

INFORMATION NOTE

Title: WWH – City-Owned Vacant Land Identified for Potential Redevelopment as Affordable Housing

Date Prepared: November 24, 2021

Report To: Committee of the Whole

Councillor and Role: Councillor Ophelia Ravencroft, Housing

Ward: Ward 2, Ward 4 & Ward 5

Issue: Provide Council with an overview of feedback received from the engagement process completed on City-owned vacant land identified for potential redevelopment as affordable housing.

Discussion – Background and Current Status:

The City of St. John's approved the Affordable Housing Strategy, 2019-2028, in November 2018. The following implementation strategy is stated in the 'Unlocking Resources' section of the City's Affordable Housing Strategy (p. 27):

1.3 Continue to create a list of city-owned vacant land and buildings and evaluate the inventory for potential redevelopment as affordable housing

Council approved the expropriation of several parcels of land to eliminate any potential claim to these sites and directed that these parcels be reserved for non-profit housing initiatives/projects or partnerships. The parcels of land identified were:

245 Forest Road	Ward 2
80-90 Empire Avenue	Ward 4
375 Waterford Bridge Road	Ward 5
28 Eric Street	Ward 2

While there is a planned project on 28 Eric Street, there are no planned projects on the remaining three sites.

As per Council directive SJMC-R-2021-03-08/97, Council approved developing a public engagement plan to inform and engage residents, businesses, and other stakeholder groups in the areas surrounding 375 Waterford Bridge Road, 245 Forest Road and 80-90 Empire Avenue. The purpose of the engagement was to better understand how stakeholders use these parcels of land, their concerns with developing the sites and gather ideas about what stakeholders would like to see if the sites were developed as affordable housing.

ST. JOHN'S

Engagement was conducted in a phased approach, with separate sessions for each parcel of land to enable staff to focus on the concerns and preferences of each neighbourhood surrounding each parcel, which vary based on the location. A variety of ways were provided for the public to participate in engagement.

Attached to this note is a summary of what was heard during the engagement process which took place in July, August, and October for the three parcels of land.

For all three parcels of land, key concerns were: the impact of potential development on the environment, parking and/or traffic related concerns, and concerns about property values decreasing, either due to the additional of affordable housing in the area or because of the loss of greenspace/view. Other concerns not listed that are specific to each site are outlined in the attachment.

Stakeholder ideas about what they'd like to see if the sites were developed varied per site. Some common suggestions included Seniors' housing, accessible housing, one and two-bedroom units to meet current need, and thoughtfully designed housing that incorporates and preserves the natural environment as much as possible.

Many stakeholders also identified other areas in the in the City with vacant land or buildings they'd like the City to explore for affordable housing. With the exception of the existing Mews Centre, which was suggested as an option when the new facility is built, none of the sites identified were City-owned.

Although staff did not conduct a statistically valid survey to quantify those in favour, against or neutral for a potential development, based on the submissions received:

- Empire Avenue received more feedback that was supportive than opposed for this site to be developed as affordable housing.
- Waterford Bridge Road received a mix of opinions, many opposed, fewer in favour, and several submissions that were in between.
- Forest Road received the fewest submissions overall. The majority were opposed to any development of this site. Very few were in favour of developing the site and very few offered suggestions for what they'd like to see if the site were developed as affordable housing.

Key Considerations/Implications:

1. Budget/Financial Implications: Funding is already allocated for 2021 Affordable Housing objectives.
2. Partners or Other Stakeholders: The City's Affordable Housing Strategy was built upon public and strategic stakeholder engagement, and the implementation continues to be guided and shaped by multi-stakeholder partnerships and processes. Residents,

businesses, and other stakeholders in the areas surrounding each parcel of land are key stakeholders in this initiative.

3. Alignment with Strategic Directions/Adopted Plans: The Affordable Housing Strategy aligns with the Strategic Plan's vision and directions. Affordable Housing implementation actions work in tandem with the Municipal Plan and Development Regulations.
4. Legal or Policy Implications: N/A
5. Privacy Implications: N/A
6. Engagement and Communications Considerations: Engagement took place in July, August and October 2021.
7. Human Resource Implications: N/A
8. Procurement Implications: N/A
9. Information Technology Implications: N/A
10. Other Implications: N/A

Conclusion/Next Steps: Utilize the information from the What We Heard document and other forms of feedback to develop a list of recommendations for Council consideration on next steps for these parcels of land.

Report Approval Details

Document Title:	WWH City-Owned Vacant Land for Potential Redevelopment as Affordable Housing.docx
Attachments:	- WWH City-Owned Vacant Land.pdf
Final Approval Date:	Nov 25, 2021

This report and all of its attachments were approved and signed as outlined below:

Judy Tobin - Nov 25, 2021 - 12:58 PM

Tanya Haywood - Nov 25, 2021 - 1:47 PM