

# DECISION/DIRECTION NOTE

**Title:** 1274 Blackhead Road, REZ2200004  
**Date Prepared:** June 15, 2022  
**Report To:** Committee of the Whole  
**Councillor and Role:** Councillor Ian Froude, Planning  
**Ward:** Ward 5

---

## Decision/Direction Required:

To consider a text amendment to the Envision St. John's Development Regulations to allow consideration of a spa facility with associated hospitality services in the Rural Residential (RR) Zone. This is prompted by an application at 1274 Blackhead Road.

## Discussion – Background and Current Status:

The City has received an application from HW Architecture for a spa facility with associated hospitality services at 1274 Blackhead Road. The subject property is within the Rural District of the Envision St. John's Municipal Plan and is primarily zoned Rural Residential (RR) with a small portion at the rear of the lot within the Rural (RUR) Zone. The policies of Section 10.7 of the Municipal Plan, for Planning Area 17 – Blackhead, apply.

The proposed development is a “Nordic spa”, a new type of development for St. John's that combines spa services with lodging in a rural setting. The development will include a main building, treatment domes, sauna structures, a yoga dome, a warming dome and sleeping domes, as indicated on the attached site plan. The photo below shows how the domes will sit on platforms. Sleeping domes will include shower/toilet, kitchenette, queen-sized bed and pull-out sofa.

This will be a year-round establishment with approximately 18 employees. Hours of operation will be 10am-7pm with hopes to eventually expand the hours to 9am-9pm. Guests will receive a day pass and can use all services. They anticipate 100 to 125 guests a day, with 12 of the guests staying overnight. There are three sleeping domes proposed, each with a 4-person capacity.



## Analysis

The Rural Land Use District is applied to lands characterized by farms, large tracts

# ST. JOHN'S

of open spaces, along with a limited number of rural dwellings on larger lots. From policy 8.10(1), within the Rural District, Council can establish zones that will accommodate natural heritage and tourism and other complementary uses. As the proposed development has a tourism component and may be a tourist destination, it could be considered in the Rural District without an amendment to the Municipal Plan

The inclusion of the sleeping domes makes this tourist destination, rather than simply a spa. Staff would not recommend amending the Development Regulations to just include Service Shop (spa) in the Rural Residential (RR) Zone, as adding new commercial uses is not the intent of the Rural District. The intent is to consider commercial services that have a tourism component

The applicant has stated that developing in a rural setting with natural scenery is a key component of a Nordic spa. They would not consider placing a Nordic spa in an urban setting. Therefore, should Council wish to consider the development at this location, staff recommend creating a new discretionary use that would consider rural tourism uses within the RR Zone. Should the amendment proceed, the new use and any associated conditions will be drafted following public consultation and feedback from the neighbouring properties.

As per Section 4.9 of the Development Regulations, Council requires a Land Use Report for all applications to amend the Municipal Plan or Development Regulations. Draft terms of reference for a Land Use Report are attached for Council's review. As the proposed development is located between existing houses, we include in the terms of reference that the applicant must do initial consultation with surrounding property owners before submitting the Land Use Report. This way, any concerns from the neighbourhood will be known prior to completing the report.

#### Next Steps

Should Council agree to consider the amendment and approve the terms of reference for a Land Use Report, the applicant will be required to prepare the Land Use Report, and a public meeting will be scheduled after staff confirm that the report meets the terms of reference.

#### **Key Considerations/Implications:**

1. Budget/Financial Implications: Not applicable.
2. Partners or Other Stakeholders: Neighbouring residents and property owners.
3. Alignment with Strategic Directions:

A Sustainable City: Plan for land use and preserve and enhance the natural and built environment where we live.

A Sustainable City: Facilitate and create the conditions that drive the economy by being business and industry friendly; and being a location of choice for residents, businesses and visitors.

4. Alignment with Adopted Plans: Envision St. John's Municipal Plan and Development Regulations.
5. Accessibility and Inclusion: Any accessibility requirements from the National Building Code or Service NL will be applied at the building permit stage.
6. Legal or Policy Implications: An amendment to the Envision St. John's Development Regulations is required in order to consider the amendment.
7. Privacy Implications: Not applicable.
8. Engagement and Communications Considerations: Should Council agree to consider the amendment, public consultation will occur once the Land Use Report is completed.
9. Human Resource Implications: Not applicable.
10. Procurement Implications: Not applicable.
11. Information Technology Implications: Not applicable.
12. Other Implications: Not applicable.

**Recommendation:**

That Council consider a text amendment to the Envision St. John's Development Regulations to consider rural tourism uses within the Rural Residential (RR) Zone, as prompted by a Nordic spa development at 1274 Blackhead Road; and approve the attached draft terms of reference for a Land Use Report (LUR).

Further, upon receiving a satisfactory Land Use Report, that Council refer the application to a virtual public meeting chaired by an independent facilitator for public input and feedback.

**Prepared by: Ann-Marie Cashin, MCIP, Planner III – Urban Design & Heritage**  
**Approved by: Ken O'Brien, MCIP, Chief Municipal Planner**

**Report Approval Details**

Document Title:	1274 Blackhead Road, REZ2200004.docx
Attachments:	- 1274 Blackhead Road - Attachments.pdf
Final Approval Date:	Jun 23, 2022

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

**Ken O'Brien - Jun 23, 2022 - 10:10 AM**

**No Signature - Task assigned to Jason Sinyard was completed by workflow administrator Karen Chafe**

**Jason Sinyard - Jun 23, 2022 - 4:18 PM**