



**CITY OF VICTORIA
ADVISORY DESIGN PANEL MEETING MINUTES**

FEBRUARY 25, 2026

**HYBRID MEETING VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS & Xwsepsum Nations ROOM
1 CENTENNIAL SQUARE**

The City of Victoria is located on the homelands of the Songhees Nation and Xwsepsum Nation

PANEL MEMBERS PRESENT: Marc Showers (Chair); Julie Brown; Nicholas Standeven; Tamara Bonnemaïson; Mark Hornell; Joseph Gowid; Jarren Butterworth

ABSENT: Kristina Zalite; Priscilla Samuel

STAFF PRESENT: Miko Betanzo – Senior Planner, Urban Design
Caner Oktem – Senior Planner, Urban Design
Geordie Gordon – Senior Planner
Rob Bateman – Senior Planner
Kamryn Allen – Recording Secretary

APPLICATIONS and ATTENDEES: **A) Rezoning Application No.00908 Concurrent with Development Permit No.00658 for 202 Harbour Road.**

Rob Pringle (Architect AIBC, Union Architecture), Kevin Lin (Architect AIBC, Union Architecture), Daryl Tyacke (Landscape Architect BCSLA, ETA Landscape Architecture), Shaun Smakal (Landscape Architect BCSLA, ETA Landscape Architecture), Niall Paltiel (Planner)

B) Delegated Development Permit No. 01021 for 129, 131 and 135 Gorge Road East – PH2

Matt Kolec (Director Development Intracorp), Dustin Dodd (Intern Architect AAA, Arcadis Architecture), Cassidy Viani (Associate Studio Manager Arcadis Architecture), Lauren Macaulay (Architect AIBC, Arcadis Architecture), Oren Mizrahi (Landscape Architect BCSLA, Connect Landscape Architecture), Susan Blundell (Biologist, WSP)

C) Rezoning Application No.00907 Concurrent with Development Permit with Variance Permit No.00299 for 517 and 533 Chatham Street; 530, 532 And 536 Herald Street

Matt Kolec (Director Development, Intracorp), Sasha Kosmajac (Junior Development Manager Intracorp), Nick Sully (Architect AIBC, SHAPE Architecture), Avery Titchkoski (Architect AIBC, SHAPE Architecture), Oren Mizrahi (Landscape Architect BCSLA, Connect Landscape

1. Call to Order

The Chair called the meeting to order at 12:02 p.m.

Panel Members and staff provided introductions.

2. Minutes

No minutes for adoption

3. Approval of Agenda

That the agenda for the February 25, 2026 Meeting be approved as presented.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

4. Applications

A) Rezoning Application No.00908 Concurrent with Development Permit No.00658 for 202 Harbour Road.

Rob Bateman (Senior Planner), provided an overview of the application and highlighted the areas that staff are seeking feedback on the proposal, including building massing/exterior finishes, street/path interfaces, public plaza design and long-term bike parking access.

Niall Paltiel provided an overview, followed by a presentation by Rob Pringle and Shaun Smakal.

The Panel asked the following questions of clarification:

- The plaza appears to function primarily as a gateway into the public space and future retail areas beyond. Is that aligned with your vision, or do you have a different concept in mind?
 - The plaza is intended to function as a mini/pocket plaza, consistent with the Dockside Green Master Plan, serving as both a visual corridor into the site and a safe pedestrian and active transportation connection, including access to Class A and B bike parking. We have coordinated with Bosa to ensure alignment with their future western building so this project acts as a complementary first phase within the broader vision. Our intent was to open the space toward the Mews entrance to create a more welcoming arrival experience and introduce landscape buffering from nearby vents and noise; however, limited design details for the adjacent phase have constrained full integration. While the current design functions well, it can be further strengthened as more information becomes available to better coordinate with the Mews entrance, retail expression, and overall plaza relationship

- It was interesting to see how ETA adapted to the recent changes to the Works and Services Bylaw requiring stormwater management and how that has been incorporated into the design. With respect to the City of Victoria’s Tree Protection Bylaw, there is currently no clear strategy shown to meet the requirement. On other City projects, staff have indicated that cash-in-lieu is not a preferred option, so clarification is requested on whether a similar direction has been provided here and whether there are opportunities to further explore on-site solutions, including the addition of more trees, to better address the bylaw?
 - It’s both yes and no. The primary constraint has been the slab location, and discussions have been paused pending further structural coordination to determine where slab depressions could accommodate trees. Referring back to the previously approved Development Permit, an SRW was established for the street-facing rain garden, which is where the new trees (five in total) are proposed. The property lines were adjusted to include the SRW as City property, meaning the majority of the landscaping and tree planting is located within the public realm rather than on the private parcel.
 - Staff anticipate that design revisions will likely be required for alignment with the Tree Protection Bylaw and the Works and Services Bylaw; however, a full assessment cannot be completed until additional information is provided by the applicant. The applicant has requested to proceed to ADP at this stage to obtain advisory input prior to advancing the first two bylaws. As identified in the report, this is an opportunity for ADP to provide feedback on increasing tree retention, landscaping, and stormwater infiltration. Staff are continuing to work through these details and have initiated discussions with Engineering. It is also noted that the project is subject to several existing legal agreements including a covenant requiring LEED Gold certification.
- Noting past concerns with vehicle carrier deliveries at the BMW dealership across the street, which have at times obstructed sidewalks and bike lanes, clarification was requested on how car deliveries will be managed on this more compact site to avoid similar impacts to pedestrian and cycling infrastructure.
 - The current plan is to utilize Harbour Road for vehicle deliveries wherever possible. Unlike the BMW dealership, this is intended to operate as a boutique dealership with significantly lower vehicle volume. Additionally, the Gain Group has other properties throughout the city that can accommodate larger deliveries, allowing vehicles to be offloaded off-site and driven to the location individually as needed.
 - Staff indicated that Harbour Road cannot be used for trucks so other solutions would have to be used. Such as having them parked elsewhere instead of trucks parked on the road.
- A question was raised regarding whether the café is intended to be publicly accessible or if it will function primarily as an internal amenity associated with the dealership?
 - The café is intended to serve both dealership patrons and the broader public. It is externally oriented with direct access and significant glazing facing the trail system on the Bosa/Dockside property, as well as internal access from the showroom. Public access is provided via both the plaza and the Mews connection.
- A follow-up question was raised regarding the discrepancy between the landscape

drawings, which show off-site plantings along the boundary, and the architectural drawings, which depict a more meandering Mews condition. Clarification was requested on what is formally being proposed as part of this application

- The Mews is still under design, and no additional detailed information has been provided beyond the initial concept. The meandering alignment shown reflects the original site-wide sketch provided at the outset of the development. Any refinement shown in the landscape drawings likely reflects access to slightly more updated information, but final details have not yet been confirmed. Our approach is based on the initial sketch of the Mews, where we've translated the greenery into a layout that connects the café and the plaza. While a detailed Mews design is not yet available, and there may be significant grade changes along the route, our intent is to establish clear connections without defining the Mews itself. As the first phase, we are ensuring the café and plaza remain accessible, allowing future design by Bosa to evolve around this connection.
- A question was raised regarding bike parking access, specifically whether cyclists will use the ramp or if the elevator will be available to accommodate bikes of that size.
 - The intent is to provide both options: cyclists can access the bike parking via the ramp or use the vehicle/pedestrian elevator if they prefer not to ride down the ramp.
- I guess with that there's sort of two areas here, there's the service area and the parking area. Is there, going to be any sort of security barrier here?
 - Yes, there's a there's another access point, another door right here to get into the service base to separate the service base itself from the parking area.
- How about access to the end-of-trip facilities and elevators, which requires passing through the service area, and whether this could pose concerns, especially if access rules change over time, or if it is intended solely for building staff.
 - Long-term bike parking is intended for employees only, as per the bylaw. Since there are no residents on-site, all users are building staff, so security and access through the service area are not expected to be issues. Operationally, the gate between the parkade and service bays is closed only outside of work hours, and during the day it remains open for employees. The Gain Group has successfully implemented a similar setup at their Audi dealership, providing reliable access to underground facilities throughout the workday.
- It was asked whether the new rezoning requirement, noted at the start of the presentation, is intended to accommodate a change of use from the previously approved Development Permit.
 - Yes, the previous approval was for office use only, and the new rezoning is required to accommodate the addition of vehicle sales use.
- A question was raised about whether the café could be located closer to the plaza, as that seems like a natural and more integrated location for a small café.
 - The café's location was chosen to primarily serve dealership customers and people using the internal site pathway, rather than as a standalone public café. As a boutique dealership, Gain Group emphasizes an urban, modern design with visibility into the showroom, rather than a traditional auto-oriented layout. The

glazing and placement support both showroom exposure and café access. While community input suggested adding a small café near the plaza, practical constraints within the dealership and manufacturer requirements limit moving it to a more prominent location, aside from potential signage enhancements.

- How about the possibility of adding a connection from the Mews into the underground parking to improve bike access, allowing cyclists to enter more easily despite the grade change.
 - There is a direct door from the Mews into the café, and a possible connection for bike access to both long-term and short-term bike parking. The building is designed to address the Mews, with visibility from the second-floor showroom, third-floor roof deck, and fourth-floor office, while also engaging the harbourfront and the pocket plaza.

Panel members discussed:

- It is noted that while the building is attractive for a car dealership, its location at the primary access point to Dockside may not be ideal. There is concern about the scale of the blank upper-storey wall and glazing, which may not feel particularly welcoming as an entry to the larger public space behind it. Overall, the design is strong, and if the city supports a dealership at this location through rezoning, the project is appropriate. The panelist found the rationale for long-term bike access reasonable and suggested that requirements for green roofs, stormwater management, and tree planting should focus on achieving LEED Gold and maximizing environmental benefits, rather than on the specific details of implementation.
- A panel member questioned whether consideration has been given to the building's long-term adaptability, noting that car dealerships are typically highly purpose-built, and asked whether potential future uses should be taken into account in the design.
 - Staff noted that the design guidelines for the area specifically reference flexibility and adaptability of use, and this has been raised with the applicant to ensure the building can accommodate future changes if needed. While there are no explicit policies prohibiting a car dealership at this location, the proposal must meet the applicable design guidelines. Staff are not opposing the dealership use outright; however, the project is expected to comply with the Development Permit guidelines.
- Noted a perceived tension between the adaptability objective in the design guidelines and the inherently purpose-built nature of a car dealership. They commented that, like other specialized building types, dealerships are designed around specific functional requirements and large interior volumes, which would require significant structural intervention to repurpose in the future. The member questioned how meaningful adaptability can be achieved beyond acknowledging that the building could theoretically be reconfigured over time.
- Staff clarified that while they do not design the project, they believe there are potential ways to align a dealership use with the design guidelines. Examples from other cities demonstrate dealerships with smaller display areas and more urban formats. While staff are not prescribing a specific solution, they maintain that the proposal should be designed in a way that accommodates the use while still meeting the applicable design guidelines.

- The panel member acknowledged that beyond the showroom, the servicing components, such as lifts and vehicle elevators, are highly specialized and difficult to adapt within a constrained footprint. They clarified that their primary concern is less about internal layout and more about how the building addresses the street and public realm, as those elements are more permanent and harder to change over time. If certain street-facing conditions do not fully meet the guidelines due to the dealership use, the member suggested exploring opportunities to improve them. They also noted that while the current bike parking arrangement may function for a single tenant, its suitability could change with multiple tenants in the future, though servicing areas may also be reconfigured in that scenario.
- A panel member commented that long-term bike parking should be conveniently located near end-of-trip facilities or exit stairs to minimize the need to walk across the parkade with equipment or bags. While they understand the current placement may be driven by spatial constraints, they suggested exploring whether program elements could be rearranged to provide a more convenient location.
- Bike parking is very secure.
- A panel member noted that the ground floor drawings suggest potential future flexibility that may conflict with the proposed linear rain garden along the building perimeter and recommended clearly committing to one approach to aid evaluation. They also identified an opportunity to strengthen the café by allocating more dedicated space along the Mews, including outdoor seating, to enhance its presence and functionality. While its current location addresses the walkway, expanding its footprint would better support it as an active use.
- A panel member noted that the building strongly expresses the Porsche brand identity, which is understandable from a corporate perspective and likely difficult to alter. While highly stylized and “space-age” in character, they acknowledged it would result in a striking and well-executed dealership if delivered as proposed.
- A panel member highlighted the visual interest created along the Mews, particularly the “peekaboo” gallery-like views into the Level 2 showroom. They noted this as a sophisticated design move and suggested the illuminated showroom could read as a glowing beacon in the evening, adding vibrancy to the pedestrian experience.
- A panel member noted that, after reviewing other Porsche dealerships, the team appears to have successfully adapted corporate standards to fit the specific site context and scale the building appropriately, as many comparable facilities are significantly larger. They also identified a potential opportunity to further activate or enhance the rooftop area beyond the solar panel installation, while acknowledging the positive inclusion of renewable energy features.
- A panel member suggested that the main podium roof could benefit from a more visible green roof treatment, noting that plantings visible from the ground would enhance aesthetics and contribute to stormwater management, while acknowledging the inclusion of solar panels. They also questioned the function of the small plaza, suggesting it would feel more purposeful if directly connected to the café. In its current configuration, they felt the space may be overly paved with ambiguous use, and proposed that increasing green space or incorporating a larger tree could strengthen the design.

- A panel member suggested lowering the parkade slab at the corner to allow for greater soil depth, enabling the addition of a substantial rain garden with meaningful planting. They noted this could better frame the building entry, enhance sustainability through visible green infrastructure, and reinforce the brand narrative of Porsche as forward-looking and environmentally conscious.
- A panel member noted that the south end of the plaza would benefit from further refinement, as the inability to move fully across the boundary may create a sense of frustration or a perceived dead end. They suggested strengthening circulation connections to make the space feel more purposeful and integrated, rather than functioning as an isolated pocket.

Motion: That the Advisory Design Panel recommend to Council that Development Permit Application No. 000658 for 202 Harbour Road be approved with the following changes:

- Consideration of a stronger interface between the proposed development and the adjacent mews including the location of the café, the plaza and the main building entrance
- The panel suggests either solar panels or a green roof are of benefit, however, the panel thinks the green roof with larger vegetation that can be seen from the ground would be most beneficial option and provide more visual and environmental public benefit
- Consideration for improving the relationship between the long-term bike parking and end of trip facilities.

Moved by: M. Showers

Seconded by: N. Standeven

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

B) Delegated Development Permit No. 01021 for 129, 131 and 135 Gorge Road East - PH2

Geordie Gordon (Senior Planner) provided an overview of the application and highlighted the areas that staff are seeking feedback on the proposal, including the pathway system, and any broader comments.

Matt Kolec provided an overview of the project and Dustin Dodd and Oren Mizrahi provided a presentation.

The Panel asked the following questions of clarification:

- What is the scope of this DDP?
 - As noted in the report, the ADP is welcome to provide comments on any aspects they wish to address. Staff are primarily seeking ADP's advice regarding the pathway system. Much of the massing distribution was considered during the rezoning stage; however, the ADP was not meeting at that time, so it was not reviewed by the panel. That said, the scope remains open, and members are encouraged to comment on any elements observed in the presentation or plans. Are there any comments the panel would like to provide?

- What's the status of the remainder of the project. While the current phase is before the Panel, clarification was requested on Phase 2, specifically, whether a Development Permit has already been approved for that portion of the project.
 - Phase 2 does not yet have sufficient documentation to proceed to permits. What ADP is currently reviewing is the form and character established through the rezoning for both sites. Rezoning for Phase 1 and Phase 2 has been approved. The Development Permit for Phase 1 has been issued and that phase is now under construction, this is the building located closest to the road.
- This presentation is for Phase 2.
- Appreciate the effort to not only provide a pathway connection to the waterfront, but to create a series of linked urban spaces that support the village concept and guide people through a sequence of “rooms” down to the water. With respect to the pathway, the illustrative materials make it difficult to determine the exact widths, and I understand they may vary along the site. Can you clarify the typical pathway dimensions (for example, 3–5 metres), where they vary, and how those variations are distributed? As well, what are the proposed boardwalk dimensions, including its overall width and cross-section?
 - From an overall perspective, the pathway width is informed first by the required building separation setbacks. That baseline dimension has been increased to accommodate accessibility requirements, including the necessary switchbacks. There are effectively two width measurements to consider: the perceived width of the space between buildings, and the actual clear walking surface. The overall space meets and slightly exceeds setback requirements to allow for daylight penetration and to create an appropriate transition between public and more private zones. The width also varies intentionally along the route to avoid a tunnel-like experience, alternating between more open areas and narrower moments, similar to a piazza sequence, creating a rhythm of openness and compression. Narrower sections are limited in length and designed with high-quality materials and active public frontages to maintain a strong public realm experience and avoid a sense of encroaching on private space.
 - The boardwalk is approximately 3.0 metres wide. In Phase 2 (to the right), the more constrained pathway segments, shown as the curved alignments, have a minimum clear width of approximately 1.8 metres. In Phase 1, the sidewalk is more generous, generally ranging from 2.0 to 3.0 metres, as it follows a more direct route and does not contend with the same grade changes. The minimum width across the site is 1.8 metres, while the shoreline condition is more generous. Pathway widths were carefully balanced with accessibility requirements: wider ramps require longer landings, which reduces their effectiveness in addressing grade changes and can result in excessive switchbacks. The design therefore seeks an appropriate width that supports accessibility and two-way passing while minimizing unnecessary landings. To avoid the perception of a narrow corridor, harder edge elements such as formal planter walls have been replaced with softer, ground-oriented landscaping and selective vertical planting to visually expand the sense of space. As the pathway approaches the waterfront, the landscape becomes increasingly naturalized to

create a stronger connection to the shoreline environment, while also responding to the significant grade change across the site.

- As a follow-up, with respect to the boardwalk elevation above grade, I appreciate the screw pile solution and the intent to keep the ground plane as undisturbed as possible. What is the proposed height of the boardwalk above grade, are we looking at approximately one metre, or something different?
 - Believe its 2 feet.
- Regarding the boardwalk, I'm a bit unclear about the city's concerns with this approach. Why is the screw pile solution causing issues, is it related to maintainability? As a follow-up, will the boardwalk be owned and maintained by the city, and is that the source of the concern?
- The city does not have fundamental concerns with the boardwalk design itself, in many ways, it is actually a preferable approach. The main considerations relate to long-term maintenance and the cost associated with this method of construction. Additionally, the broader context of connecting to Arbutus Park and Lotus Street, and how the boardwalk integrates with the larger pathway system (which the city would be responsible for constructing), also factors into the review. Overall, the design is strong, but these practical aspects are what the city is focused on.
 - One option we've been specifying frequently is the Wickcraft Boardwalk system, which is similar in appearance to the current detail but uses a more durable aluminum frame instead of wood. This could help address some of the city's durability and maintenance concerns, though the cost comparison is not fully determined.
- I understand how the pathway works around the two upper buildings in Phase 2 and between the lower buildings, but I'm unclear about the central area. Could you walk us through how pedestrians move through this space, how the grade changes are addressed, what the middle area is intended to be, and where it ultimately connects?
 - Essentially, the transition between the upper and lower buildings uses switchbacks on both levels, with dedicated rest zones on the lower portion. In the central area, the statutory right-of-way (SRW) passes through, which requires careful maintenance of grade and sufficient setbacks from the buildings, using only allowable surface materials. As pedestrians descend the upper portion, they arrive at the level of the upper building lobbies, providing direct access and elevated vantage points over the plaza below. Residents also have a roof deck overlooking this space. At the pedestrian level, the plaza offers a pleasant, accessible environment with varied paving materials, seating areas, and connections to amenities like the play area. The pathway maintains a gentle slope (less than 5%) to ensure accessibility and comply with life-safety requirements, including 15-metre access points for fire trucks. The underlying parkade follows the ramping, allowing the slope to be used efficiently for both vehicles and pedestrian circulation. Signage may also be helpful to guide people through this transition and down to the waterfront.
- So right now if your on the path above the triangle will there be a direct view to the water or is the triangle blocking it?

- At the top of the slope, you'll be able to see through the space between the two vehicles, not necessarily the water yet, but you'll get a sense of anticipation. Once you round the corner, the water will be fully visible.
- Are these path networks formed through a legal agreement or SRW across the site?
 - Yes, they are registered on title as part of the rezoning as a blanket SRW. They will come through the DPV process, and we are currently determining which option is the best.
- I think it's important to encourage the public nature of the path while ensuring there's a framework to prevent privatization. Can you describe the boardwalk along the site's boundaries, from left to right, and how it interfaces with the benches above? While the boardwalk will only exist across this site for a limited time, it's important to consider the interim conditions, particularly the elevation and grading.
 - One of our main goals was to avoid creating a simple in-and-out pathway. Because of the steep slope, accessibility cannot be provided everywhere, but there is a dedicated accessible route. The boardwalk, however, can function as a temporary circulation loop for residents or the broader community while additional connections are being completed. We focused on minimizing dead ends where possible. At one end, constraints related to fire truck access, garbage staging, and other operational needs limit connectivity, resulting in a soft landing. At the other end, the boardwalk slopes closer to the ground, allowing people to descend to the waterfront and continue walking. Neighboring users could also use this pathway to access the larger Gorge area for a more pleasant experience than navigating private roads. The design ensures that, even temporarily, the network feels intentional and connected.
- I'm not quite clear about the end of the driveway. Is it physically impossible to connect to the boardwalk with a stair or other transition? What is the height difference there?
 - The exact height difference isn't specified, but there is some retaining in place to accommodate fire truck access, which requires very specific grades. Limited retaining with the neighboring site and the need to meet the SRW height means the grade here is constrained. While it would be technically possible to create a gentle slope (under 5%) toward the adjacent property and tie into the waterfront, connecting pedestrians directly onto the road isn't desirable. A simple solution could be to add a small node at the end, just enough space for a six-foot bench, providing a short- and long-term destination so it doesn't feel like a dead end.
- Any access from the Gorge Road to the Board Walk? Have you explored all of these ideas?
 - The challenge is the 18-meter drop.
- On the actual road that comes down, are there sidewalks on that road?
 - The slope does not allow for sidewalks
- Someone who is physically able, would they be able to walk comfortably?
 - Yes.
- I notice there are a variety of materials used across the pathways. Have you considered

using a single, consistent material for the public path to clearly distinguish it from private areas and strengthen that separation through materiality?

- That's a good point and something we can consider. Currently, there are unit pavers, concrete, and wood. Some concrete is necessary for sloped areas, but we could potentially reduce the use of unit pavers in certain spots, especially at the top, to make the distinction between public and private areas clearer.
- Another approach could be using a tonal difference: the main public route could have a lighter tone of concrete or pavers, while secondary or exploratory pathways use a different color. This way, even if materials change, the tone helps distinguish the formal route from alternative paths. This could also be reinforced through signage.
- I had a question about a previous site plan included in the package, it showed what appeared to be a public swimming dock. Why was that removed?
 - When the project was first rezoned, the owner's intent was to retain the buildings as long-term purpose-built rental housing, which remains their primary business. While exploring the Burnside Gorge Neighborhood Plan, the city's goal to connect a boardwalk along the shoreline east and west was considered, and an initial investigation into a public swimming dock was conducted. A marine engineering consultant completed feasibility studies, which showed that due to tidal conditions and the shallow flat in front of the site, the dock would only be accessible for limited periods. Constructing a dock far enough into the water to maximize usability would be costly and complex, requiring screw piles or similar methods to minimize environmental disturbance. Additionally, with Phase 1 currently under construction and rental units being delivered, the team wanted to focus on ensuring the economic viability of the project before committing to a boardwalk or dock. Approvals for a dock would also require multiple external authorities, such as DFO, making the process lengthy and expensive. For these reasons, the dock was removed from the current plan.

Panel members discussed:

- The public pathway has many strong design elements and offers significant benefits over the rezoning plans, creating a beautiful, active, and safe landscaped space. To strengthen its public feel, consistent materials or colors could signal the main route, the central triangular amenity could be adjusted to avoid sharp turns and improve visibility, and the boardwalk could be used more selectively, limited to areas requiring grading or tree retention while standard durable pathways are used elsewhere.
- The waterfront should be accessible from Gorge Road, both physically and visually. The original design achieved this, but under the current proposal, the connection is less clear and feels more restricted.
- For kids on skateboards or scooters, the quickest route to the waterfront is unlikely to follow the meandering pathway, they'll find their own way if no clear path exists. While there may not be enough space for a fully separate pathway along the driveways, traffic calming measures and recognition of shared space could help. Both ends of the site could serve as small nodes to support looping flows and avoid dead ends. Overall, the variation in building massing, articulation, and material treatment is successful for such a large, dense project. Unifying the pathway materials would further strengthen the public route and make it clearly identifiable.

- This may be more of a city-side question, but would the City be installing official signage at the driveway, such as a standard “City of Victoria - Pathway Connection” sign, to give the public confidence that this is an official route? Would such signage only be installed at the street, or does the City ever place signs on private property as well?
- Without reviewing the SRW terms, it may be within our rights to install signage within the SRW itself, but primarily it would likely be located at Gorge Road to indicate the connection.
- The proposed design creates numerous beautiful public moments and goes above and beyond in providing public amenities.

Motion: That the Advisory Design Panel recommend to staff that Delegated Development Permit Application No. 01021 for 129/131/135 Gorge Rd. East be approved with the following changes:

- More direct public pedestrian connection through the center of phase 2
- Using one common material or colour for the common path
- Have a stair connection on the East end of the boardwalk up to the street
- Allowing use of the lane by pedestrians as a shared space

Moved By: M. Hornell

Seconded By: J. Gowid

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

C) Rezoning Application No.00907 Concurrent with Development Permit with Variance Permit No.00299 for 517 and 533 Chatham Street; 530, 532 And 536 Herald Street

Caner Oktem (Senior Planner - Urban Design) provided an overview of the application and highlighted the areas that staff are seeking feedback on the proposal, regarding built form/massing, pocket park, through-block walkways, and courtyard livability.

Matt Kolec provided an overview of the project and Nick Sully and Oren Mizrahi provided a presentation.

The Panel asked the following questions of clarification:

- I have a question about the north end of the pocket park. Currently, there is some sense of commercial use in that area, does Le Fevre Developments still have their office there? In the proposed ground-level plan, it looks like townhouses are planned along the back of the park. Was any consideration given to including ground-level retail or commercial space here, which could provide daytime activity, customer presence, and help animate the space?
 - We had the same question about activating the north end of the pocket park. While there is retail on Chatham Street, we considered introducing pop-up retail in the pocket park, similar to examples in Vancouver like Batch at Kitsilano Beach or West

Vancouver's seawall, which can draw visitors and animate the space. We also explored live-work units for the ground-level townhouses but determined that without strong street visibility or frontage, retail would not be viable. The commercial front is therefore limited to Chatham and Herald Street-facing sides. The courtyards provide a transition between commercial and residential spaces: on one side, the commercial frontage offers transparency and views into the courtyard, while the ground-level townhouses on the south side provide semi-public residential activity, ensuring the pocket park remains active and "eyes-on-the-space" even after commercial hours.

- Victoria doesn't have as many street issues as other Canadian cities, but the proposed passage does look inviting for shelter on a rainy day. Its layout is somewhat reminiscent of the linked passages between Johnson and Yates Streets, which experienced longstanding street disorder and were not gated. While that area currently doesn't seem to have problems, as the city grows, similar issues could emerge. What are your thoughts on addressing this potential?
 - We agree, and this was considered from the outset of the project. We are proposing gates at both ends of the passage, one at the Chatham Street entrance and another on the south side along the pocket park. From our understanding, the City supports gated access at both sides, and this will be coordinated through the statutory right-of-way to enable public access, ideally from dusk to dawn, with oversight by the building manager.
- Can you comment on the designs of the gates?
 - The gates have not been fully refined yet, but the idea is to create something almost like artwork, an iron gate that slides or swings and incorporates a sense of heritage.
- It looked relatively small on the plans
- Are there also Plans for gates or control points at the residential court?
 - Yes, the gates share a similar design language, running north-south perpendicular to the direction of travel. As we work on the pocket park landscape design, we plan to integrate the material language of the gates to create clarity, balancing transparency and security. The courtyard gates are intended to remain closed with fob access for residents only, whereas the passage and pocket park gates would be open during the day and not directly experienced by the public. The design intent is for the gates to fold or integrate into the walls when open, and we are still refining exactly how to achieve this.
- I noticed on some of the site plans there's a small stair near the Ironworks courtyard. Is there a possible connection there, or is it just shown for reference?
 - That's a very interesting observation. The Ironworks courtyard is elevated about two stories, and the stair shown connects from an existing parkade door at the property line down to the courtyard, which creates this unusual condition. The courtyard circulation has been designed generously, about 1.5 meters on each side, or 3 meters north-south, to maximize light and natural ventilation. Expanding circulation further for drop-down areas, benches, or interstitial spaces would reduce light and airflow, so a balance was needed. The circulation is intentionally curved at north-south to east-west intersections to ease movement and create

wider opportunities for stopping, chatting, or enjoying the space, while encouraging people to migrate up to the roof garden.

- I had a comment on some of the renderings regarding the guardrails. The amount of guard detail looks a bit jarring, so it might be worth refining them to create more visual interest in the courtyard.
 - That’s a good point. The picket design is sometimes used intentionally to provide oblique privacy, viewing along the pickets gives some screening, while direct transparency is maintained across the space. This allows residents to see only a few neighboring units rather than the full length of the building, providing a subtle sense of privacy within a close-knit cluster of units.
- Thank you for addressing the Chinatown context and neighboring heritage buildings. Could you explain how the gate would be operated and managed to remain both secure and accessible? In particular, how will it prevent issues like vandalism or loitering while still feeling inviting to the public?
 - The primary security measure is the operable gates. The intention is for the City to allow language in the statutory right-of-way so the gates can be open during the day (dawn to dusk) and closed at night to prevent loitering or other undesirable activity. CPTED principles are also applied through the design to minimize hidden areas and maximize visibility. The gates will be managed to ensure proper locking and operation, preventing tampering. During the day, the flow of people and “eyes on the street” from adjacent residential units help maintain safety. At night, closing the gates limits access while the design and site circulation minimize hidden or secluded spaces. Overall, the combination of controlled gate access, active edges, and careful ground-level design helps balance security with a welcoming public space.
- Regarding the design of the private open space in the pocket park, the pathways and planters have gentle, flowing curves that echo the residential courtyard walkways. At the end, the ramp and stairs have a different character to address the grade change. Did you explore alternative ways to navigate that grade change that might better unify the overall design?
 - Yes, we explored other options. In earlier phases, the passage was slightly differently aligned, and we considered a sweeping, curved ramp to navigate the grade change. However, such a ramp would require more depth, extending over roughly a 5-meter section, and would take away from usable park space. We also looked at designs with large facing walls or a circular “cup-shaped” ramp, but ultimately these options limited other aspects of the park design, so they were abandoned.
- There’s also some historical context for the ramp and stair near the larger staff area, which have a fairly rectilinear flow. While this wasn’t visible in the earliest photographs, it appears to have been added in the 1920s, creating a relationship between that historical language and the design you’re proposing.
- On the Main Street façade on the north side, the architectural articulation uses different brick types, including column-like engaged elements. Can you explain how this relates to the actual floor plate? Are these elements applied, or do they reflect changes in plane between the red and muted neutral brick?

- Yes, a lot of thought went into creating both a tripartite elevation and subtle in-plane articulation. Within the larger red and grey brick masses, a finer grain is introduced that projects slightly, adding depth and visual interest. Some of these elements align with structural columns and relate back to the commercial level, providing a logical structural connection upward. There's also a secondary rhythm tied to the unit layout, and the masonry coursing adds an additional finer grain within that pattern. This material articulation is intentional and fully intended to be expressed on the façade.

Panel members discussed:

- I really like the presentation. The site is impressive, and they've maintained much of the existing character, which really enhances the overall design.
- It's great to see a former parking lot being transformed into a proper community amenity. The internal courtyard remains connected to the street, allowing access to the units, reflecting a design paradigm envisioned in planning 15–20 years ago. Extending this approach further north into the Rock Bay area bodes well for potential development across the street from this project.
- Regarding staff questions on courtyard livability, the applicant's description is accurate. While the space won't be highly active and will be somewhat shaded, living around a courtyard like this offers much better livability compared to a standard double-loaded interior corridor.
- The project is generous in many ways, particularly the daylighted external circulation. Step code compliance may be a challenge, but that's for the applicant team to resolve. The grade change presents opportunities to program courtyard activities, such as stadium seating within the slope. The Chatham façade could benefit from more play in the elevation, perhaps by adjusting the red mass or slightly reducing the setback by about 300mm. Overall, the design is sophisticated and exciting, with interesting lane conditions and contemporary extensions. Acoustics and soffit detailing should be considered, but the design team appears capable. Linking the project with the Ironworks building will create a visually strong Chatham Street, with a pleasing combination of red brick and steel façade.
- I agree with the previous comments. Comparing the upper-level circulation to a typical apartment corridor, it's much better, but it could be further enhanced with small elements like plantings, a bench, or perhaps something on the railing to create a casual spot for people to meet.
- I think there's a lot of opportunities. I think there are many opportunities to break up the somewhat unrelenting nature of the guardrails. I'm confident the design team can handle this, so I would support Option One.
- The façade feels a bit harsh, but some landscaping could help soften it. For City staff, it's worth noting that the Ironworks building had minimal greenery, just sparse, struggling trees in grates, and this project provides an opportunity to improve that.
- Does Chatham not get boulevards and trees?
 - Staff are interested in street trees. It is the underground utilities that are causing complications, but it is on our radar.

Motion: That the Advisory Design Panel recommend to council that Development Permit with Variances Application No.00299 for 517-533 Chatham Street; 530-536 Herald Street be approved as presented.

Moved By: M. Hornell

Seconded By: M. Showers

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

5. Adjournment

The February 25, 2026 Advisory Design Panel meeting was adjourned at 4:11 p.m.