

DATE OF MEETING | October 16, 2018 |

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

SUBJECT | REZONING APPLICATION NO. RA397 – 4900 ISLAND HIGHWAY  
NORTH |

## **OVERVIEW**

### **Purpose of Report**

To present the Community Planning and Development Committee with an application for a site-specific amendment to the Community Corridor (COR3) zone to permit automobile sales, service, and rental use within the subject property. |

### **Recommendation**

| That the Committee receive the report and provide a recommendation..|

## **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 rental 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 met with the applicant and advised that Staff are not supportive of the application as presented.

Staff brought forward a report to Council on 2018-SEP-17 recommending that Council deny the rezoning application; however, Council directed Staff to proceed with the rezoning application review.

### **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; and,
- 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 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 by the Island Highway from the two nearest automobile dealerships, Volkswagen (130m away) and Galaxy Motors (140m away). 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. A few dealerships are located in the Shenton Road industrial area, but the majority of auto dealerships within the city are clustered within an auto-precinct near the intersection of the Island Highway and Bowen Road, with additional lands recently rezoned to permit auto sales use within the former Madill industrial site (2560 Bowen Road).

## **DISCUSSION**

The applicant is requesting a site-specific amendment in order to permit two separate automobile sales dealerships on the subject property. Vehicle parking includes a mixture of surface parking, showroom displays, 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 on the second storey. Although the COR3 zone encourages mixed use, the applicant has advised that the office is intended to be ancillary to the auto sales use only. No other uses are 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. Stand-alone commercial uses shall be

limited to Commercial Centres and Urban Nodes and are discouraged within the Corridor designation.

Automobile sales, service, and rental use is specifically addressed within the Light Industrial land use designation of the OCP. A stand-alone auto dealership use could be supported on properties located within the Shenton Road and Boban Industrial areas. As the subject property is not within or located in close proximity to these designated areas, the OCP does not support the proposed rezoning for automobile sales, service and rental use 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” to recognize existing stand-alone commercial uses within Corridor designated properties. 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 stand-alone 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, with a variety of businesses and residential infill to support existing adjacent commercial developments and complement surrounding residential uses. There is also space within the site to maximize highway exposure for commercial uses and provide separation from the highway for a residential building, similar to the Pacific Station corridor development at 5200/5240 Dublin Way and other developments throughout the city (see “Staff Comments” section of this report). Land uses permitted within the COR3 zone include but are not limited to:

- Hotel;
- Multiple Family;
- Personal Care Facility;
- Retail;
- Live/Work;
- Office; and,
- Seniors’ Housing.

Automobile sales, service, and rental use is permitted only on a site-specific basis where OCP policy supports this use.

### **Transportation Master Plan**

The subject property is located within 600m of the North Nanaimo Mobility Hub, as identified within the Nanaimo Transportation Master Plan (NTMP). 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. Developing the site for automobile sales would preclude the opportunity for future street-oriented development which improves the pedestrian experience within the area.

In terms of active transportation, 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 well-connected and located in close proximity to opportunities for alternate modes of transportation.

### *Community Contribution*

As outlined in Section 7.3 of the OCP, in exchange for value conferred on land through a rezoning, the applicant should provide a community contribution. The applicant proposes a monetary contribution of \$115,430 at a rate of \$34 per square metre of commercial space to be directed towards active transportation and pedestrian improvements.

### **Staff Comment**

The subject property is a key development site within this neighbourhood given its proximity to recreational amenities at Long Lake, commercial shops and services (NNTC and Long Lake Plaza) and transit services, visibility from the highway, and the density of multiple-family development within the area. There is an emerging medium- to high-density neighbourhood including approximately 600 residential units and two hotels within the Wills Road Corridor. 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.

The proposal for a site-specific automobile sales, service and rental use in this location has broader implications regarding the community vision in this neighbourhood, and would preclude the opportunity to achieve a more compatible mix of land uses and local commercial services with new businesses and residential density to support existing businesses.

The applicant has stated that the subject property is not a suitable location for residential use given its proximity to the Island Highway. Staff note a number of residential and mixed-use developments have been and will be constructed adjacent to the Island Highway and other major roads throughout the city, including but not limited to:

- 775 Terminal Avenue (Crest) - a 121-unit rental apartment building along an arterial road;
- 5200/ 5240 Dublin Way - a mixed-use development with townhouses adjacent to the Island Highway and Metral Drive (a major road);
- 6543 Metral Drive – a mixed-use development containing commercial units and condominiums fronting Metral Drive across the street from Home Depot;
- 6975 Island Highway North - three rental apartment buildings containing a total of 146 units adjacent to the Nanaimo Parkway and the Island Highway (building permit in progress); and
- Various townhouse and apartment form housing on Highland Boulevard, adjacent to a highway speed limit of 70km per hour.

The addition of new stand-alone automobile dealerships reflects an auto-oriented form of development that has historically characterized the city. This form of development is not consistent with the contemporary forms of Corridor development and infill that has been

occurring in the past seven years, as envisioned in the OCP and NTMP policies for our urban nodes, commercial centres and mobility hubs. The proposed development will not contribute positively to the human scale of the corridor and is, therefore, not in keeping with the development of the area. By permitting stand-alone automobile dealerships 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.

The proposed site-specific amendment for automobile sales, service and rental use does not comply with the objectives of the OCP or support the objectives of the NTMP. Therefore, Staff recommend that Rezoning Application RA397 be denied.

### **ATTACHMENTS**

ATTACHMENT A: Location Plan  
ATTACHMENT B: Conceptual Site Plan and Project Data  
ATTACHMENT C: Building Elevations  
ATTACHMENT D: Streetscape / Shadow Study  
ATTACHMENT E: Cross Section  
ATTACHMENT F: Aerial Photo

#### **Submitted by:**

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#### **Concurrence by:**

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