

NEWS RELEASE

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City seeks developers for key downtown site

Summary

The City of Nanaimo has issued an Expression of Interest (EOI) to gauge interest in the redevelopment of the former Jean Burns property at 6 Commercial Street. Council is keen to see this high profile site brought back into productive use.

The redevelopment of this site compliments a range of capital investments planned by the City for the downtown core in the next few years. This includes improvements to Terminal Avenue which are starting in July 2023 and the redevelopment of Commercial Street in the fall of 2023. The City is working with BC Transit and the Regional District of Nanaimo to create a new transit hub in the downtown core starting in 2024.

In addition, the private sector is making significant investments in the downtown core. The new Courtyard by Marriot Hotel opened in the spring of 2023, Telus has broken ground on a new 200 unit residential project and other residential projects are anticipated to begin construction by the end of this year.

Strategic Link: The Strategic Framework (2023 to 2026) identifies significant capital investments to support continued redevelopment of the heart of the City. This includes improvements to Commercial Street, Terminal Avenue and a new downtown transit exchange. The City Plan identifies Downtown as the Primary Urban Centre and C5.5.1 encourages the enhancement and promotion of a vibrant and diverse Downtown.

Key Points

- The City has issued an Expression Of Interest for developers to bring forward their ideas for how 6 Commercial Street could be redeveloped. Council is interested in a project that includes ground floor retail and incorporates housing on the upper floors.
- Proposals are evaluated on the proposed purchase price, financial feasibility of the project, strength of the project team, the inclusion of some non-market housing and any value added components the developer believes they can bring to the project. Submissions are due by September 5, 2023 and will be reviewed by Council in the fall of 2023.

Quotes

"The former Jean Burns property at 6 Commercial Street is one of the most high profile vacant sites in the City of Nanaimo. When Council acquired the property in 2021, our goal was to see the property brought back into productive use and to help reinvigorate the downtown. This Expression Of Interest process allows Council to receive proposals and identify a project that is the best fit for our community."

Leonard Krog
Mayor
City of Nanaimo

Quick Facts

- On March 30, 2016 the Jean Burns building at 6 Commercial Street was extensively damaged by fire, and in November 2017 the building was demolished, leaving a vacant property in the downtown core.
- In the summer of 2019, Council identified the need to take action on key vacant parcels in the downtown core. The former Jean Burns property was identified as a key site requiring redevelopment. The City acquired the property on August 12, 2021.
- The property is 1,020 sq m (0.25 acres) in size and located on the prominent corner of Commercial Street and Terminal Avenue.

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