

August 31, 2022

Municipality of North Cowichan
Planning Department
7030 Trans-Canada Hwy
Duncan, BC V9L 6A1

ATTN: Caroline von Schilling – Development Planner

RE: Development Permit Height Variance for 2945 Green Road, Duncan, BC

Dear Caroline,

We are submitting this Rationale for a height variance as it pertains to the property located at 2945 Green Road (within Cowichan Commons). Upon the completion and acceptance of this height variance permit, Duncan Storage Ltd. plans to complete the design and construction of a new hotel and full-service restaurant for the community.

The purpose of this design rationale and development permit variance is to request additional height for the hotel to provide enough buildable square footage to make the project feasible, while providing the required parking required for the proposed hotel and restaurant.

About Duncan Storage Ltd.

Duncan Storage Ltd. Was incorporated for the purchase of 2945 Green Road. Upon the purchase of the property, the former Rona Building has been operating as Extra Storage Now! The current building is being repurposed into a self storage facility, as is permitted under the current zoning.

Extra Storage Now! has 4 locations servicing communities in Mission, Abbotsford, Aldergrove, and the Cowichan Valley. We provide first class facilities offering our customers both traditional and mobile storage solutions.

Duncan Storage is now proposing this variance to provide additional services to the community in an effort to fully develop the property's unutilized land.

Zoning

The property is currently zoned as C2 Commercial General Zone. C2 Commercial General Zones allow for Mini- Warehousing, Hotel, and Restaurant in addition to a host of other uses. The proposed Hotel and Restaurant are within the permitted uses of the site. Section 69(6)(a) stipulates a maximum building height of 12.0 metres and we are requesting a variance to 20.0 metres in height to allow for a 6 story hotel that includes an over-height ceiling on the main floor (lobby and amenity floor) of 14 feet.

Proposed Project Description

The Owner is proposing a 6-story hotel and self standing restaurant. This proposal requires a variance as a 4-story building is the maximum allowed within the zoning. The proposed hotel would be located in

the parking lot area on the north side of the property, and the restaurant is proposed on the west side of the property. Preliminary plans and massing renderings have been provided with this package.

The current building on the site (the former Rona) was vacant for years prior to its purchase at the end of 2019. Permits are in place and construction is underway to complete a self storage facility. The balance of the property available for development are the parking lots and lumber yard storage areas on the north and west portions of the property.

Currently, the Greater Duncan area has limited accommodation offerings during both medium and peak travel times. With the growth of the community’s residential, commercial, and institutional segments; we believe that a new mid-upper level branded hotel would be welcomed. Mid-upper level hotel brands are ones such as Fairmont by Marriott, Hampton Inn by Hilton, Holiday Inn Express, Comfort Inn, and others.

Additionally, a full-service restaurant is not currently located within the Cowichan Commons grounds. Our current customers and other members of the surrounding community have let us know that this service was discussed when the original development of the lands took place. It is our belief that a full-service restaurant would greatly benefit many of the people who visit Cowichan Commons as well as the many residents that are now or slated to move into residential homes that will be surrounding the lands. Many of those condominium developments were also granted height variances.

The height variance requested (additional 8.0 metres in height) allows for the feasible development of services that the community needs and wants, on lands that are already paved and serviced. This height variance enables the Owner to provide the required buildable square footage to move forward with the project while also providing the required parking for all proposed uses on the property. As the communities of North Cowichan and Duncan continue to grow, the proposed developments will offer services and tax dollars to the residents and visitors that want them so much.

Parking

As indicated in the proposed plans, all parking required for self storage, hotel, and restaurant will be provided:

Exert from plans submitted:

<u>PARKING REQUIREMENT FOR COMMERCIAL</u> 5867.18 / 185 = 31.71 SPACES (32 SPACES)
<u>PARKING REQUIREMENT FOR HOTEL</u> HOTEL, MOTEL, RESTAURANT, TEA ROOM, CLUB, LICENSED PREMISES - 1 SPACE PER SLEEPING UNIT 115 SUITES X 1 SPACE= 115 SPACES
<u>PARKING REQUIREMENT FOR RESTAURANT.</u> RESTAURANT = 1.0 PARKING SPACES PER 20m ² USED FOR CUSTOMER CIRCULATION AND SEATING OR 1 PARKING SPACE PER 4 SEATS ----- 3000SF + 1500sf = 4500sf (418sm / 20m ² = 20.9 (21)) 21 PARKING SPACES NEEDED
<u>TOTAL PARKING REQUIRED</u> 32 SPACES + 115 SPACES + 21 = 168 SPACES REQUIRED

One discussion point on parking was around the current building, and how the change in use required less parking. It was also discussed that the current self storage building, after the construction of this proposal, would not have enough surface parking to be transformed back into retail uses in the future. Without getting into the changing landscape of retail brick and mortar retail real estate, the Owner wanted the Planning Department and Council know we understand and accept the risk that the current building may need to be replaced entirely or in part if they wish to redevelop that use in the future.

It should also be noted that in addition to the bylaws surrounding parking requirements for the property, there is a Restrictive Covenant in place on the property. Restrictive Covenant FB63567 is an agreement regarding the restriction that the number of parking stalls on Lot 3 (the subject property) must be at least one parking stall per 204.5 sqft of the retail area, and one parking stall per 1991.32 sqft of warehouse area (this matches current zoning). As such, the Owner understands and agrees that if they choose to redevelop the Extra Storage Now building; they will be subject to providing the required parking for any proposed use. That could mean the removal of all or part of the existing building in the future or finding the means to provide the required parking during redevelopment.

Summary

Duncan Storage Ltd. is requesting a Height Variance in order to develop a new hotel and full-service restaurant in addition to the self storage currently under construction.

- This variance makes the project feasible to move forward into the development and construction phases of the project.
- The current and future expansion of the Cowichan Commons area and the Cowichan Valley are enhanced by the services being proposed for this property:
 - A mid-upper level hotel for guests in the community are welcomed by winery wedding planners, sports teams and their families, visitors and workers involved in the new hospital, and tourists looking for quality accommodation as they visit the Greater Duncan area.
 - A full-service restaurant for a commercial hub serving the residents and visitors of Cowichan Commons area.
- Both the current and future parking requirements for this property have been considered with this application. Additionally, there is a Restrictive Covenant currently in place for the property. The Owner understands the implications and costs of future development of the property for other uses.

I look forward to working with you on this and the exciting future development of our property located at 2945 Green Road in Cowichan Commons. Please contact me if you have any additional questions.

Yours Truly,

Stephen Diebolt
Duncan Storage Ltd. (Extra Storage Now Corp.)