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## REPORT TO ADVISORY PLANNING COMMISSION

**DATE:** November 17, 2025

**REPORT:** DEV 25-087

**FROM:** Deepa Chandran  
Manager of Planning & Climate Readiness

**FILE:** 3060-20/D25-07

**SUBJECT:** Form & Character Development Permit with variance, for 3879 Alfred Avenue (BC Housing Supportive Housing & Emergency Shelter)

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### RECOMMENDATION:

THAT the Advisory Planning Commission recommends that Council approve variance requests submitted as part of the Form and Character Development Permit application D25-07, for the proposed BC Housing Supportive Housing development at 3879 Alfred Avenue, legally described as Lot A District Lot 5289 Range 5 Coast District Plan EPP142505, by varying table 2.10.4 of the Town of Smithers Zoning Bylaw to:

- a) Reduce the total number of on-site bike storage spaces required from 40 to 35; and
- b) permit 14 of the proposed 35 bike storage spaces to be of the 'Class 2' category, instead of requiring all bike storage spaces to meet the 'Class 1' standards.

### BACKGROUND:

Application: Recognizing the increasing need to support the housing needs of precariously housed individuals in Smithers area, BC Housing proposed a supportive housing project in late 2023, involving three parcels located on Alfred Avenue, next to the Town Hall, and consequently initiated zoning amendment process. As part of the rezoning process, the proponent had undertaken community engagement activities in February 2024 – both online and in-person -- to introduce the project to the community and invite initial feedback. In Spring 2024, BC Housing purchased the subject parcels upon the completion of the rezoning process, and consolidated them into one lot (see **Attachment 1**).

CAO <input type="checkbox"/>	Dir/FIN <input type="checkbox"/>	PCSO <input type="checkbox"/>	Agen Date: November 26, 2025 Closed Agen Date: Agenda Placement: APC Other:
Dir/CS <input type="checkbox"/>	Dir/DS <input type="checkbox"/>	EC/DEV <input type="checkbox"/>	
EXEC. ASST <input type="checkbox"/>	Dir/OPS <input type="checkbox"/>	REC <input type="checkbox"/>	
HR <input type="checkbox"/>	Dir/COM <input type="checkbox"/>	BLDG INS <input type="checkbox"/>	
MAYOR <input type="checkbox"/>	AIRPORT <input type="checkbox"/>	PLANNER <input type="checkbox"/>	
COUNCIL <input type="checkbox"/>	FIRE <input type="checkbox"/>	WEBSITE <input type="checkbox"/>	

On October 21, 2025, the Town received a Form and Character Development Permit application from BC Housing for the proposed housing development. As per the plans submitted, the proposed development on the consolidated lot will include 40 supportive housing units and 20 emergency shelter units contained in 5 rooms. The first floor of the 3-storey development will contain emergency shelter and supportive services while the second and third floors will exclusively contain the supportive housing units.

Given that the proposed design involves varying bike parking requirements established by section 2.10 of the Town of Smithers Zoning Bylaw, as per the Town of Smithers Development Procedures Bylaw, the application must be presented before the Advisory Planning Commission (APC) for its review and recommendation to Council. Design Plans submitted as part of DP application and relevant from a variance perspective are provided as **Attachment 2** of this report. As the APC does not review DP applications, it is intended that the APC review and discussion pertaining to this application will focus on the bike storage-related variances requested rather than on the design elements.

Community Engagement: At the community engagement sessions held as part of the rezoning process, BC Housing had confirmed its intent to work with the community to evolve a facility design that meets the community's needs and expectations. Consequently, in spring 2025, BC Housing engaged directly with the Town of Smithers and other community partners. These included the Smithers Situation Table (with membership from 21 community groups in Smithers area), the Witset First Nation, Dze K'ant Friendship Society, RCMP, Northern Health, and BC Corrections. The design plans submitted as part of the DP application has integrated feedback received from the community partners. At the time of drafting this report, BC Housing is working towards sending a community update letter to property owners / residents within a 200 m-buffer around the subject property. BC Housing is also planning to hold a second round of public engagement session in Spring 2026, to introduce the final design and the approved facility operator to the community.

Official Community Plan and Zoning: The subject property is designated Downtown Commercial / High Density Residential in the Official Community Plan (OCP) Bylaw No. 1935 and zoned CD-1 Comprehensive Development 1 in the Town of Smithers Zoning Bylaw No. 1987 (see **Attachment 3**). It also forms part of the 'Downtown Commercial' category of Form and Character Development Permit Areas in the Town, as established by Map.7 of the OCP.

## **DISCUSSION:**

**A) Form and Character Development Permit:** As permitted by s.488 of the *Local Government Act*, developments within parcels that form part of the Development Permit Areas (DPAs) established by the Town of Smithers OCP Bylaw are required to obtain a Development Permit from Council. Given the subject development's location within the downtown core, the proposed development is required to consider the general design guidelines and the specific 'downtown commercial' DP guidelines

established by the OCP. As DP review is not within the scope of APC's role, this report does not include analysis on the design details of the proposed development.

**B) Variance Request:** Section 490 (1) (a) of the Local Government Act allows local governments to issue a Development Permit that varies standards established either by the Zoning Bylaw or Subdivision and Development Bylaw. Section 490 (3) of the above legislation also restricts that a DP shall not vary use or density standards established by the Zoning Bylaw. Integrating the variance component into the DP application process -- instead of submitting two separate applications -- supports a more efficient development approval process while also offering cost savings to the proponents.

As per section 2.10.4 of the Zoning Bylaw (see **Attachment 4**), specific categories of commercial and residential developments must meet the minimum bike storage requirements, falling under the following categories:

*“Class 1” means a secure, weather-protected bicycle parking facility used to accommodate long-term parking, such as for residents or employees, usually within a building or covered, fenced area; and*

*“Class 2” means a short-term visitor bicycle parking facility that may offer some security, and may be partially protected from the weather, for example a bicycle rack at a building’s entrance*

The bike storage requirements were added to the Zoning Bylaw in 2022, with the intent to encourage active transportation and support environment-friendly transportation options, helping to bring down Green House Gas (GHG) emissions. For apartment developments – which is similar to the proposed supportive housing development – a ‘class 1’ bike storage space is required for every dwelling unit. As the proposed design plans do not meet the minimum bike parking standards established by the Zoning Bylaw, the subject DP application includes variance requests for the following items:

- a) to reduce the total on-site bike storage required to 35, instead of a minimum of 1 space per every supportive housing unit, or 40 spaces in total; and
- b) to permit a combination of ‘class 1’ and ‘class 2’ bike storage options, instead of requiring all bike storage spaces to meet ‘class 1’ standards.

As per the proposed parking plan, 21 of the proposed 35 bike storage spaces will meet ‘class 1’ standards, while the remaining 14 spaces will be designed to meet ‘class 2’ standards. The ‘class 1’ bike storage stalls will be located close to the rear exit of the supportive housing section of the building while the ‘class 2’ storage areas, arranged in two bike racks, will be located close to the main entrance areas to the emergency shelter and supportive housing uses (see **Attachment 2**).

Staff support the applicant's request for the above variances for the following reasons:

- a) The subject property is well connected to the surrounding areas and is part of a highly walkable neighbourhood. The off-site works that will be completed as part of the development will further improve the accessibility of the site.

- b) The property's location in downtown core ensures that all support services and shopping areas are available within a 5-10 comfortable walking distance.
- c) The property is located close to a public transit stop / route, ensuring an easy alternative transportation option, especially for trips outside the town or that involve longer distance.
- d) The proposed reduction in bike storage amounts to 12.5% of the requirements. Given that supportive housing units are intended to support precariously housed individuals rather than serving families, the proposed reduction in bike storage is unlikely to have any adverse effects on the residents' wellbeing.

**POLICY CONSIDERATIONS / LEGISLATION:**

Staff recommendation aligns with sections 488 and 490 of the *Local Government Act*.

**ENVIRONMENTAL / ACCESSIBILITY IMPLICATIONS:**

The approval of the requested variance is unlikely to have adverse environmental or accessibility impacts of the

**CONCLUSION:**

Given the location of the development in downtown core -- within comfortable walking distance from support service provider agencies and commercial areas -- the bike parking-related variances requested as part of the DP application are unlikely to have adverse impacts on the tenants. Hence, staff support the approval of the Development Permit with the variances requested.

**COMMUNICATIONS:**

In compliance with the requirements of *the Local Government Act*, *Town of Smithers Development Procedures Bylaw*, and *Town of Smithers Public Notice Bylaw*.

**ALTERNATIVE:**

- Recommend Council to deny the variances requested as part of the Form and Character Development Permit application.

**ATTACHMENTS:**

1. Subject Property Map
2. Proposed Bike Storage 3879 Alfred Avenue
3. OCP & Zoning maps
4. Sections 16.3.6 & 16.4 OCP Bylaw No. 1935
5. Section. 2.10.4 Zoning Bylaw No. 1987

Respectfully submitted:



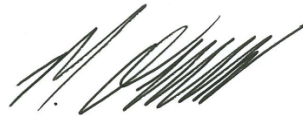
Deepa Chandran  
Manager of Planning & Climate Readiness

Reviewed by:



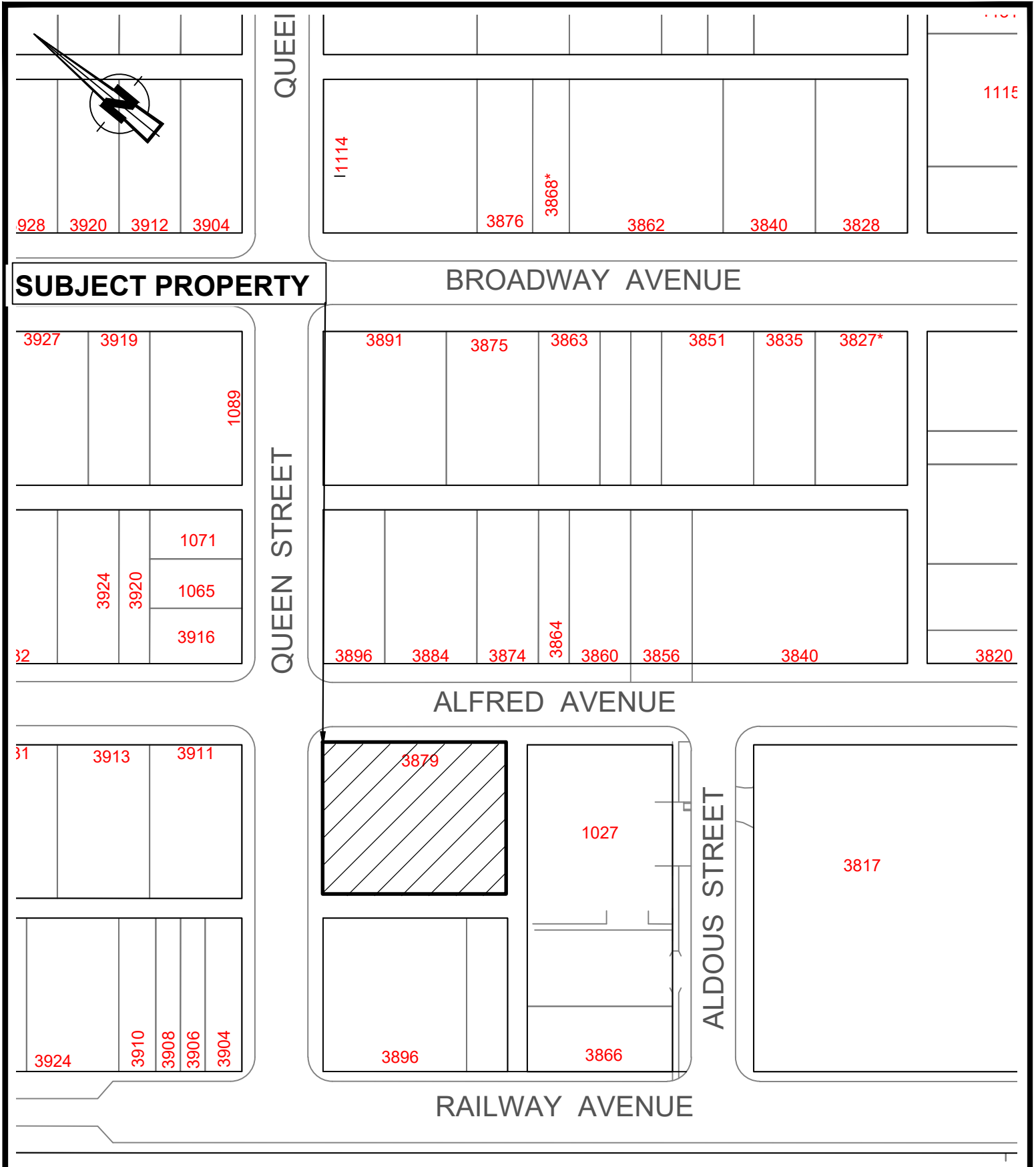
Mark Allen  
Director of Development Services

Submission approved by:



Michael Dewar  
Chief Administrative Officer

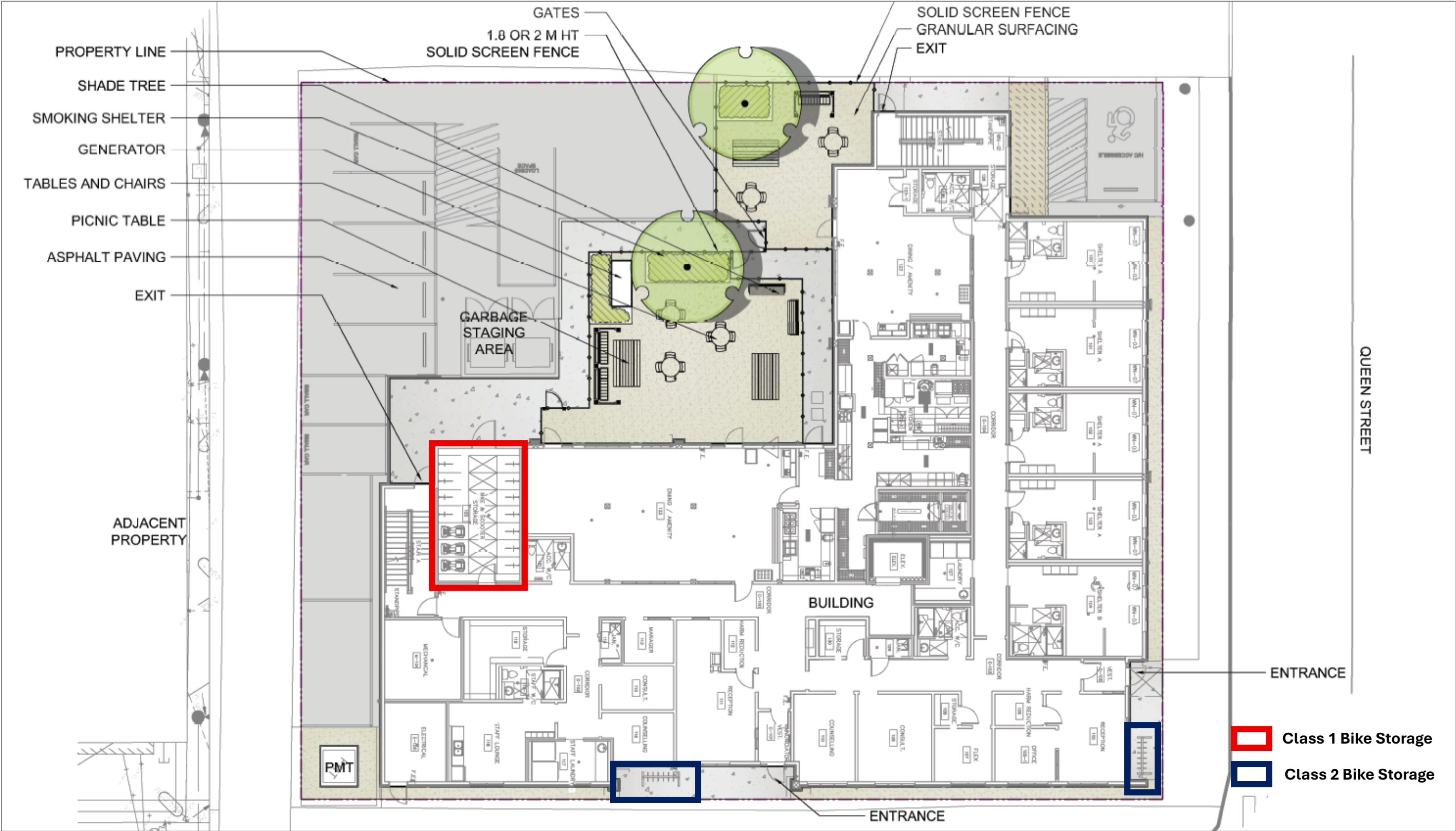
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**TITLE:**  
**DEVELOPMENT PERMIT WITH VARIANCE APPLICATION**  
**3879 ALFRED AVENUE**  
**DV25-07 SUBJECT PROPERTY MAP**

<b>SCALE:</b> 1:1250	
<b>DRAWN BY:</b> AS	<b>DATE:</b> 2025/11/10
<b>APPROVED BY:</b> MFA	<b>DATE:</b> 2025/11/10
<b>DRAWING PATH:</b> N:\3000-3699 LAND ADMINISTRATION\3060 DEVELOPMENT PERMITS\3060-20 - PERMITS (INDIVIDUAL)\2025\DV25-07 Alfred Ave Supportive	

Attachment 2 – Proposed Bike Storage @ 3879 Alfred Avenue

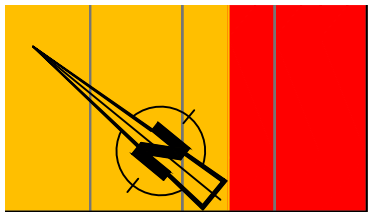






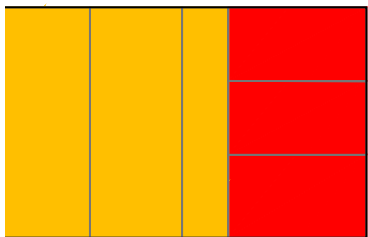




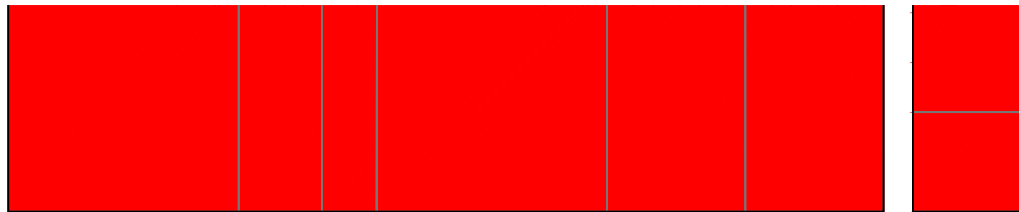
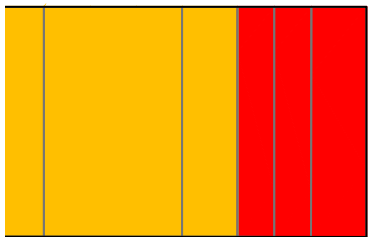
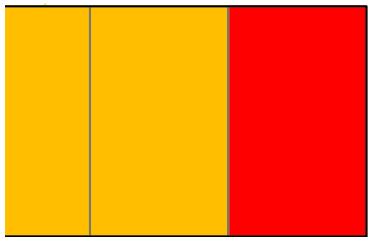


E **SUBJECT PROPERTY**

**MEDIUM  
DENSITY  
RESIDENTIAL**

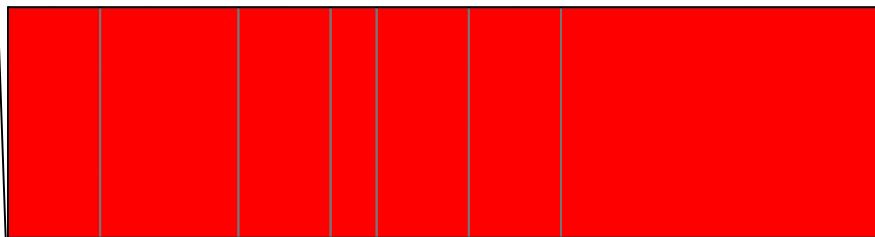


QUEEN STREET

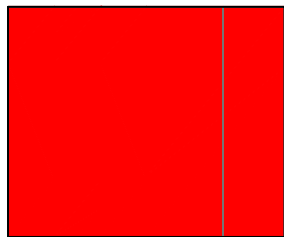
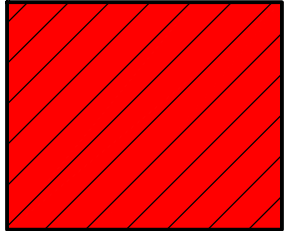


BROADWAY AVENUE

**HIGH DENSITY RESIDENTIAL /  
DOWNTOWN COMMERCIAL**



ALFRED AVENUE



ALDOUS STREET

**PARKS, OPEN  
SPACES & TRAILS**

RAILWAY AVENUE



TITLE:

**DEVELOPMENT PERMIT WITH  
VARIANCE APPLICATION  
3879 ALFRED AVENUE  
DV25-07 OCP MAP**

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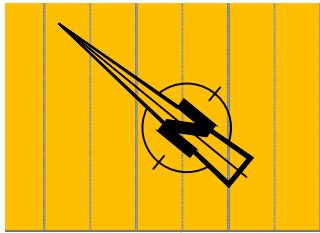
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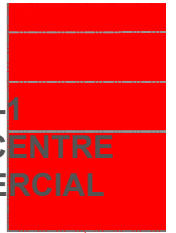
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PERMITS\3060-20 - PERMITS (INDIVIDUAL)\2025\DV25-07  
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Alfred Ave Supportive Housing Project



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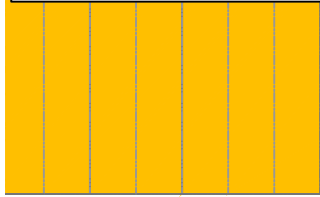


C-1  
TOWN CENTRE  
COMMERCIAL



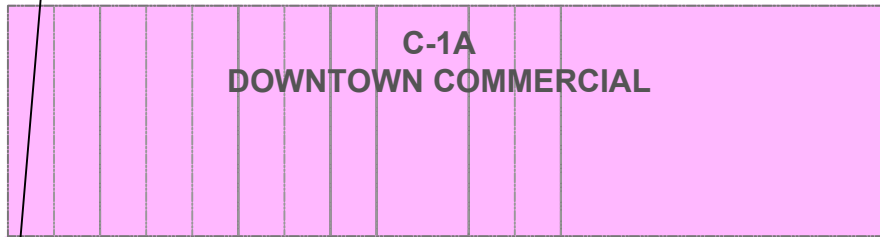
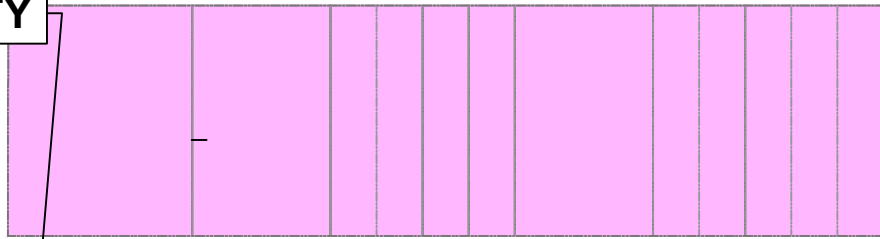
BROADWAY AVENUE

**SUBJECT PROPERTY**

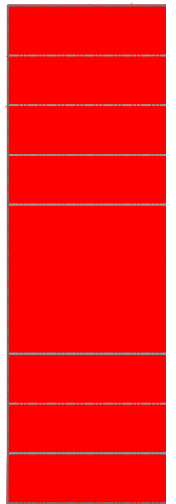


LDR-1  
LOW DENSITY  
RESIDENTIAL  
ZONE

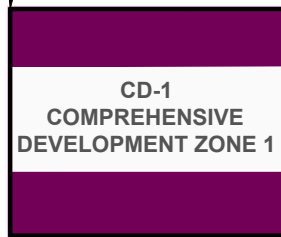
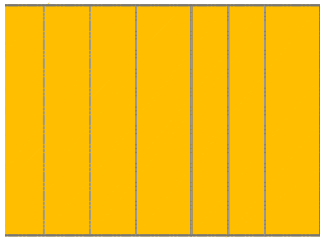
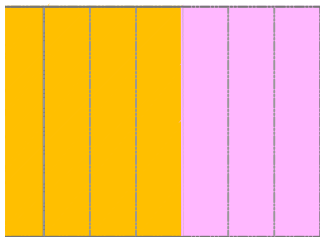
QUEEN STREET



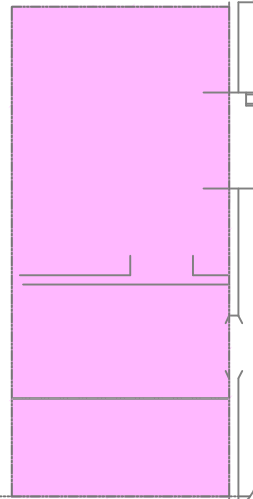
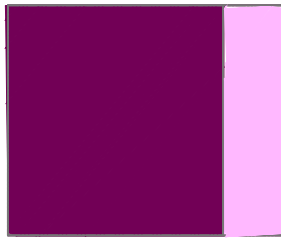
C-1A  
DOWNTOWN COMMERCIAL



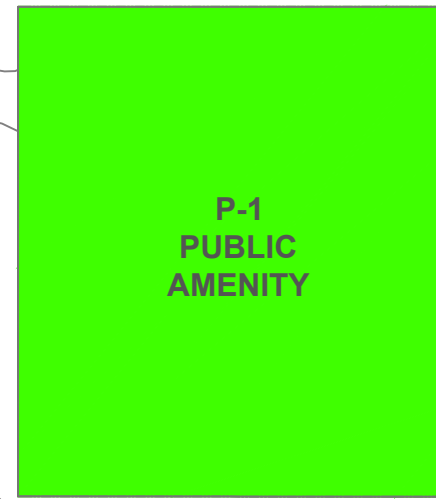
ALFRED AVENUE



CD-1  
COMPREHENSIVE  
DEVELOPMENT ZONE 1



ALDOUS STREET



P-1  
PUBLIC  
AMENITY

RAILWAY AVENUE



**TITLE: DEVELOPMENT PERMIT WITH  
VARIANCE APPLICATION  
3879 ALFRED AVENUE  
DV25-07 ZONING MAP**

SCALE: 1:1250

DRAWN BY: AS

DATE: 2025/11/10

APPROVED BY: MFA

DATE: 2025/11/10

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DEVELOPMENT PERMITS\3060-20 - PERMITS  
(INDIVIDUAL)\2025\DV25-07 Alfred Ave Supportive

## 2.10.4 Bicycle Parking Requirements

- (a) Except as otherwise specified in this bylaw, all required Bicycle parking spaces shall be provided on the same parcel as the building or use for which the spaces are required, and the number of spaces shall be provided and maintained in accordance with the regulations contained in Table 2.10.4

- (b) For the purpose of this bylaw:

“Class 1” means a secure, weather-protected bicycle parking facility used to accommodate long-term parking, such as for residents or employees, usually within a building or covered, fenced area; and

“Class 2” means a short-term visitor bicycle parking facility that may offer some security, and may be partially protected from the weather, for example a bicycle rack at a building’s entrance.

Table 2.10.4		
Use	Number of Bicycle Spaces Required (minimum of 6)	Type and Number of Bicycle Spaces
<b>Residential</b>		
Single or Semi-Detached Dwelling	N/A	N/A
Table 2.10.4		
Use	Number of Bicycle Spaces Required (minimum of 6)	Type and Number of Bicycle Spaces
<b>Residential</b>		
Apartment, Rowhouse, Townhouse	1 per unit	Class 1 – 100%
<b>Commercial</b>		
Hotel or Motel	1 per 15 rooms	Class 1 – 60% Class 2 – 40%
Office, Retail Store, Restaurant, Medical Office	1 per 250m <sup>2</sup> of gross floor area	Class 1 - 60% Class 2 – 40%
Shopping Centre	1 per 250m <sup>2</sup> of gross floor area	Class 1 – 30% Class 2 – 70%
<b>Public and Institutional</b>		
School, College	1 per 10 employees, plus 1 per 10 students	Class 1 – employees Class 2 – students
Place of Worship	1 per 50 fixed seats	Class 2 – 100%
Library, Cultural / recreational / Civic Facility	1 per 100m <sup>2</sup> of gross floor area	Class 1 – 20% Class 2 – 80%