



## REPORT

Report Date: January 28, 2020  
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Meeting Date: February 11, 2020  
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TO: Vancouver City Council

FROM: General Manager of Planning, Urban Design and Sustainability

SUBJECT: Issues Report - Addressing Housing Priorities for the Ashley Mar Housing Cooperative Site and Other Social Housing and Inclusionary Housing Sites in the Marine Drive Station Area

### **RECOMMENDATION**

- A. THAT Council direct staff to consider accepting a rezoning application to consider redevelopment of the Ashley Mar Housing Cooperative Site at 8460 Ash Street and 8495 Cambie Street with building heights beyond those envisaged in the *Marpole Community Plan*, in order to provide social housing and market rental units, noting that the supportable height and density will be determined through an enhanced rezoning process, which will include robust public consultation, urban design and technical analyses as well as a public hearing.
- B. THAT Council direct staff to consider rezoning enquiries for other existing social housing sites, or sites designated as inclusionary housing sites, within the Marine Drive Station Area boundary defined in this report, through updated area analyses to determine their appropriateness and capacity for accommodating additional height beyond those envisaged in the *Marpole Community Plan* to address Council's housing priorities, generally using the criteria outlined in this report.
- C. THAT the passage of the above resolutions will in no way fetter Council's discretion in considering any rezoning applications or referral of any rezoning applications to public hearing, and does not create any legal rights for any person or obligation on the part of the City; any expenditures of funds or incurring of costs is at the risk of the person making the expenditure or incurring the costs.

## **REPORT SUMMARY**

The proponents of the Ashley Mar Housing Co-op in Marpole have submitted a rezoning application to redevelop the site with social and rental housing that exceeds the density and height of the *Marpole Community Plan* while prioritizing the delivery of affordable housing. This report outlines the policy, land use and urban design context to consider additional height for social housing and inclusionary housing sites near the Marine Drive Station area in Marpole in order to enable the delivery of more social housing and rental housing. An enhanced rezoning process is proposed to consider the application with public consultation, technical and urban design analyses in order to meet the intent of the policy objectives of the *Marpole Community Plan*, *Housing Vancouver Strategy* and the recently approved *Rental Incentive Policies*.

Specifically, the report seeks Council's approval for staff to:

- consider a rezoning application for the Ashley Mar Housing Cooperative site (the "Ashley Mar site") to replace the existing co-op housing, and to add additional social housing and new secured market rental housing; and
- consider other rezoning enquiries in the Marine Drive Station area as outlined in this report, for increased height to enable the provision of more social housing and rental housing.

Consideration of the Ashley Mar site application and potential future enquiries will allow for a detailed area evaluation by staff, and will include consultation with the general public, the local neighbourhood, and the Urban Design Panel, prior to considerations and decisions by Council at public hearings. This would essentially enhance the typical rezoning process to incorporate additional policy planning, urban design and engagement in an expedient manner to consider effective ways to add social and rental housing that is generally consistent with the overall intent of the Marpole Plan and transit oriented development principles.

## **COUNCIL AUTHORITY/PREVIOUS DECISIONS**

- *Marpole Community Plan* (2014) (the "Marpole Plan")
- *Housing Vancouver Strategy* (2017)
- *Rental Incentive Policies* (2019)
- *Cambie Corridor Plan* (2018) (the "Cambie Plan")

## **CITY MANAGER'S/GENERAL MANAGER'S COMMENTS**

The City Manager recommends approval of the foregoing.

## **REPORT**

### ***Background/Context***

#### **1. Sites and Neighbourhood Context**

*A Transit Hub* - The area surrounding the Canada Line's Marine Drive Station has seen significant changes in the last ten years as it transitions to a high-density, mixed-use transit-

oriented community hub as defined in the Marpole Plan. The highest developments in the area are located immediately east of the station, with the tallest tower at 35 storeys in height. Recent developments at the northeast and northwest corners of SW Marine Drive and Cambie Street has seen several new towers constructed, ranging in height from 14 to 32 storeys. These projects have all been approved under the directions of the Cambie Plan (See Figures 1 and 2).

**Figure 1: Map of Ashley Mar site (red outline) and neighbourhood tower heights**



*A Co-op Renewal Site* - The Ashley Mar site (8460 Ash Street and 8495 Cambie Street) is located within a three-minute walk from Marine Drive Station, approximately one block south of SW Marine Drive. It is an L-shaped site bisected by a City-owned lane. It is comprised of 11 parcels, with a frontage of 80 m (263 ft.) along Ash Street, 36 m (118 ft.) along Cambie Street, and a site area of approximately 5,884 sq. m (63,337 sq. ft.). The site is currently zoned RT-2 and houses the Ashley Mar Housing Cooperative, a residential co-op that was incorporated in 1982 following a bestowment of the site by the Federal Government. It is comprised of 54 two-storey wood-framed townhouses constructed in 1983. A rent roll provided by Ashley Mar indicates that the housing charges for existing residents meet the City’s definition of social housing.

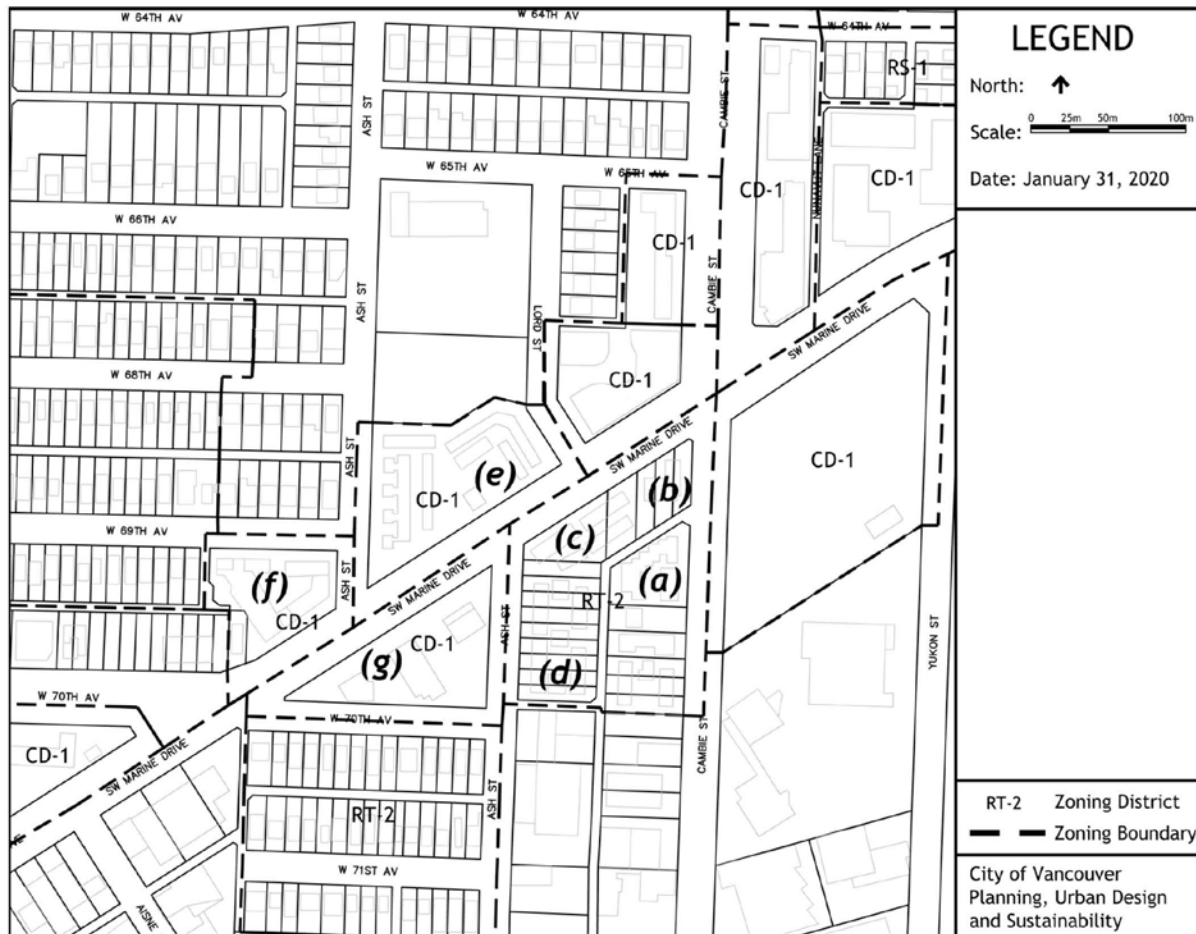
**Figure 2: Map of Ashley Mar site (red outline) and current neighbourhood context**



*An Affordable Housing Cluster* – The area is also home to a number of other existing social housing and cooperative developments, institutional uses, as well as other under-developed sites. These are marked in Figure 3 below:

- (a) 8427-8483 Cambie Street – strata townhouses and rental units, currently zoned RT-2;
- (b) 8401 Cambie Street – Vancouver Buddhist Cultural Centre;
- (c) 590 SW Marine Drive – Metro Vancouver Housing development;
- (d) 8460 Ash and 8495 Cambie Street – Ashley Mar Housing Co-op;
- (e) 575 SW Marine Drive – Vera Housing Co-operative (on City-owned land); and,
- (f) 704 W 69th Avenue – Columbus Residence seniors housing (on City-owned land).

**Figure 3 – Existing Social Housing and Institutional Sites Near Ashley Mar Site**



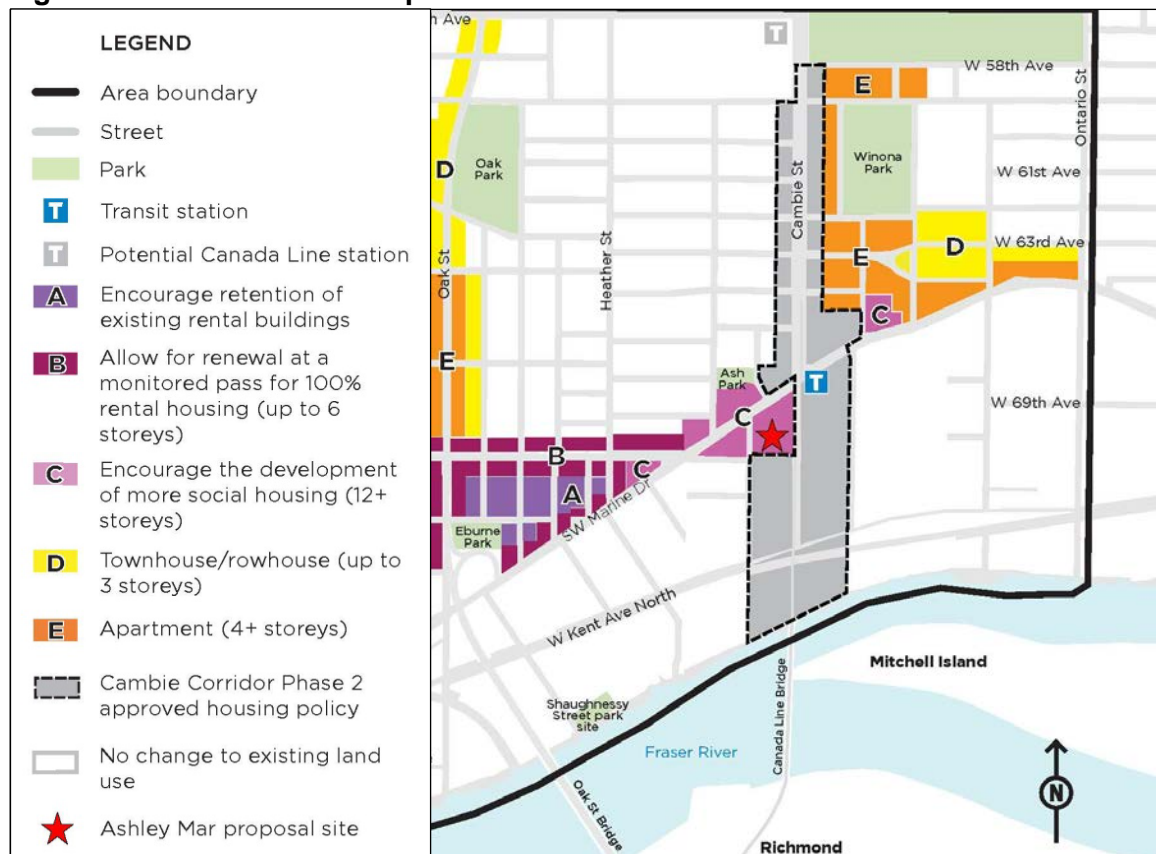
West of the Ashley Mar site is a cluster of low-rise commercial uses, including Denny's and Subway restaurants. The area directly south of the Ashley Mar site is zoned I-2, part of the South Vancouver Industrial Area and home to light industrial businesses.

## 2. Policy Context

**Marpole Community Plan (the “Marpole Plan”) and Cambie Corridor Plan (the “Cambie Plan”)** – The Ashley Mar site and other adjacent sites under discussion in this report are within the boundary of the Marpole Plan, adopted by Council in 2014. They are also at the ‘intersection’ with areas covered by Phase 2 of the Cambie Plan, adopted by Council in 2011. While the Marpole Plan provides direction for the subject sites in the quadrant area southwest of Marine Drive Station, planning policy in the Cambie Plan provided built form guidance for the other three quadrants surrounding the Station. Figure 4 below notes the boundaries of the two planning policy areas.



**Figure 4 - Boundaries of Marpole and Cambie Plans**



The high-density developments centred around Marine Drive Station have all been approved under the Cambie Plan, as part of the Marine Landing neighbourhood policy directions. The Cambie Plan anticipates that Marine Landing would evolve into a busy urban hub with a mix of retail, residential, and industrial uses. The Cambie Plan supports the provision of high-rise towers ranging in height, clustered near the Canada Line Station and the intersection of SW Marine Drive and Cambie Street, with the highest tower (35 storeys) located at the station-site. Commercial uses at the base of the towers are intended to activate a lively and walkable public realm at the pedestrian level. The Plan includes design guidelines addressing aspects such as public realm, built form, tower spacing and shadow management and it includes a public benefit strategy to deliver needed community amenities which support creating a highly livable experience for residents, workers and visitors.

The Marpole Plan recognizes the importance of replacement and increase of supply of affordable housing as well as new market housing for the subject sites located in close proximity to the Station and adjacent to Cambie Plan Phase 2 high-rise developments.

#### Ashley Mar and Social Housing/Inclusionary Sites

For the Ashley Mar site, the Marpole Plan supports new development up to 12 storeys in height, atop a four-storey podium. A mix of commercial uses on the ground floor with office uses on the

second floor is encouraged for lots fronting Cambie Street. No maximum density level is provided, but instead the density is determined through urban design performance.

The Marpole Plan's housing policies also provide directions for Ashley Mar site and other social housing and inclusionary sites marked as "C" in Figure 3:

- For the Ashley Mar site, and other sites with existing social housing, rezoning can be considered to renew and increase the stock of social housing, recognizing that projects can include a market housing component (rental or ownership) to assist with project funding. Where new development is proposed as enabled by the Plan, and social housing is included, modest increases in height and density can be considered to assist with project viability.
- On other sites identified for social housing, a target of 20% of residential units is to be provided as social housing through rezoning.

***Housing Vancouver Strategy*** ("the Strategy") – Existing co-op and social housing are key sources of affordable housing for low- and moderate income households in Vancouver. Many of these homes have rents or housing charges geared to residents' incomes, making them a truly affordable option for families, seniors, key workers, and vulnerable residents. Aging co-ops and social housing buildings are also facing increasing need to undertake major upgrades and address deferred maintenance requirements, as well as the uncertainty created by the expiry of operating agreements with senior levels of government. These units provide some of the most affordable housing within the city due to their age and subsidies that were provided by senior levels of government, and much of this housing was developed decades ago under previous affordable housing programs.

The Strategy includes actions the City will take in the next ten years to prioritize reinvestment in the existing stock of rental, co-op, and social housing, in order to protect this critical stock, preserve affordability, and minimize impact on existing tenants. To accomplish this, the City will work with its partners and with City-owned housing to retain and renew existing housing, while identifying locations where there are opportunities to redevelop in order to expand social and co-op housing supply. Further evaluation on a site-specific basis will be required to determine sites where there is redevelopment potential and other sites where retaining the existing building with capital re-investment is a better approach.

The Strategy set a ten-year target of 12,000 units for non-market and low-income housing, including 5,900 social housing units, 4,100 supportive housing units, and 2,000 co-operative housing units. In addition, it has set a target of 20,000 new secured purpose-built rental units over ten years, including 4,000 below-market rental units affordable to households with incomes between \$30,000 and \$80,000.

The 2019 Q3 *Housing Vancouver* update demonstrated that the City is underachieving in several of these targets. Through the first three quarters of 2019, 529 social and supportive housing units were approved, which equates to only 44% of the annual target. Intensification of existing social housing sites is an important component of meeting the targets for social and supportive housing. In addition, 649 purpose-built rental units were approved, which is only 32% of the annual target. Increasing the supply of non-market and low-income housing is a priority for the implementation of the City's *Housing Vancouver Strategy*.

### **3. Strategic Analysis**

#### **Ashley Mar Proposal**

The Ashley Mar Housing Co-operative has indicated that their existing buildings have come to the end of their useful life, and has partnered with a developer, Intracorp, to propose renewal of their housing through redevelopment of their site, for a mixed-tenure project consisting of three towers at 14, 24, and 27 storeys. The proposal includes one-for-one replacement of the 54 existing co-op units, approximately 70 additional social housing units, and approximately 450 secured market rental units. A maximum height of 81.5 m (267 ft.) and an overall density of 7.54 FSR are proposed.

While the Marpole Plan does allow for consideration of modest height increases for the inclusion of social housing at this location beyond 12 storeys, the rezoning application submitted proposes building heights (at 14, 24, and 27 storeys) beyond what would be considered a 'modest' increase. Multiple options were explored during the enquiry stage, including the provision of on-site strata housing to assist with funding, but the applicants have indicated that a co-op renewal and expansion project is not economically viable without additional height increases, and/or significant government funding. Internal review of earlier proposals confirmed these financial barriers, and the risk of setting a precedent for other co-ops exploring their renewal options having to rely on the provision of strata housing. Preserving land endowments for the continuation of more affordable housing tenures, including using a community land trust model, is generally a more preferred option, where possible.

While the proposed height is higher than what the Marpole Plan anticipated, taller heights are within the range of other recently completed developments in the adjacent three 'quadrants' around Marine Drive Station. Given the challenging factors cited above, staff recognize that the application represents an opportunity to explore achieving multiple City housing priorities, including the renewal and expansion of social housing in close proximity to transit, shopping, and services. In addition, the provision of secured rental housing provides improved affordability compared to strata housing, and would help with meeting City targets in providing additional secured rental housing. The approximately 70 additional social housing units would expand the social housing supply and assist in achieving the City's social and supportive housing targets.

Consideration of this rezoning application would allow staff to conduct detailed review to determine urban design performance of this proposal, including, but not limited to, liveability and neighbourhood impacts, and make recommendations for improvements. It would also enable an enhanced public engagement to give input and feedback on changes to policy for this area. The final supportable height and density may be below what is currently proposed.

Two pre-application open houses were hosted by the applicant team, as part of efforts to engage with the neighbourhood early on, and to gauge community support and interest in the project. Approximately 30 people attended each event, and feedback provided was generally in support of the proposal.

The Director of Planning recommends that a rezoning application be accepted so that detailed exploration, urban design review and technical evaluation can commence on the proposal. During the review stage, additional input will be sought through engagement with the neighbourhood and general public, and input from the Urban Design Panel, prior to its



consideration by Council at a public hearing. This process would enable broader public consultation and examination of the site within the area planning context, including consideration of the affordable housing cluster referenced above. The policy objectives of the Marpole Plan, *Housing Vancouver Strategy as well as the recently approved Rental Incentive Policies* would serve to guide this review.

### **Social Housing and Inclusionary Sites**

Applicants for other sites in the immediate vicinity will also likely express interest in exploring additional height beyond what may be considered under the Marpole Plan in order to achieve more social and rental housing. Should Council direct staff to receive and evaluate the Ashley Mar application and other rezoning enquiries, staff recommend that any future rezoning enquiries proposing change beyond what may be considered under existing planning policy will be limited to sites in the Marpole Plan identified for social housing renewal and expansion. These sites are labelled in the Plan as “Area C” on the Figure 8.5 Housing Priorities map (see Figure 4), and include the following addresses:

- Sites with existing social housing: 590 SW Marine Drive, 8495 Cambie Street, 8380 Ash Street, 704 West 69th Avenue, 8080 Yukon Street
- Other inclusionary sites identified for social housing: 8401 Cambie Street, 709 SW Marine Drive, 8471 Cambie Street, 8427 Cambie Street, 8483 Cambie Street, 600 SW Marine Drive

### **Criteria for Reviewing Ashley Mar and Social Housing/Inclusionary Sites**

The following considerations, at a minimum, will be used as a framework to evaluate proposals for the Ashley Mar site and the Social Housing/Inclusionary sites through the rezoning process:

***Housing Tenure/Affordability*** – “Area C” sites with existing social housing can be renewed, with the goal of increasing the number of social housing units and maintaining or improving the level of affordability being provided. Rezoning of these sites will be considered to renew and increase the stock of social housing, recognizing that projects can include a market component (rental or ownership) to assist with project funding.

“Area C” sites with no existing social housing must include either a minimum 20% social housing as part of the new development, or 100% of the residential floor area must be provided as secured market rental with a minimum 20% of the residential floor area for households with moderate income. The rental housing tenure and level of affordability will be secured through a Housing Agreement and Section 219 Covenant for the longer of 60 years and the life of the building.

***Pattern of Development and Building Heights*** – Consideration of additional density should meet the intent of the approved enabling policy with respect to building heights and pattern of development. Within the immediate station area, there is a general hierarchy of height and density associated with the four corners, with the southeast corner at the intersection of SW Marine Drive and Cambie Street acting as the highest point. New proposals should respect this existing pattern, with decreasing heights descending away from the station. Additional building height may be considered, provided that the height is consistent with the overall massing principles and role of the site within its local context and the city. Density should be carefully

located to preserve livability, open space, sunlight on public space, pedestrian scale and experience. An increase in height and density beyond what the community plan originally anticipated may be achievable for the sites while respecting these livability objectives. In all cases, a detailed review is required to determine the appropriate form of development, height, and density, with particular regard to urban design performance including:

- Tower location and spacing
- Tower form (including floor plate size) and orientation
- Podium height

**Shadow Impacts** – Evaluation of rezoning proposals for additional height and density should carefully consider any potential shadow impacts on adjacent sites and the surrounding area. Urban design analysis should be performed to understand cumulative shadow impacts in the Marine Landing neighbourhood for any new development proposed, with direction given to minimize any adverse shadowing impacts on public parks, childcare centre outdoor play areas, key public open spaces, and important retail sidewalks.

**Public Realm Improvements** – Both the Marpole and Cambie Public Realm plans provide detailed policy directions for public realm improvements to be achieved through rezoning applications. As the Marine Landing area continues to transition to a high-density, mixed use neighbourhood, any new development that proposes additional height and density is still required to meet the objectives of the public realm policies, including:

- Encouraging and supporting people to access sustainable transportation modes,
- Ensuring ground level uses at the base of towers and podiums activate a lively and walkable public realm for pedestrians,
- Facilitating community gathering by providing appealing, functional spaces for socializing and recreation, and
- Promoting and enhancing neighbourhood character by providing successful, desirable, and memorable places to live, play and work.
- Ensuring connectivity in the neighbourhood, such as to greenspace

For any large sites, additional opportunities for more setbacks and open spaces at the ground plane will be explored.

**Public Amenities** – Both the Marpole and Cambie plans include a Public Benefits Strategy (PBS) to provide strategic direction for future capital investments in their respective communities over the long term. These policies cover key areas that support livable, healthy, and sustainable communities, including community facilities, parks and open spaces, affordable housing, heritage, public safety, transportation, and utilities and public works.

As the Marine Landing neighbourhood continues to evolve into a high-density, mixed-use community, with potential additional population introduced to the area, staff will need to monitor and update the PBS to meet residents and workers' needs and to prioritize public investment through the Capital Plan process if necessary. In addition, individual projects being considered for rezoning will be analysed to determine if additional on-site public amenities, beyond the provision of affordable housing, can be achieved to support a growing population.

**Public Consultation** – Through the enhanced rezoning process staff will engage with the community, residents, and other stakeholders regarding changes to building height beyond approved policy. Feedback gathered through the process will inform staff assessment of each proposal. A consultation summary will be included in the rezoning report for consideration by Council at public hearing.

**Financial Review** – As part of the rezoning process, there will be a financial assessment of the additional floor area, consistent with standard practice to determine if there is a CAC. If a CAC is generated it could be used to deepen affordability or be utilized for other public amenities identified in City policies. The additional housing units, depending upon the tenure proposed, may be eligible for a DCL waiver, subject to the requirements of the DCL by-law.

**Other Site Specific Considerations** – A comprehensive review of each site will be completed as part of the rezoning process to understand potential impacts and mitigation measures on planned utility upgrades, transportation network, groundwater and/or other considerations.

### **Implications/Related Issues/Risk**

#### **Financial**

Subject to Council direction and as part of the rezoning process, staff will report back at the time of any rezoning referral report on applicable developer contributions (e.g. Development Cost Levies, Community Amenity Contributions, and Public Art), as well as proposals for on-site and/or off-site amenities for Council's consideration.

### **CONCLUSION**

The purpose of this report is to seek Council's approval to consider a rezoning application for additional social housing and secured market rental housing for the Ashley Mar Housing Cooperative site, which includes heights that exceed those that were anticipated by the Marpole Plan. The report outlines an enhanced rezoning process and criteria for staff to evaluate this rezoning application as well as future proposals to intensify other "Area C" sites that are identified in the Marpole Plan for the delivery of social housing and moderate income rental housing. This proposed approach will facilitate public consultation, technical and urban design review to address the intent and policy objectives of the Marpole Plan, *Housing Vancouver Strategy* and the *Rental Incentive Policies*. The addition of social housing and rental housing aims to address City housing priorities, and deliver much needed affordable housing for low and moderate income households within the City of Vancouver, while responding to the evolving urban design context of a mixed-use, high-density hub at Marine Drive Station and ensuring this new neighbourhood has adequate community amenities and advances creation of a highly livable neighbourhood..

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