

# OUR CITY. OUR FUTURE.



## City-Owned Vacant Land Identified for Potential Redevelopment as Affordable Housing

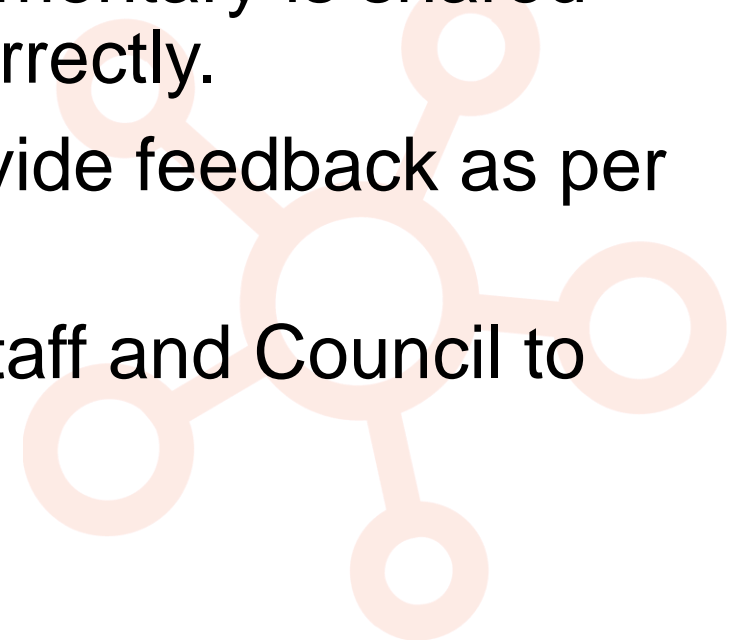
375 Waterford Bridge, 245 Forest Road, & 80-90 Empire Avenue

What We Heard from Public Engagement  
November 2021

ST. JOHN'S

# Disclaimer

- This document provides a summary of what was heard from participants during this engagement process. It is not meant to reflect the specific details of each submission word-for-word
- The City produces a What We Heard document for every city-led public engagement project. This collected commentary is shared with the community to ensure we heard you correctly.
- The City protects the privacy of those who provide feedback as per Access to Information and Privacy Legislation.
- The full scope of commentary is used by city staff and Council to help inform recommendations and decisions.





# Context

- Affordable Housing Strategy 2019-2028 approved by Council in November 2018
- **Affordable Housing:** Costs less than 30 percent of a household's pre-tax income including housing and related costs
- Approximately 1 in 4 households in St. John's live in unaffordable housing



# Affordable Housing Strategy 2019-2028

## Mission

- The City of St. John's will leverage its unique capacities and build strong partnerships to produce, protect, and promote affordable housing for the people of St. John's.

## Vision

- St. John's will be a vibrant, inclusive, and thriving city with a wide range of affordable housing options that contribute directly to community health, sustainable growth, and economic security.

## Strategic Directions



# Unlocking Resources

- This strategic direction and the following implementation action is the focus for the project.
- Continue to create a list of city-owned vacant land and buildings and evaluate the inventory for potential redevelopment as affordable housing
  - 375 Waterford Bridge Road
  - 245 Forest Road
  - 80-90 Empire Avenue
  - 28 Eric Street
- There is a planned project on 28 Eric Street.
- Following public concerns about the project on Eric Street, engagement was planned for the other 3 sites. There are no planned projects on these sites.





# 375 Waterford Bridge Road





# 245 Forest Road





# 80-90 Empire Avenue





# Public Engagement Plan

## Purpose

- To notify residents, businesses, and other stakeholders in the areas surrounding the parcels of land about engagement opportunities.
- To gather information from stakeholders about their ideas for potential projects and concerns with developing a site in their neighbourhood.

## Approach

- Conduct engagement 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 immediately surrounding each parcel, which vary based on the location.
- Provide a variety of ways for the public to participate in engagement and keep all stakeholders informed regarding the development and engagement processes.

# Promotion of Engagement

Addressed mail – sent out to residents, businesses and stakeholders in and around the subject properties (1331 for Waterford Bridge Rd, 472 for Forest Rd and 1592 for Empire Ave)

Public Service Announcements

Two newsletters to over 3100 registered users of [engagestjohns.ca](http://engagestjohns.ca)

City of St. John's social media channels: Facebook, Instagram and Twitter



# Who Engaged



TOOLS	375 WATERFORD BRIDGE RD	245 FOREST RD	80-90 EMPIRE AVE
Engagestjohns.ca	356 visitors. 25 actively engaged.	242 visitors. 9 actively engaged.	710 visitors. 51 actively engaged.
Virtual public meetings	July 28, 2021 21 Attendees	August 3, 2021 11 Attendees	October 13, 2021 25 Attendees
Email submissions (unique individuals)	40	12	21
Outdoor pop-up	July 29, 2021 at Bowring Park West Gate Approx. 35 visitors.	N/A	N/A
Mailed submissions	1	1	0
Phone calls	0	0	3

# What We Heard

## How stakeholders use this land:

### 375 Waterford Bridge Road

- Use T'Railway in this area
- Access nearby amenities – Bowring Park, dog park,
- Enjoy nature here
- Forage
- Use bus stop near this site

### 245 Forest Road

- Connect to the Quidi Vidi lake via trail on this parcel
- Use as a viewpoint (fireworks, Regatta, sunsets, etc.)
- Use for recreation and leisure activities (picnics, sliding)
- Enjoy nature here

### 80-90 Empire Avenue

- Parking
- Access to Kelly's Brook trail
- Access to playground



# Key concerns about potential redevelopment of 375 Waterford Bridge Road

- Loss of greenspace, destruction of mature forest & ecosystems
- Parking and traffic are already issues in the area and more development will make both worse
- Impact on water retention/flooding
- Affordable housing will decrease property values
- Impact on T'Railway



# Key concerns about potential redevelopment of 245 Forest Road

- Loss of the last remaining greenspace on Forest Road
  - Associated decrease in property values due to loss of view/greenspace
- Traffic is already an issue in the area and more development will make it worse
- Already enough affordable housing and/or development in general in this area
- Concerns over City ability to potentially rezone open spaces for development





# Key concerns about potential redevelopment of 80-90 Empire Avenue

- Loss of parking
  - Associated increase of on-street parking and impact on traffic flow in area
- Affordable housing will decrease property values in area
- Impact on crime in area (such as blocking sight lines, some attributed crime in area to Affordable Housing)
- Environmental impacts of development – water issues, loss of trees
- Impact on trail system
- Stability of the site



Stakeholder  
ideas for design  
and incorporated  
features if the site  
was developed  
as affordable  
housing

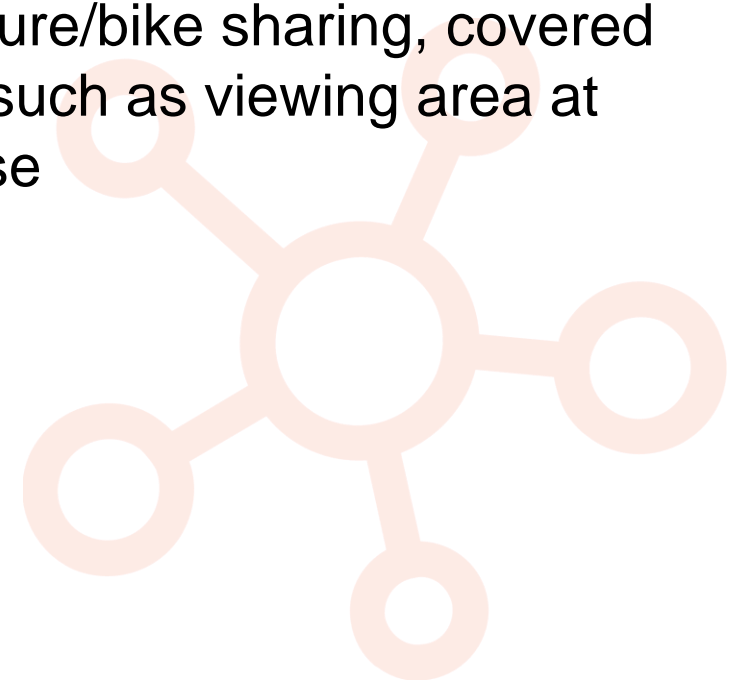
## 375 Waterford Bridge Road

- Housing for seniors, families or multigenerational housing
- Mixed ideas: small apartment complex, higher density housing, small cottages or single-family homes
- Thoughtfully designed housing that incorporates & preserves trees and nature as much as possible including maintaining a buffer of trees along T'Railway and Waterford Bridge Road
- Access to T'Railway from site
- One to two-bedroom units
- Accessible housing
- Incorporate community spaces, retail, social enterprise, bicycle infrastructure, covered bus stop
- Improve bus access to site
- Improve road safety – crossing lights at Waterford Bridge Road where it meets Park Road

Stakeholder  
ideas for design  
and incorporated  
features if the site  
was developed  
as affordable  
housing

## 245 Forest Road

- Ensure trail access from Forest Road to Quidi Vidi
- One to two-bedroom units
- Intentional design to allow aging in place and to avoid stigmatization of affordable housing in the area
- Traffic calming
- Incorporate bicycle infrastructure/bike sharing, covered bus stop, community spaces such as viewing area at back, retail, or social enterprise
- Improve bus access to site



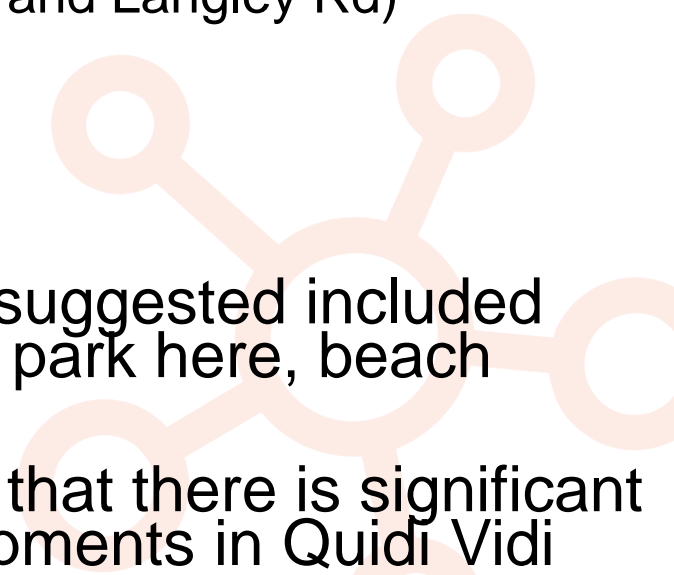


Stakeholder  
ideas for design  
and incorporated  
features if the site  
was developed  
as affordable  
housing

## 80-90 Empire Avenue

- Maintain & upgrade trail access from Empire Avenue
- Improve pedestrian safety in area – improved lighting near trail, crosswalk lights, traffic calming measures, and include sidewalks & active transportation in design
- Seniors housing
- Accessible housing
- Mix of ideas: Single-family homes, town housing with apartments, small apartments, modular or container designs, tiny homes
- One to two-bedroom units
- Thoughtfully designed housing that incorporates & preserves trees and nature as much as possible
- Attractive and adds visually to the landscape

# What We Heard: Other ideas & Comments

- Many residents identified other areas with vacant land or buildings they'd like the City to explore for affordable housing. With the exception of the Mews, none of these sites are City-owned.
    - The Old Mews Centre when the new facility is built
    - Grace Hospital Site
    - Land in Pleasantville (Janeway Pl, Charter Ave, Churchill Ave and Langley Rd)
    - Waterford Hospital Site when the new facility opens
    - Hoyles-Escasoni buildings
    - Vacant retail buildings on Stavanger Drive
    - Vacant land further west on Empire Avenue
  - For 375 Waterford Bridge Road – other potential uses suggested included additional parking or recreational space (i.e. move dog park here, beach volleyball, etc.)
  - It was noted in the public meeting for 245 Forest Road that there is significant distrust in City Council for past decisions about developments in Quidi Vidi
- 

# What We Heard

- 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.



# Next Steps



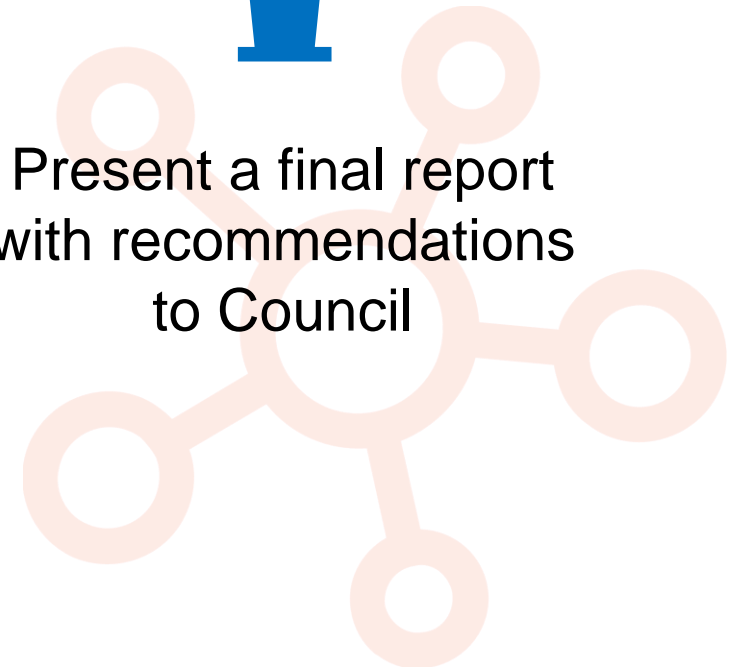
Release What We Heard



Council to review



Present a final report  
with recommendations  
to Council



# To stay informed

Follow the project page or sign up to receive notifications at [engagestjohns.ca](https://engagestjohns.ca)

ST. JOHN'S

[Home](#) [Citizen Committees - Members page](#) [FAQs](#) [Document Library](#)

[Sign in](#) [Register](#)

Welcome to Engage! St John's

This online public engagement space allows you to contribute your ideas and feedback on City projects and initiatives that matter to you!

Sign up and join the community - more than 3,000 people strong!

**Register to get involved!**

