

Caledonia Redevelopment Project



Frequently Asked Questions

Capital Regional District | October 2020

What is the Caledonia Development?

The Caledonia Development is a comprehensively planned, mixed-market community located in the central Fernwood neighbourhood of Victoria. This development includes a 5 storey apartment, a 4 storey apartment and three townhouse buildings connected through a series of pathways amongst unique gathering spaces with rain gardens and urban agriculture. Once constructed, the project will provide 158 affordable rental units with varying unit sizes from studio to 4 bedrooms.

What is planned for the vacant land adjacent to Victoria High School?

Previously home to the Fairy Tech School building, the vacant lands are currently owned by the City of Victoria, School District 61 (SD61) and BC Housing. A land exchange is underway to consolidate the lots between Gladstone Avenue and Grant Street, adjacent to the Victoria High School track. Once the land agreements are in place, the Capital Region Housing Corporation (CRHC) will enter into a long-term lease with SD61 and construct the Caledonia Development.

What is the anticipated unit mix?

There are 97 apartment units comprised of: 14 studios, 38 one-bedrooms (7 accessible), 15 two-bedroom (5 accessible), 11 three-bedroom (1 accessible) and 6 four-bedroom units.

There are 61 townhouse units, comprised of: 55 two-bedroom (2 accessible), 2 three-bedroom and 2 four-bedroom units.

A total of 158 new affordable rental units will be constructed, of which 15 units will be accessible.

What other amenities/partnerships are being proposed?

- CRHC proposes to build 1450 square feet of amenity space that will be operated by the Fernwood Neighbourhood Resource Group (NRG) for public use. This amenity space has been specifically sized to suit the needs of the Fernwood NRG.
- The CRHC is working with M'akola to commemorate the naming of the amenity space room.

For more information please visit www.crd.bc.ca/caledonia

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- CRHC is working with the Compost Education Center to oversee the urban agricultural spaces and promote composting for residents of the development.

What lands are subject to the potential disposition?

School District 61 will retain ownership of the consolidated parcels of land and lease the lands to CRHC for the Caledonia Development.

trade the Springridge Commons Site, the Compost Education Site and two lots adjacent to Haegart Park to the City of Victoria in exchange for three lots between Grant Street and Gladstone Avenue that were part of the former Fairy Tech School site.

The lots acquired by the City of Victoria would remain in their current form as greenspace, while the lots acquired by the School District would be consolidated and leased to the CRHC for the purpose of this affordable housing project. Additionally, an eight metre easement between the development site and the Victoria High track would be granted to the CRD to create a public path and buffer that connects Gladstone Avenue and Grant Street.

Why would you demolish the existing Caledonia complex that was built less than 30 years ago?

The existing Caledonia complex was built in 1992 and requires a complete building envelope remediation. Multi-family buildings that were constructed in BC before the year 2000 did not utilize a rainscreen system. Rainscreen is an exterior wall detail where the siding stands off from the moisture-resistant surface of an air barrier applied to the sheathing to create a capillary break and to allow drainage and evaporation. Prior to the 2000's there was a reliance on face-sealed wall systems as designers and builders had a fundamental lack of awareness regarding the principles of enclosure design suitable for BC's coastal climate. Although the rate of deterioration at Caledonia is slow, there is still a need for a costly remediation due to the "leaky condo design".

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Why not just remediate the existing Caledonia Units?

The proposed remediation is estimated to cost +/- \$2.15 million. The cost to remediate would need to be mortgaged against the current property or against other properties in CRHC's portfolio. Caledonia's current net income after debt servicing is insufficient to finance the remediation work.

What is being done to assist the current tenants?

CRHC has developed a tenant relocation policy and has a Tenant Services Assistant to assist with all tenant relocation efforts. Staff will meet with Tenant Households to develop individualized Tenant Relocation Plans (TRP). These plans will support tenants in moving to an existing CRHC unit or with another social housing provider. Current tenants will be given right of first refusal to move back into the redevelopment and tenants must meet the eligibility requirements for the redevelopment.

What is affordable housing and what type of rents will you charge?

The Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) defines housing as affordable when a household spends less than 30% of its gross income (before-tax) income on acceptable shelter. The average rents being charged in the Caledonia development is \$1,122 per month.

In the City of Victoria, 61% of City of Victoria's population are renters and the median household income of renters is \$44,165, which at an affordable level (30%) would allow \$1,104/month to be spent on housing costs.

- The average rent in the City of Victoria for occupied units is \$1,163.
- The average rent of units that are vacant and available for rent is \$1,452. ¹

How will you address the parking impact of the redevelopment on the Fernwood community?

The Caledonia Development proposes an underground parkade that meets the City of Victoria requirements for parking. The underground parkade will contain 112 vehicle stalls and 224 bicycle stalls.

¹ <https://www.cmhc-schl.gc.ca/en/data-and-research/data-tables/average-apartment-rents-vacant-occupied>

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Where will vehicles access the site?

The parkade will be accessed from Caledonia Avenue and Grant Street. Emergency vehicle access has been accommodated in the centre of the site, as per the City of Victoria Engineering Department specifications, on Vining Street.

Will this development reduce the availability of green space in Fernwood?

No. The Caledonia development has enabled the City of Victoria to acquire additional parks and greenspace to be preserved for future generations, including the existing Fernwood Community Allotment Gardens, the Compost Education Centre and the lots adjoining Haegart Park.

Further, the Caledonia Development is comprised of 5 buildings and 60% of the site will be landscaped amenity, containing community allotment gardens, playgrounds, gathering spaces within plazas and open lawns, new vegetated plantings and rain gardens.

How many trees will be lost?

While 25 existing trees will be removed, 97 new trees will be planted as part of the Caledonia redevelopment. Further, a pedestrian and cyclist greenway is proposed on the SD61 lands that is proposed to add additional trees and seating areas.

Will the buildings incorporate any “green” features?

Yes, this project will be designed to meet at minimum BC Energy Code: Step 3, which increases energy efficiencies 50% higher than conventional construction. Highlighted energy efficient features include: heat recovery ventilators (HRV's) in every unit, low-flow plumbing fixtures, electric car charging stations and continuous insulation for minimal thermal bridging (heat loss).

How is Caledonia contextually sensitive to the existing community design?

The proposed zoning for the development is similar to the R3-1 and R3-2 zone which allows buildings to be built up to 6 storeys. Approximately 28 properties located within 400m of the proposed development and north of Pandora Avenue are zoned R3-1 and R3-2.

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How has the design changed in response to community feedback and consultation?

The CRHC has:

- Refined form and character of all buildings to reduce the roofline of both apartments and include townhouse materials to better compliment the heritage and artistic character of Fernwood.
- The 5 storey apartment, bordering Grant Street, was reduced to a 4 storey apartment building with an additional step back on the 4th floor to limit the perceived building massing from a pedestrian scale.
- Relocated the Grant Street parkade ramp from the courtyard to within the footprint of the building. This arrangement provides additional landscaping areas, limits impervious surfaces and reduces vehicle/pedestrian interactions in the courtyard area. Relocation of the parkade ramp also allowed for more tree retention adjacent to Haegert Park.
- Provided additional floor space for the amenity building to meet requirements of potential user groups.
- Included urban agriculture and rain gardens within the landscape design.
- Added private outdoor space for all units.
- Improved pedestrian experience to provide more townhouse and at grade frontages, with prominent entryways from pathways and adjacent to the Greenway
- Vining Street was widened to permit enhanced vehicular (emergency) and pedestrian access to the site with a widened drive aisle and boulevard; with the addition of sidewalks, curbs, lighting and street furniture.