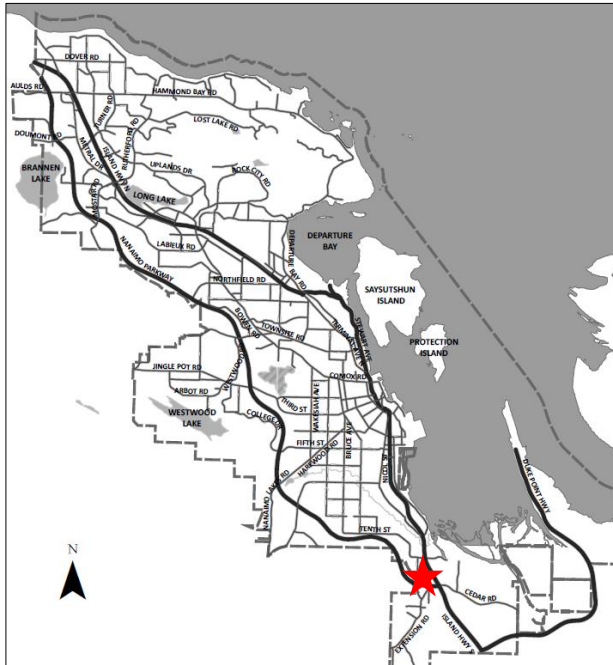


DATE OF MEETING | December 1, 2025

AUTHORED BY | CALEB HORN, PLANNER, CURRENT PLANNING

SUBJECT | **DEVELOPMENT PERMIT APPLICATION NO. DP1359 –
1435 CRANBERRY AVENUE**



Proposal:

A 42-unit affordable family housing development

Zoning:

CS1 – Community Service One

City Plan Land Use Designation:

Secondary Urban Centre

Development Permit Areas:

DPA7 – Nanaimo Parkway Design
DPA8 – Form and Character

Lot Area:

3,570m²



OVERVIEW

Purpose of Report

To present for Council's consideration a development permit application for a family housing development at 1435 Cranberry Avenue. |

Recommendation

That Council issue Development Permit No. DP1359 for a family housing development at 1435 Cranberry Avenue with variances as outlined in the "Proposed Variances" section of the Staff Report dated 2025-DEC-01. |

BACKGROUND

A development permit application, DP1359, was received from Snuneymuxw First Nation for a 42-unit affordable family housing development at 1435 Cranberry Avenue. The subject property is owned by the City of Nanaimo and was created through subdivision in 2023 on the southwest corner of Cranberry Avenue and the Cranberry Connector. The property is one of three sites identified for affordable housing projects in the July 2020 Memorandum of Understanding between BC Housing and the City of Nanaimo (previously under the address of 1425 Cranberry Avenue). BC Housing has partnered with Snuneymuxw First Nation to develop affordable housing for families on the site.

Subject Property and Site Context

The subject property is located in the Chase River Neighbourhood at the southern edge of the South Gate Urban Centre. The site is bordered by a no-exit portion of the Cranberry Connector to the north, Cranberry Avenue to the east, Thirteenth Street to the south, and Wexford Creek with its associated wetland to the west. Road dedication was taken at the time of subdivision to account for a future roundabout at the intersection of Cranberry Connector and Cranberry Avenue. The Cranberry Connector is expected to connect with the rest of the South Gate Urban Centre in the future.

The site is partially wooded and slopes downhill slightly from east to west towards Wexford Creek. A portion of the creek and wetland occupy the westernmost portion of the property where they are protected by covenant.

The surrounding neighbourhood consists of a mix of residential, commercial, and institutional uses. Adjacent land uses include the Nanaimo Fire Station No. 4 across the Cranberry Connector to the north, single residential dwellings to the northeast and east, the Nanaimo Parkway across Thirteenth Street to the south, and a large undeveloped portion of a City-owned parcel to the west. Nearby amenities include John Weeks Parks, the Boys and Girls Club, the Nanaimo Moose Hall, and a gas station with a convenience store on the east side of Cranberry Avenue to the north, and Chase River Elementary School to the south. |

DISCUSSION

Proposed Development

The proposed development is a six-storey family housing building with 42 dwelling units. The proposal is a partnership between the BC Housing Management Commission and the Snuneymuxw First Nation, and the development will offer affordable housing with supports provided on-site. The project will offer housing for families on their journey towards independent living with a priority for Indigenous families. Residents will be supported by Snuneymuxw First Nation resources and programs. The use is considered a Personal Care Facility in the City of Nanaimo “Zoning Bylaw 2011 No. 4500” (the “Zoning Bylaw”).

The proposed unit composition is as follows:

<i>Unit Type</i>	<i>Number of Units</i>	<i>Approximate Unit Floor Area</i>
Studio	6	38m ²
One-Bedroom	14	40m ² – 59m ²
Two-Bedroom	11	68m ² – 72m ²
Three-Bedroom	11	84m ² – 90m ²
<i>Total</i>	<i>42</i>	

The proposed gross floor area is 3,730m² and the total Floor Area Ratio (FAR) is 1.04, less than the maximum permitted FAR 1.25 for a Personal Care Facility in the CS1 zone.

Site Design

The building is sited in the eastern portion of the site with an “L-shape” footprint to maximize on-site amenity space. The principal building entry will be located in the northeast corner of the building. Surface parking is proposed between the building and Cranberry Avenue, and an enclosed outdoor amenity space is proposed between the building and the wetland at the rear of the building. No encroachment into the 15m setback from Wexford Creek is proposed.

Parking proposed on-site consists of nine surface parking spaces below a second-storey building overhang. Vehicle access will be from the Cranberry Connector to the north, with secondary access from Thirteenth Street to the south. The two vehicle entries will be gated and will allow for through-access for larger vehicles (e.g. waste collection and emergency response vehicles) without a turnaround on-site. Short-term bicycle parking will be provided outdoors near the front entry, and secure long-term bicycle storage will be provided indoors on the ground level.

An outdoor waste management enclosure is proposed in the Thirteenth Street right-of-way at the south end of the surface parking lot with a pedestrian connection to the building. An encroachment agreement will be required for this enclosure as a condition of this development permit. Staff support the enclosure within the right-of-way given that this portion of Thirteenth Street provides access to only one property (130 Thirteenth Street) and is not expected to be built to the full road standard.

Building Design

The proposed building design references the Snuneymuxw Nation's weaving tradition by alternating vertical and horizontal metal plank cladding. Visual contrast will be provided by varying wood-tone, red, and grey shades of cladding. The building layout is organized around a double-loaded corridor in each wing. A canopy is proposed as weather protection for the front building entry.

Exterior wall assemblies, windows, and glazed doors will be built to minimize noise impacts from the Nanaimo Parkway in accordance with CMHC acoustic criteria for interior spaces and the City's Nanaimo Parkway Design Guidelines.

Landscape Design

Landscaping is proposed throughout the site with a narrow buffer along the Cranberry Avenue frontage, planting beds in front of the building, and planting throughout the rear amenity space. The planting palette is made up of indigenous species including a medicinal garden. Removal of existing trees is proposed with replacement trees to include quaking aspen, western red-cedar, and Pacific dogwood. The multi-tiered outdoor amenity space will include a large concrete patio with raised garden beds, an accessible picnic table, a play area, and landscape boulders distributed throughout. Exterior lighting will include dark-sky compliant in-ground lighting and bollard lighting near the building entry and throughout the amenity space. A wood fence reinforcing the weaving aesthetic of the building is proposed to secure the perimeter of the site.

The overall development design is in substantial compliance with the applicable City design guidelines and provides visual interest through a unique and culturally significant exterior cladding and fencing pattern.

Design Advisory Panel

The Design Advisory Panel (DAP), at its meeting held on 2025-MAR-27, accepted DP1359 as presented and provided the following recommendations:

- Consider the necessity for extra fence height, especially on the front of the building;
- Consider using three pane window glass to mitigate the noise from the highway;
- Consider adding a window in the small nook near the elevator;
- Consider a covered bike parking area; and
- Consider the building height and how it will impact the neighbours.

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

- Revised the fence design to be semi-transparent along the street frontage;
- Incorporated CMHC-compliant windows for interior acoustic criteria; and
- Reviewed shadowing impacts which were found to primarily affect the Fire Station to the north.

Proposed Variances

Maximum Building Height

The maximum allowable building height in the CS1 zone is 14.0m. The proposed building height is 20.1m, a requested variance of 6.1m.

The *City Plan* future land use designation of ‘Secondary Urban Centre’ envisions typical building heights between 2 and 12 storeys. The applicant is requesting the building height in order to accommodate the compact six-storey building form and maximize the outdoor open space outside of the protected wetland. Through initial shadow studying, the building massing was not found to have significant shadowing impacts on nearby residential properties to the north and east, which are further than 50m away from the proposed building due to the road dedication for future roundabout. Elsewhere in the South Gate Urban Centre, a four-storey development at 1300 Junction Avenue was completed in 2024.

Minimum Flanking Side Yard Setback

The minimum required flanking side yard setback in the CS1 zone is 6.0m. The proposed flanking side yard setback is 5.0m from the north property line (Cranberry Connector) and 1.5m from the south property line (Thirteenth Street), requested variances of 1.0m and 4.5m respectively.

The flanking side yard setback variances are requested to accommodate the building footprint which is intended to enclose the outdoor amenity space in the rear yard. The flanking side yard variances have been reviewed for sightline implications from adjacent streets, and no off-site impacts are anticipated as the proposed building is separated from the edge of curb on both streets and there are no neighbours across either street except for the Fire Station to the north.

Maximum Fence Height

The maximum allowable combined height of a fence and retaining wall in the CS1 zone is 1.2m in the front and flanking side yard setbacks. The proposed perimeter fence height along the north, east, and south property lines ranges up to 2.8m when including portions on top of a proposed retaining wall, a requested variance of up to 1.6m.

Staff have worked with the applicant to ensure that solid portions of the 1.8m-high fence do not exceed 1.2m facing the intersection of Cranberry Avenue and the Cranberry Connector. In these locations, the uppermost 0.6m of the fence is transparent to ensure sightlines at the intersection and visibility of pedestrians while maintaining the weaving theme found throughout the development (see fence details in Attachment H). For portions of the front and flanking side yard next to the surface parking lot, the fence will be located on top of a retaining wall ranging up to 1.0m in height to account for future grades of the City street cross-section. The retaining wall will face internal to the site and will not have off-site visual impacts.

Minimum Required Parking

While the proposed development is considered a Personal Care Facility in the Zoning Bylaw, the Personal Care Facility rate in the City of Nanaimo “Off-Street Parking Regulations Bylaw 2018 No. 7266” (the “Parking Bylaw”) is based on ‘sleeping units’ which do not include kitchens in individual units. The proposed development includes ‘dwelling units’ with full kitchens and the

nearest relevant rate is the supportive housing parking rate of 0.2 parking spaces per bed. Using this rate based on the number of beds, the minimum required parking would be 15 parking spaces. The proposed number of parking spaces is 9, a requested variance of 7 parking spaces. Of the parking spaces provided, one will be an accessible space.

The applicant has advised that the parking rate aligns with the anticipated parking demand based on comparable affordable family housing projects. In accordance with the Council Policy for Consideration of a Parking Variance, the applicant has provided rationale (Attachment G). Some of the considerations to support the parking variance include:

- Site proximity to future Bus Rapid Transit and Secondary Active Mobility Routes as identified in 'Schedule 3' of *City Plan*; and
- Long-term bicycle parking (37 spaces) provided in excess of the minimum required amount

Staff note that had the units met the definition of 'sleeping units' without kitchens, then the required amount of parking would have been 9 parking spaces and no variance to the number of off-street parking stalls would have been required. Additionally, direction was received from the Governance and Priorities Committee (2025-OCT-31) to amend parking rates and remove minimum parking requirements in Secondary Urban Centres in the future.

In addition to the parking space variance, a variance is requested to the minimum required number of loading spaces. A Personal Care Facility over 2,800m² in floor area requires two loading spaces. No loading spaces are proposed. Given the proposed purpose-built family housing, the demand for loading space will be more like residential than institutional uses and dedicated full-size loading spaces are not expected to be needed. There will be opportunity for residential-scale vehicles to load or unload on-site in the surface parking lot without a dedicated loading space.

Staff support the proposed variances which maximize the building envelope outside of generous open space and support the intended programming for the building.

Community Consultation

BC Housing previously circulated information to neighbours in 2020 regarding the intent to develop affordable family housing on the site. Since partnering with Snuneymuxw First Nation and finalizing design details, the applicant has circulated a newsletter with more detailed information to the surrounding community in Fall 2025 (see Attachment H). Staff have not received any comments or concerns regarding the proposed development from nearby residents to-date.

SUMMARY POINTS

- Development Permit Application No. DP1359 is for a six-storey family housing building with 42 units at 1435 Cranberry Avenue.
- Variances are requested to increase the maximum permitted building height, reduce the minimum required flanking side yard setbacks, increase the maximum permitted combined fence and retaining wall height, reduce the minimum required number of off-street vehicle parking spaces and loading spaces.

- The overall development design is in substantial compliance with the applicable City design guidelines and provides visual interest through a unique and culturally significant exterior cladding and fencing pattern.
- Staff support the proposed variances which maximize the building envelope outside of generous open space and support the intended programming for the building. |

ATTACHMENTS

ATTACHMENT A: Permit Terms and Conditions
ATTACHMENT B: Subject Property Map
ATTACHMENT C: Site Plan
ATTACHMENT D: Building Elevations and Details
ATTACHMENT E: Building Perspectives
ATTACHMENT F: Landscape Plan and Details
ATTACHMENT G: Parking Variance Rationale
ATTACHMENT H: Fall 2025 Community Newsletter |

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