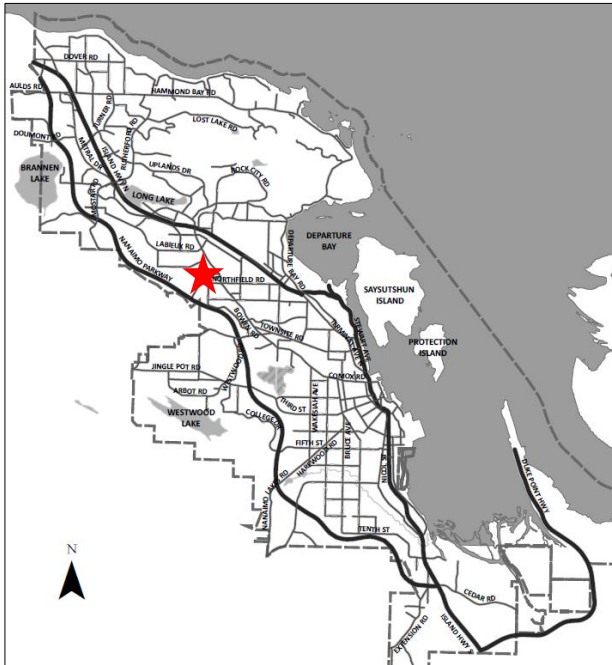


DATE OF MEETING | March 3, 2025

AUTHORED BY | KRISTINE MAYES, PLANNER, CURRENT PLANNING

**SUBJECT** | **DEVELOPMENT PERMIT APPLICATION NO. DP1364 – 1960 MOUNTAIN VISTA DRIVE**



**Proposal:**

A 93-unit multi-family residential development

**Zoning:**

R6 – Low Density Residential

**City Plan Land Use Designation:**

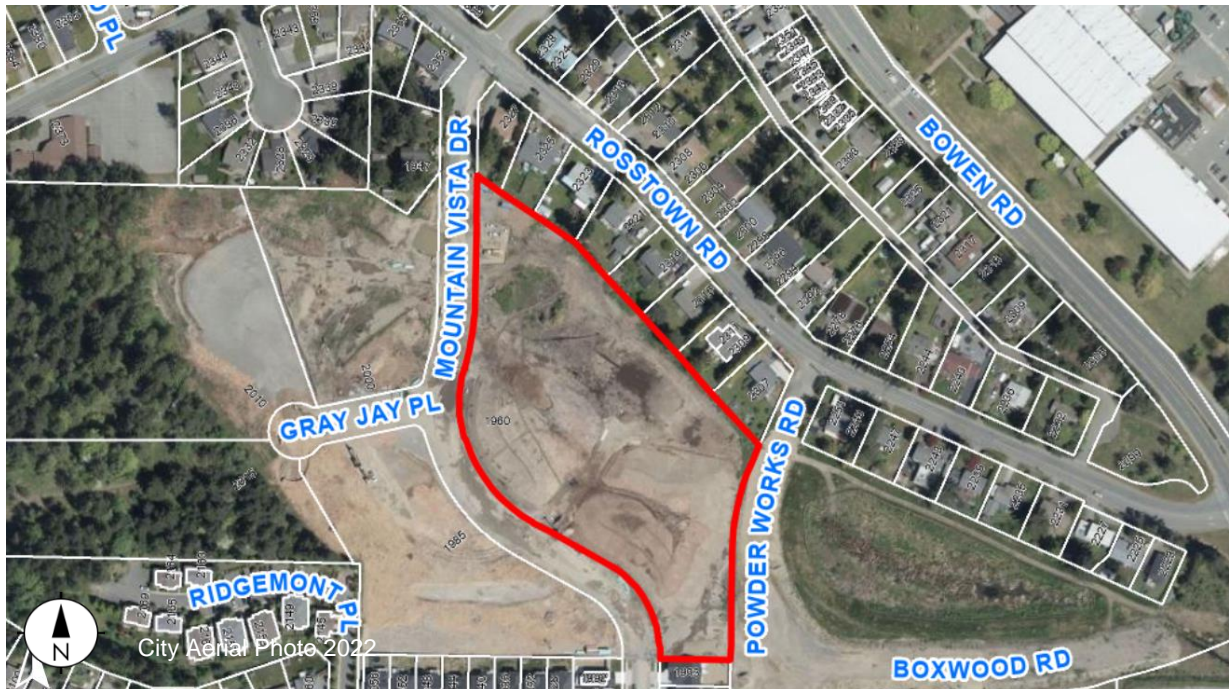
Suburban Neighbourhood

**Development Permit Areas:**

DPA8 – Form & Character

**Lot Area:**

2.25 ha



## **OVERVIEW**

### **Purpose of Report**

To present for Council's consideration a development permit application for a multi-family residential development at 1960 Mountain Vista Drive. |

### **Recommendation**

That Council issue Development Permit No. DP1364 for a multi-family residential development at 1960 Mountain Vista Drive with variances as outlined in the "Proposed Variances" section of the Staff Report dated 2025-MAR-03. |

## **BACKGROUND**

A development permit application, DP1364, was received from Loxley Developments Inc., to permit a 93-unit multi-family residential development at 1960 Mountain Vista Drive.

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

The subject property is a large irregularly shaped lot located in Central Nanaimo between Mountain Vista Drive (to the west) and Powder Works Road (to the east), south of Rosstown Road, and adjacent to the Midtown Gateway/Boxwood Connector. The property is a brownfield site, which is currently vacant and with existing treed mounds established through site remediation. The property is subject to a Ministry of Environment and Climate Change Strategy Certificate of Compliance for site remediation which constrains the buildable area of the lot and prohibits the construction of an underground parkade. The proposed development will occur within the northern corner of the subject property which has an approximate grade change of five metres (sloping downward to the centre of the site).

The surrounding neighbourhood primarily consists of established single-family dwellings, multi-family developments, commercial uses, and Beban Park. The property is well connected to an existing pedestrian network and is within walking distance to commercial services, recreation amenities, a frequent transit route on Bowen Road, and active transportation routes within the nearby mixed-use Bowen Road corridor. |

## **DISCUSSION**

### **Proposed Development**

The applicant is proposing to construct three, 3-storey multi-family rental buildings and a single-storey common amenity building (Building D). The total gross floor area is 7,972m<sup>2</sup> and the proposed total Floor Area Ratio (FAR) is 0.31, less than the permitted FAR of 0.45 in the R6 zone.

The proposed unit composition is as follows:

Unit Type	No. of Units (Building A)	No. of Units (Building B)	No. of Units (Building C)	Floor Area
Studio	2	12	18	35m <sup>2</sup> – 45m <sup>2</sup>
1-Bedroom	10	6	21	55m <sup>2</sup> – 60m <sup>2</sup>
2-Bedroom	6	3	9	78m <sup>2</sup> – 80m <sup>2</sup>
3-Bedroom	6	0	0	103m <sup>2</sup>
<i>Total:</i>			93 Units	

### *Site Design*

Buildings A and B provide street presence along Mountain Vista Drive, with Building C located at the rear of the development, and Building D (amenity building) located in the centre of the site. A central walkway connects to each building and to a trail network that connects to Mountain Vista Drive and Powder Works Road. Vehicle access is from Mountain Vista Drive and leads to 99 surface parking spaces to the rear of Buildings A and B. Long-term bicycle storage (125 spaces) will be located within secure common rooms (54 spaces and 4 non-standard spaces) in Buildings C and D as well as within in-unit storage rooms (67 spaces). Short-term bicycle racks (12 spaces) are located beside the front entrances of each building. Three-stream waste management containers are located in two refuse enclosures in the middle of the site.

### *Building Design*

The buildings are contemporary simple forms with flat and low-sloped roofs that echo the mountain vistas. The design of the buildings is intended to reflect the natural setting and foliage of the area. Building D features a central gathering space with glazing and warm-hued panels to create an inviting activity hub. The street-facing units for Buildings A and B have individual connections to Mountain Vista Drive. The ground floor entries for Buildings A, B, and C along public thoroughfares are highlighted by entryway lighting and accent paneling that extends to the top of the roofs visually break the low-rise apartment facade into discrete volumes with emphasis on individual ground-oriented unit entries. The common entrances face internally and are emphasized by accent panels and glazing for wayfinding. The exterior finishes of the buildings include a mix of corrugated square metal panels, fibre-cement siding and fascia, wood cladding, steel and wood columns, and Juliet balconies with metal railings.

### *Landscape Design*

Landscaping is provided throughout the development with a variety of deciduous and coniferous trees, as well as evergreen and deciduous shrubs, groundcovers, and bioswale planting. Deciduous shade trees are proposed along the perimeter of the development with a robust landscape buffer comprising of a mix of tree species for year-round between the building and parking, to adjacent dwellings. Decorative metal fencing atop retaining walls and wood privacy screens are provided between the units fronting the street to delineate private amenity areas. Each unit has a private patio or Juliet balcony. A common amenity building (Building D) is located in the middle of the site with indoor and outdoor common spaces including an activity lawn beside Building A. Bollard, wall, and dark sky compliant lighting are provided along pedestrian pathways, above the individual building entrances, and within the parking lot.

The proposed development meets the intent of the General Development Permit Area Design Guidelines including pedestrian connections to onsite and offsite destinations; siting the development with consideration to existing site features (remediation mounds and trail network); accent materials and detailing to break up the facades and emphasize building entrances; and landscape materials that provide screening and visual interest.

### **Design Advisory Panel**

The Design Advisory Panel (DAP), at its meeting held on 2025-JAN-09, accepted DP1364 as presented and provided the following recommendations:

- Consider including a few on-site visitor parking spots;
- Consider a hard surface path to connect to public trails in the forested area;
- Consider choosing bike racks with two points of contact;
- Consider additional plantings between Building C and residences to the north to increase privacy;
- Consider alternate material and scale of the privacy panels on ground floor patios to better fit with the architectural presence of the building;
- Consider including a dedicated car-share parking stall, or working with the City and car-share companies to locate one on the street; and,
- Consider adding some areas of decorative paving to the parking lot.

The applicant subsequently submitted revised plans in response to the DAP recommendations, including the following key design revisions:

- Incorporated on-site visitor parking (in accordance with the Parking Bylaw) and short-term bicycle racks with two points of contact;
- Changed gravel material for the path to a cart path chip which compacts to a hard base for improved accessibility;
- Added trees (including evergreen species for year-round screening) between Building C, the parking area, and residences to the north;
- Privacy screens for units along Mountain Vista Drive reduced in size; and,
- Vehicle overhangs distinguished from pedestrian pathways with stamped concrete.

### **Community Consultation**

The subject property is within the boundary of the Wellington Community Association. The application was forwarded to the association for information, and the applicant presented the proposal to the Association on 2025-JAN-23. The applicant also hosted a Public Information Meeting (PIM) on 2024-DEC-04 at Affirmation Coffee (Beban Plaza) where two members of the public attended. Some attendees expressed concerns regarding building form (low-rise apartment in the Suburban Neighbourhood land use designation), overlook into and proximity to neighbouring properties, and traffic. Following the PIM, the applicant provided revised conceptual plans to minimize overlook and proximity to neighbouring properties as detailed in the variances section below.

## Proposed Variances

### *Building Height*

The maximum permitted height of a principal building with a flat roof in the R6 zone is 7m. The proposed building height is 10.7m for Building A; 9.8m for Building B; and 10.8m for Building C; requested variances of 3.7m, 2.8m, and 3.8m respectively. City Plan supports the remediation and redevelopment of brownfield sites and encourages cluster housing design in the Suburban Neighbourhood future land use designation typically as ground-oriented buildings up to three-stories in height.

Staff support the proposed height variance to achieve a more compact building form, up to three-stories, given the unique constraints of the site. The applicant has incorporated a number of ground-oriented design elements and provided a shadow study and comparison of the proposed building heights with permissible building heights (10.5m) on neighbouring R5 zoned properties. There are no shadow impacts on adjacent residences and the proposed building heights will be lower than permissible heights on neighbouring buildings (Attachment F). To mitigate any potential overlook on neighbouring properties, the applicant has incorporated the following measures:

- Increased Building C setback from the north property line to 5m (requirement is 3m);
- Relocated a common access path and added tree plantings on the north side of Building B;
- Added trees including evergreen trees for year-round screening on the north side of Building C; and,
- Removed windows on Building B (upper storey) and Building D.

### *Fence Height*

The maximum permitted combined height of a fence and retaining wall in the R6 zone within a front yard (adjacent to Mountain Vista Drive) is 1.2m. The proposed combined fence and retaining wall height is up to 2m, a requested variance of 0.8m. Staff support the proposed variance as only the 1.2m high fence will be visible from the public realm; and the retaining walls are needed to address the grade change for the sunken private patios. The applicant has incorporated permeable materials (decorative metal fencing) which will allow a visual connection to be maintained between the patios and adjacent sidewalks.

### *Parking Spaces & Percentage of Small Car Parking Spaces*

The minimum number of parking spaces required for the development is 136 parking spaces. The applicant is proposing to reduce the number of parking spaces from 136 to 99 parking spaces, a requested variance of 37 parking spaces. The maximum percentage of parking spaces that may be designated for small cars is 40%. The applicant proposes to increase the maximum percentage of small car parking spaces from 40% to 45%, a variance of 5%. The applicant has provided a parking study in accordance with “City of Nanaimo Policy for Consideration of a Parking Variance” which supports the parking reduction, with an anticipated parking demand of 92 spaces (based on ICBC vehicle ownership data for similar projects in Nanaimo at a rate of 0.95 vehicle parking spaces per unit, plus four visitor parking spaces). The proposed 99 parking spaces exceeds the anticipated demand; therefore, Transportation Demand Management (TDM) is not warranted; however, the applicant proposes to include TDM measures that would be secured as a condition of the permit to further reduce parking demand. These measures include excess long-term, secure bike parking (125 spaces), 47 spaces are required, with 4 non-standard (over-sized)

spaces to accommodate bikes with increased capacity such as electric cargo-bikes and bikes with trailers.

Staff support the application as proposed with variances to facilitate a carefully designed residential development with substantial onsite amenities within the developable area of the site. The applicant has demonstrated that compliance with the parking requirements would significantly hinder development within this uniquely constrained site. The three-storey clustered building form will provide a diversity of unit types and a suitable transition between existing single family homes, the approved townhouse development (DP1255) at 1985 Mountain Vista Drive (permitted height of 9.5m), and future development potential (up to six storeys) within the Mixed-Use Corridor lands (Midtown Gateway site) on the east side of Mountain Vista Drive. The scale and form and character of the proposed development reflects the emerging land use context, reinforces active transportation, and is well-connected to nearby commercial services, recreation amenities and transit. |

### **SUMMARY POINTS**

- Development Permit Application No. DP1364 proposes a 93-unit multi-family residential development at 1960 Mountain Vista Drive.
- Variances are proposed to increase the maximum permitted fence and building height; to reduce the number of required parking spaces; and to increase the percentage of small car parking spaces.
- Staff support the proposed variances which would allow a uniquely constrained brownfield site to be developed in a clustered building form near services and transit. |

### **ATTACHMENTS**

ATTACHMENT A: Permit Terms and Conditions  
ATTACHMENT B: Subject Property Map  
ATTACHMENT C: Site and Parking Plans  
ATTACHMENT D: Building Elevations and Details  
ATTACHMENT E: Building Renderings  
ATTACHMENT F: Shadow Study & Height Comparative Analysis  
ATTACHMENT G: Landscape Plans and Details |

#### **Submitted by:**

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#### **Concurrence by:**

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Director, Planning & Development