 4-plex kitty-corner beside the laneway. I'm not opposed to development the property, but the density increase doesn't have to be to the maximum. OCP that label us as a LUV, 6 stories is too high, and out of keeping with CSV. I find it a concern that maximizing the OCP objectives on density comes at a cost of other equally important OCP goals and objectives. Parking on Oliphant, is already problematic and it can only get worse, unless sufficient parking is provided for the new businesses and enhanced access for those with mobility challenges. I find the unsecured location of the only elevator in the underground parking will provide serious security issues.

McClure

I'm very much in favour of seeing housing inventory in this neighbourhood. There are renters always trying to move in this neighbourhood. It's nice to see a development that offers a mixed use with retail, as rental and residential. My background is real estate and the price point that this building is looking at offering is definitely within today's market. The demand in this neighbourhood is phenomenal.

Cook St

People have implied there are no other places of this nature in the CSV for sale. In MLS there are always several similar units available for sale in and around the CSV for more sq. ft. and less money that are truly affordable. The building on the corner of Park Ave for example at any given time has 2 or 3 for sale signs and those are 1000 ft² and go for well under \$300K. I support developing the property, but it needs to be done more conservatively, it's too high. Every business you add without the required parking you take away parking from an existing business, why would you do that?

Oliphant

I've been there about 17 years. Unless you're talking about a delivery van, 99% of delivery vehicles will not fit into the loading zone you are providing, which leaves parking on the street or blocking the lane and backing all the way out onto Oliphant. We were told it wouldn't be an issue with the previous development, but it is an issue. Every day trucks, the semi-trucks end up unloading on Oliphant to supply the Pharmasave and the liquor store, but this time they will not only be blocking us, but your entrance as well. Regardless what it says on paper, drivers are not going risk an unsafe situation.

Chapman

Little or no consideration for the design at such a prominent street head vista as called for in CSV guidelines. To go from a 40% open space requirement to 7%, what are the risks to the natural ecology, water runoff, and all those of other things, sight lines, and sunshine coming through to the village? There's no reference guidelines placed on the commercial aspects of this building. Section 3 of the OCP has visions, values and goals for Victoria. Now how does this development fulfil the visions, values, and goals, particularly whole system's thinking?

Heywood

You start from Fort St and Cook, and come straight away straight to the water, you do see four stories high, you also see one story. I love the variation in height. Back in late 1970s when I was involved in Fairfield

Community Association, there was consideration at that time for zoning all of Fairfield for multiple dwellings; single family dwellings. And thank goodness for people who were on the community association who stood up and said no, but this LUV designation is the same thing in reverse. I hope that there is something that fits for all people and fits in with the neighbourhood.

Oliphant

We chose Fairfield because of its aesthetic beauty, heritage buildings and general surroundings. Yes we are supportive of development of the village, but development as done respectfully of the people, its surroundings and its natural features. There needs to be some compromise reached. I support the idea of lowering the height by cutting out the commercial for it would speak to many issues. Shadow analysis shows that the whole street will be in shadow and canyon effect. Should be a transition to Beacon Hill Park.

Chapman St

I support developing this corner, but this is the wrong approach. I hear you talking about the future, but I think the future is much more environmentally friendly than what this development is offering. One of my big complaints is parking; do you know that this is the site of the old Fairfield lagoon. I speak from experience when I say the cost to facilitate the underground parking for this project is coming at the expense of all other topics we should be concerned about. Individuals can choose where they live, but we need to be making the choices for our environment. Keep it friendly, a smaller scale.

Howe St

My main concern is height and setbacks. Take a look at the Abstract building at Foul Bay and Oak Bay .I grow up in Vancouver. I'm really concerned with the City with their OCP allowing 6 stories in certain areas. Developers are business people and they're going to see opportunity, so the LUV to them means something completely different from what people who live in the community think. People have been talking about "canyoning" because if this gets built that what you will have. , I wish you would eliminate commercial thus lowering the height. There's a lot of commercial space available in CSV

Chester

I've been on the design panel for the City of Victoria and the Board of Variance and I'm flabbergasted at the OCP calling CSV a LUV, allowing 6 stories. There shouldn't be an award for how many can you jam into a small space and still create a decent building. The building done on Sutlej done a few years ago, it's much smaller in scale but it also has a more residential feel to the architecture. So we need to think, do want commercial on that block? When you really size up the commercial element of this proposal is the trade-off really worth it and how much density if appropriate.

Linden

Many years ago, 1987, I was the founder and 1st president of the CSV Merchant's Association. I love this project. And what I like about it contrary to the person before is that it is focused on merchants. We don't need another residential only building, we need business, and we need vitality. We need more coffee shops, little restaurants, setbacks and residential units above that. I'm very pro density and I think the concept of having fewer cars is probably a good idea.

Vancouver

I'm 26 yrs. old and lived in Fairfield all my life, I absolutely support this proposal. I like the look of the building, the increase in density and the height. It will change the character of CSV for the better. There not enough affordable housing in the village for young people. I would support more of medium density projects like this. I think significantly increasing density in the CSV is the way we got to go.

Cornwall

I moved from Grand Prairie Alberta, I've never seen an engagement process like this, it's great. The one mistake I see is that they virtually have no design guidelines to with LUV designation. It's not just about looks and height, but how it works on the site and how it interrelates to everything else. So many people speak about that and that is the big challenge here. The big challenge with density is that you've got to get the design right so that it doesn't impact as much as it can. I can see the laneway presenting numerous problems I'm not an architect, I don't like the look of the building.

May St

I grew up in Fairfield. I love the character of Victoria, including Fairfield and this neighbourhood. I do support development, I do support some increase in density, but I don't believe that the scale of this building, the mass, the height, setbacks are appropriate and fit in the character of the village. I suggest that the developer lower the building to 4 stories and that will address most other concerns.

Oliphant

I haven't really heard anyone speak in favour of this proposal tonight. This may surprise you. But people have spoken in favour of having condos available, having greater density available, but that doesn't necessarily mean this proposal is the way to provide it. I support increasing density, but the mass & height of this building will create a concrete canyon. If you take other building in the CSV and duplicate them within the village the scale and character will remain, can you make the same claim about this proposal? With so many documents referring to scale and character it must be important.

Burdett

You know I came undecided this will be a tough decision for council to make. At this moment I'm for the project, but not in its entirety, we need more density. Burdett was dying and the increase density brought it back to life. As far as the commercial I like to see it extended, but I question if there is enough demand for it. I don't have a problem with the 6 stories it's not that bad. Again this will be a tough decision for council. I would like to add, loading and unloading will likely be a big problem.

Oscar

So I lived in Fairfield for 23 years. Let's just call it what it is, it's a grab for every inch and every dollar that can be made on the property under the disguise of doing a good thing for the village. You ask for the max of 6 stories and we all have to go through this for months and then agree on 4. It's not very neighbourly proposal, it doesn't bring out the best in people. I support development in Cook St. generally and I agree that the village is in a desperate need for refresh and three stories will be plenty.

Dallas Road

I have been working with seniors for the last 15 years or so. I escort seniors with scooters, walkers and other mobility issues back and forth through the village every day. We need to retain every inch of our public walkway. People should not have to navigate around natural or unnatural obstacles to benefit developers. I see so many mobility and parking issues. The building looks like a cruise ship lost its way. If you go down the street a block you will see a nice complex; mixed with young families housing

Thank you for your time and consideration

Wayne Hollohan

Chair, Fairfield Gonzales Community Association Land Use Committee (CALUC)