

DATE OF MEETING February 7, 2022

AUTHORED BY CALEB HORN, PLANNER, CURRENT PLANNING

SUBJECT **DEVELOPMENT PERMIT APPLICATION NO. DP1178 –  
4900 ISLAND HIGHWAY NORTH**

## **OVERVIEW**

### **Purpose of Report**

To present for Council's consideration a development permit application for an automobile sales development at 4900 Island Highway North.

### **Recommendation**

That Council issue Development Permit No. DP1178 for an automobile sales development at 4900 Island Highway North with the following variances to:

- reduce the flanking side yard setback from 3.0m to 2.4m along the north property line;
- waive the minimum building height requirement; and
- increase the maximum combined height of a fence and retaining wall in the side yard setback from 1.8m to 2.8m.

## **BACKGROUND**

A development permit application, DP1178, was received from James E. Irwin Architect Inc., on behalf of 1960400 Ontario Ltd., to permit an automobile sales development at 4900 Island Highway North. The subject property was previously rezoned to allow automobile sales and rental as a site-specific use in 2019 (RA397).

### **Subject Property and Site Context**

|                                      |   |
|--------------------------------------|---|
| <i>Zoning</i>                        | Community Corridor (COR3)   |
| <i>Location</i>                      | The subject property is located on the east side of the Island Highway North frontage road where it turns into Wills Road.  |
| <i>Total Area</i>                    | 0.86ha  |
| <i>Official Community Plan (OCP)</i> | Map 1 – Future Land Use Plan – Corridor<br>Map 3 – Development Permit Area DPA No. 9 – Commercial, Industrial, Institutional, Multiple Family, and Mixed Commercial / Residential Development |
| <i>Relevant Design Guidelines</i>    | General Development Permit Area Design Guidelines   |

The subject property is a corner lot and was formerly occupied by Long Lake Nurseries Garden Centre. The nursery opened in 1975 and closed in January 2017. The property was subsequently purchased by the current owner and the nursery buildings were demolished prior to rezoning. The lot is relatively flat with a slight slope downhill to the east.

The property is centrally located in the Long Lake neighbourhood and is approximately 70m west of Long Lake and 70m southeast of the intersection of the Island Highway and Rutherford Road. Adjacent properties include the Long Lake Plaza retail centre across Wills Road to the north, multi-family residential developments to the east, Lakeside Centre offices and Long Lake Inn to the south, and a mix of retail and commercial service uses including the Volkswagen car dealership across the Island Highway to the west.

## **DISCUSSION**

### **Proposed Development**

The applicant is proposing to construct three new commercial buildings for automobile sales with a total gross floor area of 3,971m<sup>2</sup>. The building breakdown is as follows:

- Building A – 1,806m<sup>2</sup> Subaru car dealership.
- Building B – 1,302m<sup>2</sup> Porsche car dealership.
- Building C – 863m<sup>2</sup> Servicing support building for both dealerships. There will be a two-storey parking structure connected to Building C as well as a car wash bay.

The total floor area equals a Floor Area Ratio (FAR) of 0.46, which is below the maximum permitted FAR of 0.75 in the COR3 zone.

### *Site Design*

Buildings A and B are sited close to the west property line facing the Island Highway and frontage road. Building C will face Wills Road to the north. Three vehicle access points are proposed to the site: between Building B and C to north, between Building B and A to the west, and south of Building A. No parking is proposed between the front faces of the buildings and the adjacent streets. All required parking will be provided on-site, and a two-level parkade attached to Building C will provide additional parking and storage for vehicles. A garbage / recycling enclosure is proposed to be located in the lower parkade level.

As conditions of RA397, road dedication along the north property line and a statutory right-of-way to accommodate a public sidewalk along the west property line are required prior to Building Permit issuance.

### *Building Design*

Both Buildings A and B have been designed to accommodate the corporate requirements of Subaru and Porsche. Both buildings will be visible from the Island Highway and will include high windows to illuminate and animate the street frontage. Building C is designed to provide street presence along Wills Road to the north, and will act to screen the parkade structure. Exterior materials will consist generally of aluminium composite materials, precast concrete panels, and metal siding.

### *Landscape Design*

Landscaping is proposed along all frontages, with trees clustered near the edges of the site. Low shrubs and columnar trees will provide a buffer between the streets and the buildings. A bioswale is proposed along the east property line where a chain-link fence and shrubs will screen the site from adjacent residential uses. A concrete retaining wall up to 1.7m high and a landscape buffer are proposed along the south property line. A small outdoor seating area for employees is proposed adjacent to Building C, and an outdoor seating area for employees and customers is proposed outside of Building B at the corner of Wills Road.

### **Design Advisory Panel**

This application was not reviewed by the Design Advisory Panel (DAP) as DAP meetings were suspended at the time of application due to COVID-19 restrictions. Staff reviewed the proposed development in relation to the applicable General Development Permit Area Design Guidelines and provided a number of recommendations to the applicant related to site and building design. The applicant subsequently revised the proposed plans by:

- amending the site layout to improve pedestrian connections and reduce potential conflicts;
- increasing fenestration and building transparency;
- refining site lighting details; and
- enhancing the proposed landscaping along the site perimeter.

### **Proposed Variances**

#### *Minimum Flanking Side Yard Setback*

The minimum flanking side yard setback in the COR3 zone is 3.0m. The proposed flanking side yard setback for portions of Buildings B and C is 2.4m from the north property line, a requested variance of 0.6m.

The setback will be measured from the new property line after road dedication of approximately 1.6m has taken place, and the anticipated road cross-section will be accommodated within the new road right-of-way. The site design will allow sufficient sightlines for vehicles exiting the drive aisle adjacent to the areas of the requested variance. Staff support the proposed variance.

#### *Minimum Building Height*

The City of Nanaimo “Zoning Bylaw 2011 No. 4500” requires a minimum building height of two storeys above grade in the COR3 zone. While a second floor is provided for Building C and portions of Buildings A and B, a variance is requested to allow Buildings A and B as primarily one-storey buildings.

Given the nature of the automobile sales use and the internal programming requirements of the dealerships, the applicant has advised that providing full-size floor plates on the second storey of the buildings would not be practical. The street-facing portions of the buildings, however, will appear as two storeys above grade due to the large showroom ceiling heights. Staff support the proposed variance.

### *Maximum Fence Height*

The maximum combined fence and retaining wall height in the side yard setback in the COR3 zone is 1.8m. The proposed height for a portion of a combined retaining wall and fence in the south side yard setback is 2.8m, a requested variance of 1.0m. The concrete retaining wall will slope to a height of 1.7m at its highest point and will address a grade difference between the subject property and the neighbouring commercial lot to the south. The wall will be screened by evergreen shrubs and trees. A 1.1m-high galvanized metal guard is proposed on the top of the wall for safety reasons. Staff support the proposed variance.

### **SUMMARY POINTS**

- Development Permit No. DP1178 is for an automobile sales development at 4900 Island Highway North.
- The subject property was previously rezoned to allow automobile sales and rental as a site-specific use in 2019.
- Variances are requested to reduce the minimum flanking side yard setback from 3.0m to 2.4m, to waive the minimum building height requirement, and to increase the maximum combined fence and retaining wall height from 1.8m to 2.8m. Staff support the proposed variances.

### **ATTACHMENTS**

ATTACHMENT A: Permit Terms and Conditions  
ATTACHMENT B: Context Map  
ATTACHMENT C: Location Plan  
ATTACHMENT D: Site and Parking Plan  
ATTACHMENT E: Building Elevations and Materials  
ATTACHMENT F: Building Renderings  
ATTACHMENT G: Perspective Views  
ATTACHMENT H: Landscape Plan and Details  
ATTACHMENT I: Aerial Photo

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