MINUTES
ADVISORY DESIGN PANEL
Held virtually via MS Teams
August 06, 2025 at 1:00 PM

ROLL CALL

In Attendance:	Greg Gillespie (Chair), Brian Fraser, Chris Gower, Matthew Jarvis, Sean Partlow, Jacy Lee, Carl-Jan Rupp, Kimberly Simpson, Xeniya Vins
Regrets:	Justin Gammon
Guests:	Dima Itskovich, Maxcellent Group; Aaron Urion, MGBA - Mallen Growing Berzins Architecture Incorporated; Adam Boyko, MGBA - Mallen Growing Berzins Architecture Incorporated; Nicole Payne, MGBA - Mallen Growing Berzins Architecture Incorporated; Jacob Bethell, LADR Landscape Designer and Chris Windjack, LADR Landscape Architects
Staff:	Chuck Bell, Planner, Current Planning; Preet Chaggar, Senior Committee Clerk

ADOPTION OF MINUTES

MOVED by B. Fraser and Seconded by: X. Vins "That the Minutes of the Advisory Design Panel meeting held on June 18, 2025, be adopted as circulated."

RESULT: 0 TO 0
IN FAVOUR: None
OPPOSED: None

July 2, 2025

MOVED by J. Lee and Seconded by: B. Fraser "That the Minutes of the Advisory Design Panel meeting held on July 2, 2025, be adopted as circulated."

RESULT: 0 TO 0
IN FAVOUR: None
OPPOSED: None

COMMITTEE BUSINESS ITEMS

3468 TILLICUM ROAD
Applicant: Maxcellent Group (Dima Itskovitch)
Project Description: Rezoning and Development Permit application to construct an 18-storey mixed use purpose-built rental project with 407 rental units and 5 commercial units at grade over 2 levels of underground parking.
Planning File: DPR01079; REZ00782
Planner: Chuck Bell

Planning referred the panel to the previous meeting for an overview of the proposal, followed by a presentation from the applicants.

The Chair stated that this application had returned to the Advisory Design Panel because the project had previously been postponed to address five specific issues outlined in the panel's earlier motion, and that discussion should be restricted to those areas rather than re-opening debate on the proposal as a whole.

- Improved site circulation and pedestrian connectivity to adjacent sites
- Improved public realm and further design of the plaza space
- Inclusion of a child-specific amenity space
- Meeting minimum bike parking requirements
- Better alignment of floor plate area and massing with district guidelines

The applicant noted the following in response to questions from the Panel:

- 136 stalls are required for 407 units (1:3 ratio) 126 underground, 15 at grade.
- Relocation of the three sanitary rights-of-way was considered but is not feasible at this time due to cost, feasibility, and dependence on CRD approval.
- Fire access requires a continuous route, limiting public plaza space; design changes are constrained by underground parking and safety requirements.
- Curb stops and removable bollards are currently shown in the design to provide separation between parking spaces and the public amenity plaza space.
- The outdoor plaza is designed as a flexible, hazard-free space with a unified level surface. It will seamlessly transition between daily activities and public events, ensuring accessibility and safety by eliminating grade changes and tripping hazards.
- Movable elements (bollards, planters, furniture) may be rearranged or removed during special events to maximize usable amenity space.
- The Plaza will serve as a flexible event space for community activities and will include semi-permanent food truck stalls with utility hookups, a concrete seating wall, and a mix of permanent and mobile site furnishings.
- Permanent features such as heavy site furniture and café tables will be included but not fixed to specific locations.
- Landscaping along the southern edge is minimal; there is a retaining wall for a parkade on the neighboring property
- A drive aisle is required for parkade access and grading. The current proposal improves landscaping compared to the existing site (a paved strip-mall parking lot). Earlier designs were revised to include a northern pathway for enhanced connectivity.
- Columnar trees located partway up the building at the corners are planned to break up the tower massing, serve as a focal point, and elevate landscaping, though soil depth and structural limitations are noted
- Opportunities for rooftop planting, terrace gardens, and community gardens are being explored; feasibility of vertical edible gardens or urban farms require further study.
- The project offers extensive amenities at grade in the plaza and alley, and through 10 separate amenity rooms with 8 attached outdoor spaces (balconies and decks).
- Rooftop amenities face design and code challenges, including elevator/stair reconfiguration and equipment constraints, and would require reducing the building height to stay within the maximum allowable height under the OCP.
- Noise mitigation strategies include relocating amenities (placing the weight room above the play area), using construction measures such as concrete walls and double-floor systems, consulting an acoustics specialist for targeted treatments, and applying operational controls and scheduling to minimize disruption to nearby residential units.
- The two-tower option was explored; however, it would have encroached significantly on rights-of-way, would create circulation challenges for elevators and core connections to the parkade, and would not achieve the desired unit yield.
- Panel noted monolithic appearance; suggested exploring height/massing variation.
- Pedestrian connectivity is limited by topography, design, and regulatory constraints. While northern connections may be possible with future development, a southern connection is not feasible due to the adjacent site’s steep drop, parkade, and private courtyards.

- Panel encouraged an “artistic alley” design with interactive semi-public space.
- Applicant to explore washroom access options for plaza and commercial units.

Planning staff noted the following:

- The floor plate maximums are present in the Development Permit Area Guidelines, but these do not appear in the Official Community Plan.
- Any parking variance should account for the worst-case scenario of closures and lost stalls, with mitigation measures such as limiting closures to specific times and ensuring they do not conflict with business operations. This would address concerns regarding the dual use of the Plaza amenity space. Including occasional garbage staging and the potential for an applicant or strata owner to remove required parking post-approval.
- Temporary closures could be acceptable if they are limited and well-managed, and that staging for dumpsters or deliveries is common and generally less problematic if properly timed.
- The Official Community Plan (OCP) sets height guidelines assuming ideal site conditions. Adjusting heights (e.g. with one lower tower and one higher) would conflict with the OCP and require an OCP amendment, which is not ideal.

The following was noted during Panel discussion:

- The building is large, monolithic, slab-like, and top-heavy, with excessive floor plate and overall mass. Prior feedback on massing has not led to substantial changes.
- The design does not clearly read as two separate towers, instead appearing as a single slab with overly uniform symmetry. Strict symmetry is excessive and disconnected from the surrounding context.
- Suggestions for improvement include emphasizing a podium, articulating upper levels, creating varied heights, step-backs, rooftop terraces, sculptural forms, distinct corners, or considering a two-tower or podium-and-tower configuration.
- A comparison was made to View Street Towers in Victoria, noting that that building was roughly 66 meters long and the proposed building was measured at 74 meters. Highlighting both its size and potential impact on the urban context.
- Circulation has improved slightly (including east–west connections), but overall pedestrian circulation remains weak and poorly integrated with the surrounding urban context.
- Connections such as along Artist Lane lack visibility and feel hidden, reducing effectiveness.
- Public realm and plaza design feel disconnected, particularly from Tillicum Road, and do not successfully activate community space.
- The plaza reads more like a commercial forecourt rather than a true gathering space.
- Ground planes needs to be more vibrant, people-oriented, and integrated with the urban fabric. Weak public realm integration is a recurring, unresolved issue.
- Amenity areas are too small, isolated, and not community friendly. Rooftop amenity with kitchen/lounge and outdoor space was strongly encouraged.
- The renderings highlight amenities and events; their usability may be overstated. The plaza space will only succeed with considerable programming effort.
- Lack of meaningful outdoor amenity space remains unresolved from prior feedback.
- The project lacks landscaping, especially on the south and east sides of the parking lot.
- Oversized building and parkade limit space for landscaping and public plaza programming.
- Landscaping and public realm remain insufficient and unresolved from previous review.
- Despite previous feedback, concerns such as building massing, circulation, landscaping, the public realm, and amenities have yet to be addressed
- Despite previous feedback key issues such as enhancements to the public realm through further design development of the plaza and improved alignment of floor plate area and massing with District guidelines remain unresolved.
- Concern was raised about the District of Saanich’s process rather than the application. The system lacks adequate tools to balance developments that may not fit with the protection of public interest and alignment with city goals, despite the building’s positive amenities.

MOVED by C. Gower and Seconded by B. Fraser: "That it be recommended that the design to construct an 18-storey mixed use purpose-built rental project with 407 rental units and 5 commercial units at grade over 2 levels of underground parking at 3468 Tillicum Road be postponed to allow for consideration of:

- **Significant revisions to advance the design of the project with regards to massing, landscaping and circulation."**

RESULT: Failed 2 TO 7
IN FAVOUR: Fraser, Gower
OPPOSED: Gillespie, Jarvis, Partlow, Lee, Rupp, Simpson, Vins

MOVED by M. Jarvis and Seconded by K. Simpson: "That it be recommended that the design to construct an 18-storey mixed use purpose-built rental project with 407 rental units and 5 commercial units at grade over 2 levels of underground parking at 3468 Tillicum Road be denied."

Panel discussion ensued with the following comment:

- The main concerns are items 2 and 5 particularly the floor plate.

RESULT: Carried 9 TO 0
IN FAVOUR: Gillespie, Fraser, Gower, Jarvis, Partlow, Lee, Rupp, Simpson, Vins

OPPOSED: None

ADJOURNMENT

MOVED by J. Lee and Seconded by B. Fraser: "That the meeting be adjourned at 3:28 p.m."

RESULT: Carried 9 TO 0
IN FAVOUR: Gillespie, Fraser, Gower, Jarvis, Partlow, Lee, Rupp, Simpson, Vins
OPPOSED: None

_____
CHAIR

I hereby certify these Minutes are accurate.

_____
SENIOR COMMITTEE CLERK