

# HILTON HOTEL MAKES PROGRESS

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Last May, Insight Holdings Ltd. proposed a 30-storey multimillion-dollar Hilton hotel for Nanaimo's waterfront. The property is located at 10 and 28 Front St. adjacent to the Pacifica condominiums.

Last October, Nanaimo council approved a zoning amendment bylaw to allow the high-rise development and increased the allowable height of the building to 32 storeys from street level. The new design extended the hotel three storeys below street level, making the total height 35 storeys. At the time, a 60-year lease of city-owned parkland was proposed to construct a staircase, restaurant patio, loading dock, and vehicle access for the hotel. This design would take up 925 square metres of parkland; the developer was also seeking to lease approximately 225 square metres of the area of the park adjacent to Front St. to construct a public plaza and an access point for delivery trucks. Insight Holdings Ltd. would be responsible for the parkland improvement costs.

In April, it was announced that the hotel developers no longer planned on leasing the parkland. This change in plans came after considerable opposition to the original proposal. The new pitch was for an expanded statutory right of way to cover improvements instead. There would still be a staircase and public plaza, but it would remain city property and become public thoroughfare through the hotel to the waterfront. This pitch was given the go-ahead three days later. The new design did not include a loading dock or restaurant patio. According to the design as of April, the hotel would be 35 storeys with 303 rooms, a health club and bar/café, two restaurants, and eight retail units.

Now, the project zoning and conceptual design drawings are in place. A development permit application is pending. Insight Holdings Ltd. is actively assembling the financing. They are also formalizing the details of the ownership structure and the operational agreements for the hotel. Construction of the Hilton is scheduled to start in early 2016.