

## **Cordova Bay Association for Community Affairs (CBA) Response to Saanich Referral 2 (Revised Plans) For DPA00900, 5120 and 5144 Cordova Bay Road**

Dear Saanich Planning:

### **Referral Response Summary**

**To receive the support of the Cordova Bay Association for Community Affairs (CBA) for this application, the following points need to be addressed:**

1. Traffic control at the corner of Doumac Ave. and Cordova Bay Rd. with a small roundabout, or traffic lights, with pedestrian crosswalks.
2. Lowering of Building # 3 to (3) three storeys and the further stepping back of Building #1, floors 3 and 4. It is recognized that this could require a variance approval for possibly (5) five floors on Building # 2. Or extend the floor-plates of the buildings and redistribute the permitted density to reduce height along the Cordova Bay Rd. frontage.
3. A bus pull-out in front of the plaza to maintain smooth traffic flow.
4. We strongly encourage a change to the exterior finish of the buildings to give a softer, “beachier” appearance.

### **Referral Response Details**

The Cordova Bay Association for Community Affairs (CBA) would like to acknowledge the significant efforts of the Applicant in addressing many of the Form and Character concerns submitted in our April 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2017 response to Saanich Referral for DPA00900, 5120 and 5144 Cordova Bay Rd., as seen in the revised plans presented to the community by the Applicant at Claremont Secondary School on September 21<sup>st</sup>, 2017 and submitted to Saanich Planning on October 5<sup>th</sup>, 2017.

Notably, the grade relationship along Cordova Bay Rd. was successfully addressed, and windows were added along the Doumac Ave. frontage for “eyes on the street”. It will be important to monitor interior layouts to ensure these windows don’t ultimately present dead or blocked views, as at Whole Foods in Uptown.

### **FORM AND CHARACTER CONCERNS (key guidelines from Saanich Planning include massing and scale that is compatible with adjacent development, and village-like character)**

**The following concerns listed in the CBA response of April 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2017 have been adequately addressed by the Applicant:**

- \* The effect of the built-up underground parking structure along the street is to create a barrier. The Cordova Bay Rd. frontage should be at grade.
- \* Building #3 has garage parking that backs out into exiting traffic raising safety concerns
- \* The south wall of Building #1 creates a tunnel effect that overshadows Cordova Bay Estates and as a service corridor may generate excessive noise into the strata during off hours. This wall

is a blank barrier and should not be used to post advertising and could be improved with murals or graphic relief. It is also noted that garbage bins are located backing up to a residence in Cordova Bay Beach Estates. The juxtaposition of service lane and residential is unfortunate. This is even worse at the west end of the property with the large, un-buffered service lane for the grocery store.

\* There is no left hand turn from Cordova Bay Rd. into the Residential section of Building #1 which then requires all residents to enter into Doumac and travel through the shopping area before going underground. This mix of resident traffic driving through along with the Commercial traffic and pedestrians should be a concern.

\* There is no left hand turning lane exiting from Building #1 onto Cordova Bay Rd. which requires Residents to either turn right and travel to Claremont, Royal Oak or possibly do illegal U-turns to go north to their originally intended destination. Or alternatively go back through the shopping area and the pedestrians there. ***(The original left hand turn issue has been addressed but there is a concern regarding the right hand turn from Building #1 and the left hand turn from Cordova Bay Beach Estates, as well as pedestrian and cycling traffic. Would the combination of these entrances or a small roundabout similar to the one proposed at Doumac Ave. address this safety issue?)***

\* All A/C equipment is located close to some residents in Cordova Bay Beach Estates and might be better situated elsewhere.

\* A sidewalk on the east side of Building # 2 would add to the safety of shoppers.

\* A drop off area near the proposed restaurant would assist customers to off load passengers that might have mobility issues.

\* More detail of the overall signage design and a stronger sense of entrance under the 3888, Doumac and TRU VALUE marquees would be more appealing.

\* It appears that trucks are required to back up on Doumac Ave. to unload at Building #2. This seems to be unsafe.

\* There is no safe pedestrian access into the plaza from Doumac Ave.

\* A larger Community space near Building #4 with seating, bike racks to make it more of a Landmark entrance would be more inviting.

\* The entrance to the Underground Parking for both residents and shoppers is located in the center of the plaza causing more traffic and pedestrian interaction.

\* The lower walls of the (3) three main buildings are blank barriers, with the lack of fenestration giving an institutional feel. More relief would add character and be more aesthetically pleasing. Perhaps more troubling is the lack of "eyes on the street" at grade, which makes such an area feel unsafe.

**The following concerns listed in the CBA response of April 2nd, 2017 have been partially addressed by the Applicant:**

\*The relationship of the proposed buildings to the neighboring properties and to our main street, Cordova Bay Road, is troubling ***(The CBA would like to see step backs of floors 3 and 4 on Building # 1 and Building # 3 topped at 3 floors to reduce the massing at Cordova Bay Rd.)***

\* Massing at Cordova Bay Road at (4) four storeys and the build-up of soil on Building #1 from existing grades gives an overpowering presence in contrast to other developments such as Cordova Bay Beach Estates and Mattick's Farm that are set back from the road. This grade increase creates the appearance of (5) storeys. A maximum of 2 storeys at the road edge for both Buildings #1 and #3 would be more inviting. ***(The step backs from Cordova Bay Rd. for floors 3***

**and 4 on Building #1 need to be more pronounced and building #3 should not be more than 3 floors).**

\* There is only one main exit into and out of the Plaza, at Doumac Ave., which could restrict emergency access and egress. It could also lead to traffic congestion and impatience when turning left. **(We would like a better understanding on how emergency vehicles would be able to operate if the Doumac intersection was blocked.)**

**The following concerns listed in the CBA response of April 2nd, 2017 have not been addressed by the Applicant:**

\* Massing at Building #3 is over powering at the corner of Doumac Ave. and Cordova Bay Rd. and would be more in scale at a total maximum of (3) three storeys. **(Building # 3 continues to be overpowering at the Doumac Ave./Cordova Bay Rd. corner and should be 3 storeys.)**

\* Building #1 should have floors 3 and 4 more stepped back from the street. **(An approved variance to five (5) floors on Building # 2 may be required to accommodate.)**

\* A bus pull-out on Cordova Bay Rd. is required so as not to cause traffic backup at both Doumac Ave. and Cordova Bay Rd. **(The Applicant is prepared to accommodate. Residents see the lack of a pull-out as a restriction to the calm flow of traffic.)**

\* There are no provisions for pedestrians leaving the plaza and crossing Cordova Bay Rd. to access the beach. This is a common occurrence and a sidewalk and possibly a crossing light with money coming from the Amenities Fund would improve convenience and safety particularly in that Doumac Ave. is the primary exit and entrance for the plaza. **(This would need to be addressed by Saanich.)**

In summary, the current overall feel, while much improved, is still more urban shopping center than village plaza. Recognizing the site is zoned as C-3; more work is required to give an appealing, village look with consideration for transition from it to Cordova Bay Rd. and the neighboring residential areas.

Ultimately, we are presented with three large, blocky buildings that would look at home in downtown Victoria, resulting in little “village” character, but rather more “urban shopping mall”. “Village” conjures an image of relatively fine-grained buildings lining the streets. We would like to see a plan showing a redistribution of the permitted density to reduce the height along the Cordova Bay Rd. frontage.

A number of residents requested that the buildings have a beachy, seaside, community feel. This could be accomplished with softer materials and additional colors.

At the Applicant’s presentation to the community on September 21<sup>st</sup>, 2017, the CBA distributed a questionnaire to individuals in attendance (and they were collected directly from the individuals, so there was no “ballot-box stuffing”). From approximately 200 attendees, 150 questionnaires were collected. In general, the responses indicated:

1. An eagerness to have the plaza redeveloped (68% in favour or neutral of the proposed development).
2. A continued concern (split opinion) in the design presented.
3. A significant concern about its impact on traffic movement.

The CBA received many comments from members and non-members alike, and their views differed widely, but they were remarkably uniform on the subject of traffic, and the concern that the amount of development being proposed in Cordova Bay will make our “village” choked like big city arterials. In particular, with convenient and safe access onto Cordova Bay Rd. Please note that typical urban traffic standards are not reasonable or acceptable to residents of Cordova Bay, given the uniqueness of Cordova Bay having no typical 4-way intersections at the “village core” – i.e. this proposed plaza development.

Our April 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2017 response regarding this application and our September 7<sup>th</sup>, 2017 updated opinion regarding the 986 & 990 Doumac Ave. application both identified a number of traffic concerns directed to Saanich that have yet to be addressed.

During rush hours, or when there is an obstruction on Cordova Bay Rd., it is very frustrating for drivers waiting at side streets trying to join the column of traffic. With the intensity of use that would be generated by the Plaza, a signalized intersection (or small round-about if it can be designed in a pedestrian-friendly way) will be essential. So would a bus pull-out to keep buses from holding up the traffic column along CBR. In addition, the residents at 5125 and 5131 Cordova Bay Rd. will not be able to turn left (south); this challenge could easily be solved by separating the proposed island into sections, to allow residents at these two addresses to turn south. The traffic calming effect of an island would still be retained. Another traffic concern is the safe entrance and exiting from the Cordova Bay Beach Estates and the Building #1 garage, both in close proximity to each other.

The unfortunate conflict between the existing zoning and the Cordova Bay residents’ wishes for a village-like character (as called for in the OCP, LAP and DPA Guidelines) is inevitable, but we feel more effort could be made to distribute the density permitted, and more work is needed to ensure smooth traffic movement.

In conclusion, the CBA and many residents would like the approval of this application to be conditional on Saanich and the Applicant providing an improved traffic solution at Doumac Ave. and Cordova Bay Rd., as well as having a less massive presence of Buildings #1 and #3 at the Cordova Bay Rd. street frontage.

Respectfully submitted by:  
The Cordova Bay Association for Community Affairs  
December 14, 2017

Attachments:

1. CBA April 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2017 Response to Saanich Referral for the Plaza
2. CBA September 7<sup>th</sup>, 2017 Updated Opinion for 986 & 990 Doumac Ave.
3. CBA September 21<sup>st</sup>, 2017 Plaza Survey Results