

1915 Cumberland Road: Rezoning Application Summary

Project Description:

The proposed rezoning of 1915 Cumberland Road to R-1E is intended to enable the creation of a small, community-oriented infill neighbourhood, primarily targeted at first-time homeowners and young families, to help meet the growing housing need in the community.

This will be the site of our future home, and as such, we are bringing our personal values to bear on our vision for the project. Our aim is to develop twenty modest-footprint homes of varied layouts, in a well designed neighbourhood with valuable community amenities that facilitate interaction, engagement and support among neighbours.

Key elements of this proposal:

- The proposed zone is similar in density-character to adjacent Burgess Road and Krebs Crescent neighbourhoods.
- Property ownership will be as freehold strata in a bareland strata corporation.
- Homes will meet and exceed STEP Code requirements, with important energy saving components like heat pumps and utilizing passive solar gain approaches.
- Community amenities will include a common house/ meeting space, small community orchard and herb garden, to be managed by the strata group; Gatherings and skill-shares will include bike maintenance, ski tuning, parent-tot meetups, and fruit harvesting and processing.
- Vehicles will be restricted from transiting through the property (with proper signage and physical barrier part-way down the strata access driveway). Note: physical barrier will be removable for emergency vehicle access.
- The site will be well integrated with the surrounding neighbourhoods, and its design will enhance walking and biking connectivity for the area, as well as access to Krebs Park (with green space and playground structure).
- Landscaping and natural features will be environmentally sensitive, including the creation of a habitat pond and use of native plant species. We are also exploring the use of permeable driveway surfaces and bioswales.
- The City of Courtenay's sanitary infrastructure expansion objectives will also be well met, with a new sanitary main right-of-way extending through the length of the property.

Conformance with Affordable Housing Policy

This rezoning proposal conforms with the City's Affordable Housing Policy, which sets out to encourage "compact community", "a variety of housing types", as well as the "provision of secondary suites".

This proposed rezoning will support these objectives by enabling relatively compact community, with modest lot sizes and home sizes, in walking/biking distance to shops, schools, etc. The R-1E zone is the most compact zone available for single detached homes. There will be some variety in home size and layout, providing attainable home ownership opportunities for middle income households with varied space needs. Some of the homes

will also be designed with secondary suites, which can create rental home availability, as well as mortgage-helper income for the homebuyers. Thoughtful site design, home layout and architectural design, and exteriors/ finishing will be coordinated to create a visually appealing aesthetic, with cohesive neighbourhood feel.

Relation to Arden Corridor Local Area Plan (AC LAP)

Our property is situated within the Arden Corridor Local Area and this rezoning proposal and future development proposal will seek to support the objectives of the Arden Corridor Local Area Plan. We believe our proposed neighbourhood development supports the Plan's vision statement, *"Allowing for environmentally responsible new developments that respond to the community's growth, that support a network of trails and rural roads, parks, cost-effective infrastructure systems and a diversity of housing and small home-based businesses."* Further information on how our proposal conforms to the AC LAP can be found within the submitted Sustainability Checklist.

Environment

Our development plan conforms with the environmental principles of the AC LAP, based on the following features: habitat creation, responsible stormwater management (maximizing infiltration, consideration of bioswales, retaining open-channel conveyance and creation of a retention pond), and a strong emphasis on tree retention and planting, including native species trees, shrubs and groundcovers, intended to enhance habitat values and soil stability.

Before contemplating development of the property, we engaged with the local watershed stewards (Millard-Piercy Watershed Stewards), as well as an environmental consultant to understand the environmental features of the site and their ecological value. The Stewards educated us on the connection of our site to the greater watershed, reinforced our understanding of the importance of stormwater mitigation, and explained their intentions to make downstream improvements, including the desire to daylight culverted areas of Tributary 10. We strongly support each of these values and objectives.

Our environmental consultant suggested that our project would be a good candidate for amphibian habitat creation, given the site's hydrologic function and grading, and our desire to access the property from Larsen Road, noting also its benefit in terms of stormwater management. As such, a Water Sustainability Act Section 11 Authorization request to the Province (MFLNRO) was made (and subsequently approved) to cross the small seasonally wet area at the Northwest end of the property, in consideration of building such a habitat (and stormwater management) pond. This new environmental feature will be designed to support amphibian life (not currently possible on the property), while buffering storm water from the city storm water system.

Below is an excerpt from the conclusion of the Environmental Impact Assessment, explaining rationale to support a 15m protection buffer around the pond and a request for certain exemptions from the AC LAP:

A recommended natural preservation area within the development plan includes a 15 m vegetation protection area around a 485 m² constructed Habitat/Stormwater (SW) Pond (Figure 1). The Habitat Pond is intended to offset the removal of 150 m² existing seasonally

wetted area within the new driveway prism that is currently isolated from the Larsen Rd. ditch channel. Because the wet area is isolated from the ditch it is not applicable for review under the *Riparian Areas Protection Regulation* (RAPR) although changes to it are subject to the Water Sustainability Act (Appendix B). As well, it has been determined to have little to no habitat function, will be modified under Section 11 Approval, and has been deemed “not environmentally sensitive”. As a result, it is recommended that the 415 m² isolated wet area be exempt from the City of Courtenay *Arden Corridor Environmental Development Permit Area* (AC-EDP) under Section 9.6.6 - #3.4. Furthermore, FLNRO Approval #1005012 for the construction of a habitat/SW pond is intended to create a feature with increased habitat benefits on the landscape.

In conversation with staff from the City’s planning and engineering departments, it was indicated that primary vehicular access to the property should be from Larsen Road. There will need to be a short extension of the existing stormwater culvert in that location, which is also contemplated in the Section 11 Approval.

These ecological features included in our plan will bring additional value to the neighbourhood, with habitat creation and the demonstration of stormwater-sensitive landscape and surfaces.

Housing

Our proposal supports the AC LAP’s housing objective: “*Maintain housing opportunities for a diversity of resident demographic profiles including young families, family members and seniors,*” and it conforms with the plan’s policies regarding lot size, infill development, and supporting rental. Our proposed housing plan is also consistent with neighbourhood character.

Mobility

Our proposal supports walking and biking connectivity, including improved access to Krebs Park. We are avid cyclists and intend to host bike repair and maintenance gatherings to support our neighbours in keeping their bikes in good working order.

Servicing

We are following all indicated procedures to ensure appropriate servicing. Our proposal also enables the expansion of the City’s sanitary network with a sanitary main right-of-way extending through the length of the property. Our site’s stormwater plan will conform with all of the policies articulated in the AC LAP.

Thank you for your consideration of our application. We look forward to working with City staff, councillors, and our neighbours, to make this community dream a reality.

Sincerely,



Tomas Nielsen



Tamara White