

DATE OF MEETING | September 17, 2018 |

AUTHORED BY | DAVID STEWART, PLANNER, CURRENT PLANNING AND  
SUBDIVISION |

SUBJECT | **REZONING APPLICATION NO. RA397 – 4900 ISLAND HIGHWAY N** |

## **OVERVIEW**

### **Purpose of Report**

To present Council with a rezoning application for a site-specific amendment to the Community Corridor (COR3) zone to allow a standalone car dealership use and to seek Council direction with respect to further consideration of the rezoning application. |

### **Recommendation**

That Council deny Rezoning Application No. RA397 at 4900 Island Highway N. |

## **BACKGROUND**

A rezoning application (RA397) for 4900 Island Highway N was received from Holland Planning Innovations Inc., on behalf of 1960400 Ontario Ltd. The applicant is requesting an amendment to the Community Corridor (COR3) zone in order to permit automobile sales, service, and rentals as a site-specific use on the subject property.

Staff do not support the rezoning application as the use does not meet the intent of Official Community Plan (OCP) policies for a supportable land use for this location. Staff have previously met with the applicant and advised the applicant that Staff are not able to support the application as presented.

Typically, Staff would bring forward a report accompanied by a zoning amendment bylaw and a recommendation from the Community Planning and Development Committee; however, as Staff do not support the proposed amendment, Staff are seeking Council direction prior to proceeding further. If Council directs Staff to not proceed, the application will be closed and the proposed automobile sales use will not be permitted on the site. Alternatively, if Council elects to proceed with the application, Staff will continue the rezoning application process and bring forward a zoning amendment bylaw for Council's consideration at a later date. The applicant has been advised of Staff's decision to seek Council direction prior to proceeding further with the application and has been given the opportunity to present the application to Council.

## Subject Property & Site Context

<i>Location</i>	The subject property is located on Wills Road, approximately 70m southeast of the Island Highway and Rutherford Road intersection.
<i>Lot Area</i>	8,561m <sup>2</sup>
<i>Current Zone</i>	COR3 - Community Corridor
<i>Proposed Zone</i>	COR3 - Community Corridor with site-specific automobile sales, service and rental.
<i>Official Community Plan Designation</i>	Corridor

The subject property was formerly occupied by Long Lake Nurseries, which closed in early 2017. The property has since remained vacant. Wills Road parallels the highway in front of the subject property then turns approximately 90 degrees around the site and heads eastward. The subject property is a corner lot. Long Lake is situated approximately 65m southeast of the property.

The surrounding neighbourhood land uses include:

- Retail uses (Long Lake Plaza, Nanaimo Town North Centre)
- Office (Lake View Centre, Workers Compensation Board)
- Multiple-Family Housing
- Hotels (Inn on Long Lake and The Grand Hotel)
- Seniors' Housing
- Park and Trail access to Long Lake

Recent development within the area includes the completion of a four-storey, 79-unit personal care facility (Nanaimo Memory and Complex Care) at 4989 Wills Road. A development permit has also been issued for a mixed-use seniors' housing development at 4979 Wills Road with 183 residential units and 2 commercial units. A 63-unit apartment building was also recently built at 4960 Songbird Place, and Staff have received a development permit for a 172-unit, multi-family development at 4800 Cedar Ridge Place. As such, approximately 497 residential units have recently been, or are anticipated to be constructed, within this emerging neighbourhood in addition to the 92 existing residential units located at 4949 and 4969 Wills Road.

The property is separated from the nearest automobile dealerships (Volkswagen 130m and Galaxy Motors 140m) by the four-lane Island Highway. The closest automobile dealership on the same side of the highway as the subject property is Nissan of Nanaimo, which is located approximately 1.5km away from the property.

## DISCUSSION

The applicant is requesting a site-specific amendment in order to permit two separate automobile sales dealerships. Vehicle parking includes a mixture of surface parking and a parkade structure that is to be built near the rear of the property. Each of the automobile sales buildings are proposed to be two storeys in height with office space provided above. Access to the office space is through the auto dealerships and, as such, the offices function as ancillary to

the auto dealership use and shall not be considered a separate use. No other uses are currently proposed for the property.

See Attachments for more information.

### **Official Community Plan**

The subject property is located within the Corridor designation of the OCP. Development within Corridors shall be characterized by medium- to high-density residential, mixed-use commercial/residential, and office land uses. The provision of commercial services within mixed-use developments in Corridors is encouraged, while standalone commercial uses shall be limited to Commercial Centres and Urban Nodes and are discouraged within the Corridor designation.

Automobile sales, repair, and rental is specifically addressed within the Light Industrial designation of the OCP. A standalone auto dealership use is supported within properties located within the Shenton Road and Boban Industrial areas. As the subject property is not within or located within close proximity to these designated areas, the OCP does not support rezoning for automobile sales within the subject property.

### **Community Corridor Zone**

The Corridor designation was established within the OCP as primarily a residential or mixed-use designation. The Community Corridor (COR3) zone was established with the adoption of “Zoning Bylaw 2011 No. 4500” in order to recognize existing standalone commercial uses within Corridor designations. The COR3 zone is intended to provide a range of uses to meet the day-to-day needs of the surrounding community. The zone allows for a five- to six-storey building form. While standalone commercial is permitted, density is limited to a floor area ratio (FAR) of 0.75. Mixed-use development is encouraged with an additional FAR of 0.50, for a total FAR of 1.25, and additional density awarded if parking is provided beneath a building. Given the size of the subject property (8,562m<sup>2</sup>), there is sufficient area to achieve a mixed-use development. Land uses permitted within the COR3 zone include but are not limited to:

- Hotel
- Multiple Family
- Personal Care Facility
- Retail
- Live/Work
- Office
- Seniors’ Housing

Automobile sales, service, and rental use is permitted only on a site-specific basis and in accordance with OCP policy as noted above.

### **Transportation Master Plan**

The subject property is located within 600m of the North Nanaimo Mobility Hub, as identified within the Nanaimo Transportation Master Plan. The master plan encourages future development within the area to focus on improving pedestrian/cyclist mobility and comfort while breaking down barriers formed by major roads in order to increase the amount of walking and

cycling within the hub. Automobile dealerships are by their very nature not pedestrian-oriented development types and typically detract from the pedestrian experience. By developing the site for automobile sales, the opportunity for future street-oriented development which improves the pedestrian experience within the area will be lost.

A soft surface pedestrian trail connects Wills Road to Lakeview Road (multi-purpose trail) and the Long Lake strata housing development on the north side of Long Lake. The E&N hard surface trail starts on the opposite side of the highway from the subject property. The Nanaimo North Town Centre (NNTC), which is located 130m from the subject property, includes a transit exchange, and a bus stop is located on Wills Road approximately 45m from the subject property. Therefore, the subject property is located in close proximity to opportunities for alternate modes of transportation.

### **Staff Comment**

Due to its proximity to Long Lake and NNTC, visibility from the highway and the density of multiple-family development within the area, the subject property is a prominent lot within the city. With approximately 600 residential units and two hotels within the Wills Road Corridor and access to shopping within walking distance at NNTC and Long Lake Plaza, the area has developed into an emerging medium-high-density walkable neighbourhood. The subject property is located in the centre of the Wills Road Corridor and, as such, has potential to contribute positively to the character, density, and walkability of the neighbourhood.

Allowing the proposed rezoning application to proceed for consideration of this site-specific use in this location would have broader implications on the community vision for this neighbourhood and may preclude a more suitable land use.

The addition of a standalone automobile dealership will not contribute positively to the human scale of the corridor and is not in keeping with the development of the area. By permitting a standalone automobile dealership on the property, the City will miss an opportunity for additional future development of residential units or local services on the site that could support and complement existing commercial and residential uses. Staff do not support the rezoning application.

Alternatively, Council may choose to motion for the rezoning application review to proceed. If Council endorses this alternative motion, Staff will continue the rezoning application review and bring the application to the Community Planning & Development Committee for a recommendation, and a bylaw will be introduced to Council at a later date.

### **SUMMARY POINTS**

- An application was received for a site-specific amendment to the Community Corridor (COR3) zone in order to permit two separate car dealerships on the subject property.
- The subject property is designated as Corridor within the OCP. The OCP encourages mixed-use or standalone residential uses within the Corridor designation and does not support rezoning for automobile sales within the subject property.
- Staff are requesting Council direction prior to proceeding further with the rezoning application.

## **ATTACHMENTS**

ATTACHMENT A: Location Plan  
ATTACHMENT B: Conceptual Site and Floor Plans  
ATTACHMENT C: Conceptual Elevations / Renderings  
ATTACHMENT D: Streetscape Context  
ATTACHMENT E: Aerial Photo

### **Submitted by:**

L. Rowett  
Manager, Current Planning and Subdivision

### **Concurrence by:**

D. Lindsay  
Director, Community Development