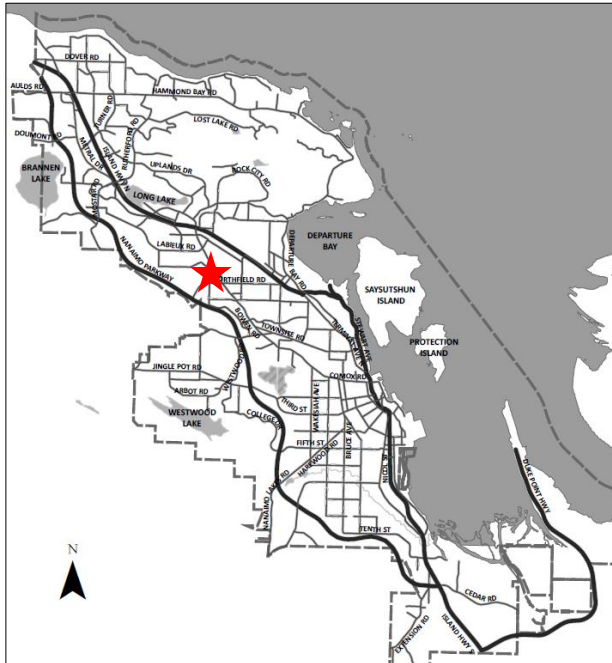


FOR: COUNCIL MEETING
 MEETING DATE: February 2, 2026
 DEPARTMENT: PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT
 SUBJECT: **DEVELOPMENT PERMIT APPLICATION NO. DP1386 – 2240 NORTHFIELD ROAD**



Proposal:
 A 211-unit multi-family residential development

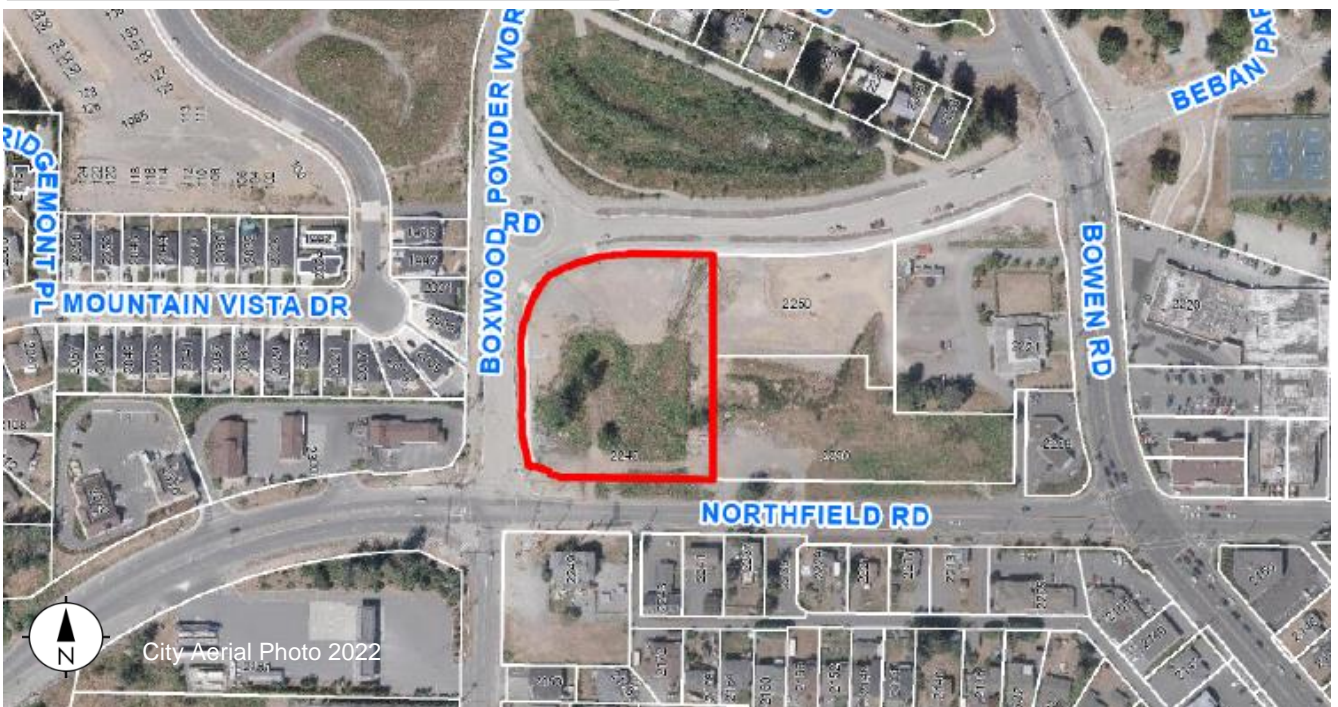


Zoning:
 COR2 – Mixed Use Corridor

City Plan Land Use Designation:
 Mixed-Use Corridor

Development Permit Areas:
 DPA4 – Abandoned Mine Workings Hazards
 DPA8 – Form and Character

Lot Area:
 0.969 ha



OVERVIEW**Purpose of Report**

To present for Council's consideration a development permit application for a proposed multi-family residential development at 2240 Northfield Road. |

Recommendation

That Council issue Development Permit No. DP1386 for a proposed multi-family residential development at 2240 Northfield Road with variances as outlined in the "Proposed Variances" section of the Staff Report dated [2026-FEB-02.]

BACKGROUND

A development permit application, DP1386, was received from Isabella Munro, Path Developments Ltd., on behalf of 1279779 BC Ltd., to permit a 211-unit multi-family residential (strata) development at 2240 Northfield Road.

Subject Property and Site Context

The subject property is located at a prominent (northeast) corner of Boxwood Road and Northfield Road. The property is currently vacant and relatively flat with some localized depressions. The parcel boundaries were established through subdivision in June 2025 and the site was cleared of vegetation to facilitate development as part of the Midtown Gateway redevelopment plans. The property was previously a brownfield site, contaminated by past industrial activity. Through subdivision and the construction of the Boxwood connector road, the subject property now has a continuous pedestrian connection to Bowen Road, Beban Park, local-servicing commercial services, and a frequent transit route along Bowen Road, all within 200m of the site.

The surrounding neighbourhood is characterized by residential development, commercial uses, a church and daycare, and light industrial businesses. |

DISCUSSION**Proposed Development**

The applicant proposes to construct a phased development including two six-storey multi-family apartment buildings (Building A - 96 units and Building B - 108 units), as well as seven three-storey townhouses. A total of 211 units are proposed including a mix of unit types (studio, one-bedroom, two-bedroom, and three-bedroom) in the following composition:

Unit Type	Number of Units	Unit Size
Studio	2	42m ²
One-Bedroom	114	47m ² – 73.8m ²
Two-Bedroom	88	74.2m ² – 91m ²
Three-Bedroom (townhouses)	7	151.4m ²

A minimum of 10% of the units will also be designed as adaptable units in accordance with the covenant secured through rezoning (RA469).

The total gross floor area for the development is 15,261m² and the proposed Floor Area Ratio (FAR) is 1.57. The COR2 zone permits a base FAR of 1.25 with a maximum permitted FAR of 1.69 based on the proposed percentage of underground parking and Tier 1 amenities to be provided, in accordance with Schedule 'D' Amenity Requirements for Additional Density of the "City of Nanaimo Zoning Bylaw 2011 No. 4500", including amenities such as:

- The development is located on a brownfield site;
- A minimum of 80% of the parking is provided underground; and,
- A parking space will be secured for a future carshare location.

Site Design

Vehicle access to the site is proposed from a new public road which will extend north-south through the property to connect Northfield Road and Boxwood Road. The two multi-family apartment buildings are oriented to maximize street presence, with direct pedestrian connections to the street and most of the parking provided below grade. A central drive aisle and surface parking area provides resident access to bike storage and waste management facilities. Publicly accessible plazas are provided on the northwest and southwest corners of Building A, in accordance with the covenant conditions as secured through rezoning. The townhouse building is oriented to face the new road in the northeast corner of the property. A network of sidewalks connect all three buildings onsite and to the adjacent street frontages.

The "Off-Street Parking Regulations Bylaw 2018 No. 7266" (the "Parking Bylaw") requires 262 parking spaces, including six accessible spaces and ten visitor spaces. Additionally, 106 long-term and 21 short-term bicycle spaces are required. The required long-term bicycle storage is provided within the under-building parking area and the short-term bicycle parking is located adjacent to the apartment building entrances. Each townhouse unit (3-bedrooms) will have two dedicated parking spaces located within individual garages and driveways. A parking variance to the total number of parking spaces is proposed as outlined in the Proposed Variances section of this report.

The proposed parking plan also includes tandem parking for nine two-bedroom units of the total 211 units. The applicant has confirmed that each pair of tandem spaces will be tied to a single strata unit and this requirement will be secured as a condition of the development permit.

Building Design

The architectural design of the proposed buildings is modern and minimalist with flat rooflines. The apartment forms have articulated facades with private balconies and strategically stepped massing to reduce visual bulk and enhance the streetscape. The townhouses provide a ground-oriented form, lower in height, with individualized entrances to add visual interest. Exterior finishes include a mix of contrasting light and dark metal siding and panels with reveals, as well as wood-like siding accents to add warmth and texture and to complement the character of the surrounding context.

Landscape Design

The site is bordered by generous landscaping and a number of trees that will provide shade at maturity. The surface parking areas are screened from street view and are broken up with

landscape islands to direct vehicle movements. Two large public plazas are proposed on the northwest and southwest corners of the site, complete with trees, outdoor seating, and broom finished concrete with a score pattern. Public art, to be selected, is proposed between Buildings A and B. A combination of trees, shrubs, and lawn are proposed throughout the site to provide privacy between units and areas for recreation. Ground-oriented units have an outdoor patio with privacy screening and landscaping. Dark-sky compliant bollard and pole lighting are proposed throughout the site and parking areas.

The proposed development meets the City's Form and Character Design Guidelines with complementary building forms and materials that enhance the streetscape; integration of landscaping, public plazas, and art to encourage social interaction and provide outdoor amenities; and a mix of unit types to accommodate a broad demographic.

Design Advisory Panel

The Design Advisory Panel (DAP), at its meeting held on 2025-JUN-26, accepted DP1386 as presented with support for the proposed variances and provided the following recommendations:

- Consider adding more three-bedroom units in Buildings A and B;
- Consider utilizing materials with tones that align with adjacent buildings within the neighbourhood;
- Consider enhancing the residential character of the townhouse units by incorporating design elements such as stepped parapets;
- Consider more programming in the plaza area, such as community gardens, varied ground plane treatment, or jointing patterns;
- Consider additional sheltered bicycle parking with two-point frame contact;
- Consider adding a commercial space;
- Consider increasing the overall tree coverage;
- Consider revising the surface parking layout to prioritize landscaping and reduce drive aisles;
- Consider relocating the loading bay;
- Consider connecting the buildings and adjacent programming with pedestrian pathways;
- Consider highlighting the building entrances;
- Consider moving the public art in the southwest area closer to the street corner; and,
- Consider adding a rooftop amenity space for the townhouse units.

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

- Revised the composition of exterior colours and finishes to better complement the neighbourhood character;
- Incorporated stepped parapets into the townhouses and further enhanced the ground level entrances;
- Revised the plazas to include three colours of concrete paving arranged in a geometric pattern, integrated with at-grade and raised planters and tables;
- Revised bike parking to provide a centralized, fully enclosed shelter at-grade, with additional spaces in the parkade, complete with two-point contact.

- The applicant has advised that a commercial space is not proposed as this is not aligned with the development.
- Additional tree coverage is not feasible due to structural constraints and limited soil volumes above the underground parkade; however, tree planting is proposed with robust landscaping strategically throughout the site.
- The surface parking layout was refined to reduce drive aisles and increase planting and pathways;
- The loading bay has been designed with finishes that complement and function as an extension to the public plaza;
- The site plan has been revised to provide additional pedestrian pathway connections;
- The apartment building entrances have been revised with double-height overhangs for weather protection and visual interest;
- The public area has been relocated to the front edge of the southwest street corner; and,
- The applicant also considered adding more three-bedroom units but maintained the unit mix which was based on detailed market analysis and to keep the price of units attainable for local purchasers.

Proposed Variances

Minimum Required Off-Street Parking

The minimum required number of parking spaces is 262. The applicant is proposing 228 parking spaces, a requested variance of 34 parking spaces. 172 of the 228 spaces are provided underground, with the remaining provided either under-building, within private garages, or at-grade screened by landscaping and building. All accessible spaces and long-term and short-term bike parking requirements are met.

The scale of the proposed parking variance (13% reduction) does not trigger the requirement for a parking study, in accordance with the City of Nanaimo's Policy for the Consideration of a Parking Variance. The applicant has provided the following rationale in support of the variance:

- Demographics of future residents - the unit composition primarily consists of one and two-bedroom units targeting first-time homebuyers and younger residents, as well as downsizers and retirees. Both groups demonstrate lower rates of vehicle ownership than family households. The proposed ratio of 1.08 parking spaces per unit aligns with actual usage patterns observed in similar developments within Nanaimo's urban areas.
- Site-specific constraints - the development site presents substantial challenges due to its history as a former coal mining operation. Comprehensive geotechnical and environmental assessments confirm that only approximately two-thirds of the property footprint can support underground parking structures without extraordinary engineering interventions and environmental remediation. Meeting the bylaw parking requirement would necessitate a second level of underground parking at prohibitive costs, rendering the project financially unviable and creating undue hardship.
- Transit Access – the subject property is located within walking distance to transit routes including routes #25 and #40 along Bowen Road and route #30 (stop adjacent to the site), with connections to other destinations (Downtown Nanaimo, Nanaimo Regional General Hospital) via the Country Club Exchange.

- Alignment with City Plan Mobility Goals and Objectives – City Plan objectives support sustainable transportation and reduced vehicle dependency. The development reinforces City policy given its:
 - Proximity to cycling infrastructure including the recent Midtown Gateway project upgrades;
 - Provision of secure bicycle parking for residents;
 - Connectivity to a robust pedestrian network along Boxwood Road; and,
 - Convenient walking distance to commercial services (grocery store, pharmacy, restaurants, etc.), public recreation facilities (Beban Park complex), and community services (church and elementary school).

Furthermore, the applicant has agreed to secure the following transportation demand management (TDM) measures as a condition of the development permit:

1. A statutory right-of-way for a (future) public carshare space onsite;
2. A bike repair station for residents in the underground parkade;
3. Commitment to provide a minimum of 36% of the long-term bike parking spaces as horizontal spaces that can be accessed by automatic doors for ease of use with larger commuter or cargo type bikes.

In addition, the applicant has contacted a bike share provider to accommodate a public bike share within the public plaza space onsite. This facility is desired in this location and although not confirmed at the time of writing this report, the bikes can be added at any time within the public plazas.

Staff have reviewed and accepted the proposed parking variance and TDM measures with the understanding that the variance aligns with the City's intent to move in the direction of reduced rates as vehicle ownership is declining; however, Staff also acknowledge the effectiveness of the TDM measures may be somewhat limited at the outset until there is more uptake on active transportation. Staff also acknowledge, however, that the subject property would likely be designated as a "transit-adjacent land" and potentially have lower rates, negating the need for a parking variance, based on the draft parking rates being considered through the update to the City's Off-street Parking Regulations Bylaw No. 7266. For example, the subject property if developed under the proposed new rates for this density would only require 109 parking spaces as a transit-adjacent land with the provision of required TDM measures. The applicant is proposing 228 spaces, recognizing that there is still market demand for more parking as transit service and frequency continues to grow near the site. Given the context of the property location within walking distance to commercial services and public amenities and transit, Staff recommend supporting the variance recognizing the potential for limited parking spillover into the surrounding neighbourhood.

Minimum EV Parking Requirement

The applicant has also requested a variance to reduce the minimum requirement for shared access to a Level 2 Electric Vehicle Charge Receptacle (or more efficient charger) from 25% of all off-street vehicle parking spaces within any common parking areas, to all visitor parking spaces (10 spaces).

All 228 vehicle stalls would have conduit to be EV ready in accordance with the Parking Bylaw, and as a condition of the development permit, access to Level 2 receptacles would be provided for the visitor parking spaces. The applicant has provided the following rationale in support of this variance:

- The proposed approach delivers practical charging access now while maintaining full future adaptability;
- Requiring 25% of all stalls to be fully equipped would impose costs on purchasers in a strata project, regardless of whether they own an EV.
- Because stalls are purchased and allocated by unit, mandating chargers in advance will increase the purchase price without matching actual demand; and,
- Providing the chargers within the visitor parking provides accessible charging where it is most needed, preserves owner choice, and reinforces the intent of the Parking Bylaw to provide EV infrastructure, in a way that supports housing affordability.

Staff have not received such a variance request since the requirement was introduced in the Parking Bylaw, however, it is acknowledged that there is an aspect of administration of the costs associated with installation and usage of the EV chargers, which may otherwise be simplified in administration in the context of a single ownership entity (e.g. a rental apartment building). The proposal does include 100% of the spaces to be EV ready (conduit) with the provision of some charging facilities, so Staff are supportive of this variance request.

Maximum Building Height

The maximum permitted building height in the COR2 zone is 18.0m. Proposed Buildings A and B are 18.29m and 18.18m in height, respectively. The applicant has requested a minor height variance of 0.3m to maintain standard ceiling heights (2.5m) on each floor by allowing a maximum height of 18.3m. No variance is needed for the proposed townhouses which are 10.13m in height.

The development complies with all other zoning requirements including building setbacks and lot coverage. The applicant has provided a shadow study demonstrating that the additional height will not negatively impact adjacent properties. Staff support the proposed height variance.

COMMUNICATION AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

This application does not require any statutory notification or community engagement. Engagement was done in 2021 through the previous rezoning application (RA469), which established the current zoning of the property to facilitate development.

KEY MESSAGES

- Development Permit Application No. DP1386 is for a proposed 211-unit multi-family residential development at 2240 Northfield Road.

- Variances are requested to reduce the minimum parking requirements and increase the maximum building height.
- The proposed design meets the City's Form and Character Design Guidelines, and Staff support the proposed variances.

ATTACHMENTS

ATTACHMENT A: Permit Terms and Conditions
ATTACHMENT B: Subject Property Map
ATTACHMENT C: Site and Parking Plans
ATTACHMENT D: Context Photos
ATTACHMENT E: Building Elevations and Details
ATTACHMENT F: Building Renderings
ATTACHMENT G: Shadow Study
ATTACHMENT H: Landscape Plans and Details
ATTACHMENT I: Schedule D – Amenity Requirements for Additional Density

Authored by:

Lainya Rowett
Manager, Current Planning

Concurrence by:

Jeremy Holm
Director, Planning and Development

Lisa Bhopalsingh
Acting Chief Administrative Officer