

# DECISION/DIRECTION NOTE

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**Title:** 222 LeMarchant Road

**Date Prepared:** April 8, 2025

**Report To:** Committee of the Whole

**Councillor and Role:** Councillor Maggie Burton, Planning

**Ward:** Ward 2

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## **Decision/Direction Required:**

To consider a text amendment to the Envision St. John's Development Regulations to add "Dwelling Unit – 1<sup>st</sup> storey" to the Commercial Office Hotel (COH) Zone to allow a fully residential building, prompted by an application at 222 LeMarchant Road.

## **Discussion – Background and Current Status:**

The City has received an application from Gagnon Walker Domes Ltd. to convert the hotel at 222 LeMarchant Road into a residential rental building. The applicant is proposing to retrofit the 4-storey building, which has been operating as the Extended Stay St. John's hotel, to create 99 new dwelling units - 96 studio units plus three (3) one-bedroom units are proposed. Dwelling units are proposed for every floor of the building, including the first floor.

No changes to the building footprint or additions to the building are proposed. The access from Roberts Place will remain. The applicant is proposing minor changes to the layout of the parking lot; those will be finalized at the development application stage. The extent of the paved parking area will remain generally the same and the existing parking lot buffers and setbacks will not change.

In the COH Zone, dwelling units are permitted on the second or higher storeys but not on the ground floor. To enable an all-residential building, the applicant is requesting a text amendment to the zone. Dwelling units on the ground floor (the first storey) are discretionary in several commercial zones, including Commercial Mixed (CM), Commercial Regional (CR) and Commercial Downtown (CD). Therefore, the proposed text amendment is to add dwelling units on the first storey as a discretionary use to the COH Zone.

## **Alignment with Envision St. John's Municipal Plan**

The Municipal Plan enables a range of housing options, promotes higher density development near key transportation areas, and encourages development using existing infrastructure and services. The subject site is surrounded by a mix of uses, including low and medium density residential uses, various commercial uses like shops, convenience stores and offices, and institutional uses like Holy Cross Junior High School and St. Clare's Mercy Hospital.

# ST. JOHN'S

There is a Metrobus stop nearby on LeMarchant Road, and a proposed cycling route next to the site that will run along LeMarchant Road and Roberts Place. Further, the proposed development makes efficient use of infrastructure being a retrofit of an existing building.

The proposal aligns with Municipal Plan policies for housing in Section 4.1, including:

- Enable a mix of housing forms and tenures, including single, semi-detached, townhousing, medium and higher density and mixed-use residential developments.
- Promote housing choice for all ages, income groups, and family types by supporting housing that is appropriate, accessible and affordable for low-income and moderate-income households.

The subject property is within the Commercial District, which enables residential dwelling units provided they will not prevent an area from being used for commercial purposes. The subject property would retain its existing COH zoning, which enables commercial uses, so the property could potentially still be used for commercial purposes in the future.

#### Alignment with the City's Affordable Housing Strategy 2019-2028

Policy 4.1.1. of the Municipal Plan encourages development that supports the City's Affordable Housing Strategy. The strategy recommends increasing housing stock, including rentals, and supports intensification throughout the city. The proposed development consists of a mix of studio and one-bedroom rental units that will meet different household needs and options.

#### Alignment with the Envision St. John's Development Regulations

Section 4.9(2)(a) of the Development Regulations requires a land use report (LUR) for applications to amend the regulations. However, as per section 4.9 (3), where the scale or circumstances of the proposed development do not merit a full report, Council may accept a staff report instead. Given that this is a simple text amendment to the COH Zone to enable more residential use in an existing building, staff recommend a staff report in lieu of an LUR. This would be completed following public consultation.

#### Public Consultation

Should Council decide to consider this amendment, staff recommend public notification (not a public meeting) as the proposed development aligns with the Municipal Plan and the Affordable Housing Policy. The proposed use is compatible with the neighbourhood and the COH Zone, which already allows dwelling units on the second storey or higher. Please note, public notification would be the only opportunity for public review and comment. No Municipal Plan amendment is required, so there would not be a commissioner's public hearing later.

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

1. Budget/Financial Implications: Not applicable.
2. Partners or Other Stakeholders: Neighbouring property owners and residents.
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; St. John's Affordable Housing Strategy 2019-2028.
5. Accessibility and Inclusion: Accessibility requirements are applicable at the building permit stage.
6. Legal or Policy Implications: A text amendment to the Development Regulations is required.
7. Privacy Implications: Not applicable.
8. Engagement and Communications Considerations: Public notification (not a public meeting) will be carried out in accordance with the Development Regulations. There will also be a project page for the application on Engage St. John's.
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 add "Dwelling Unit – 1st Storey" as a discretionary use in the Commercial Office Hotel (COH) Zone.

Further, that the application be publicly advertised (notification only) in accordance with the Development Regulations.

**Prepared by: Faith Ford, MCIP, Planner III**

**Approved by: Ken O'Brien, MCIP, Chief Municipal Planner**

**Report Approval Details**

Document Title:	222 LeMarchant Road - REZ2500009.docx
Attachments:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- 222 LEMARCHANT ROAD.pdf</li><li>- 222 LeMarchant - Site Plan (Submission 1).pdf</li><li>- Development Regulations - Existing COH Zone.pdf</li></ul>
Final Approval Date:	Apr 10, 2025

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

**Ken O'Brien - Apr 9, 2025 - 2:49 PM**

**Jason Sinyard - Apr 10, 2025 - 9:18 AM**