



The Corporation of the City of Cornwall
Regular Meeting of Council
Report

Department: Cornwall SDG Human Services Department
Division: Housing Services
Report Number: 2023-28-Cornwall SDG Human Services Department
Prepared By: Lisa Smith, Manager, Housing Services
Meeting Date: April 24, 2023
Subject: Vacant Land for Future Municipally Operated Affordable Housing Developments

Purpose

To provide Council with additional information relating to the advancement of recommendations in the Housing Revitalization Plan and the Mayor's Housing Task Force as it pertains to municipally owned vacant lands.

Recommendation

That Council approve the designation of municipally owned vacant land located at 330 Montreal Road for a future affordable housing development.

Financial Implications

None, at this time.

Strategic Priority Implications

This project aligns with Council's Strategic Plan to grow quality housing stock, including affordable housing.

Background / Discussion

As a mandate of the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing, the City (as Service Manager) was required to complete a Ten-Year Housing Plan and subsequently a Five-Year Update to that original Plan. Following a presentation to Council on July 8, 2019, the Five-Year Update was approved by Council at the August 12, 2019 meeting.

As a recommendation from the Five-Year Update, on October 13, 2020, Council approved The Cornwall SD&G Housing Revitalization Plan (the Plan) which identified that the most resource intensive component of providing housing is capital investment required to create new housing (Council report # 2020-226-Social and Housing Services). This includes land which can be a great cost component to the overall cost of development.

To translate the above strategy into achievable projects, the housing needs were further dissected across two five-year periods – 2021 to 2026 and 2027 to 2031. The existing sites and potential new sites in the Cornwall and SDG areas were reviewed for constraints and opportunities to developing new units through additions to the existing site, demolishing existing and building new or building new units in a greenfield site. As part of reviewing constraints and opportunities, sites that allowed shovel ready projects considering current site conditions and applicable regulations were identified. A list of potential projects was identified, including municipally owned vacant lands at 504 4th St. East (former Bob Turner/Joe St. Denis Field) and the corner of Ninth St. and McConnell in Cornwall.

The Plan also pointed to a clear consensus emerging for more affordable housing units suitable for families and individuals in all stages of life and of varying financial standing. Development on municipally owned vacant land could address a good portion of those needs. Results also showed that there is a preference for creating self sufficient communities with public services and amenities such as recreational, healthcare, and educational facilities.

Furthermore, the housing needs assessment showed that, approximately 740+ units will be required in the Cornwall and SDG area by 2031. Over 40% of the identified housing needs will be in the City of Cornwall.

To make projects more viable and to support diversified communities, as indicated above, we have determined that at least 30% of any development

should be at or near market rent. In addition, since COVID, we anticipate that the 740+ units that were originally identified are now under understated.

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| Total Affordable Units Required (by 2031 – from the Plan) | 741 |
| Total Affordable Units Required (post COVID 20% est. increase) | 889 |
| Total % Required in Cornwall (40%) | 356 |
| Additional Units – Market/Near Market Rent (+30%) | 106 |
| Total Units Required in Cornwall (by 2031) | 462 |

In early 2022, the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing adopted a Community Housing Renewal Strategy (CHRS) which outlined a plan to work with municipalities, non-profits, and housing co-ops to stabilize and grow the community housing sector. There have also been other Ministry reports and action plans that have addressed the need for more housing in Ontario.

According to the Ontario Housing Affordability Task Force Report (Feb. 2022), “While the affordability crisis began in our large cities, it has now spread to smaller towns and rural communities.”

“Time is of the essence. Building housing now is exactly what our post-pandemic economy needs.”

“Resolving a crisis requires intense focus and a clear goal.”

As part of this report, it also identifies that undeveloped land inside and outside existing municipal boundaries must be part of the solution, particularly in northern and rural communities.

On May 5, 2022, as part of continued action from our Plan, City Council passed a resolution and approved the Declaration of an Affordable Housing Crisis. That report indicated, amongst other things, that Administration provide City Council with what it will take to implement more aggressive targets and a framework for action, in order to:

- preserve and increase the affordable housing supply,
- increase access to housing affordability,
- ensure people are supported to achieve housing stability and long-term housing retention; and
- that Administration be directed to develop a long-range financial plan to meet the targets as set out in the Housing Revitalization Plan.

Additionally, on May 24, 2022, Council received the final report and recommendations from the Mayor's Housing Task Force (Council Report # 2022-17-CAO). One of the recommendations within that report was to "Support and endorse the recommendations made in the Housing Revitalization Plan, as previously approved by Council."

In late 2022, to support the ambitious goals laid out in the local Five-Year Housing Update, the Housing Revitalization Plan, and the 4 separate regional Housing Reports (including the Mayor's Task Force), there was a recognized need to form a Working Group to be tasked with developing and realizing common strategies and priorities related to affordable housing.

The Affordable Housing Progress and Development Collaborative (A HOME) was created to improve service integration, which will promote positive development in the City of Cornwall, Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry housing and homelessness situation. To ensure maximum effectiveness of the Collaborative, membership is comprised of a cross-sector of disciplines from amongst the City and Counties staff, who share the vision of increasing housing opportunities across the region. To the best of our knowledge, this has been the first committee of its kind with 100% collaboration from across the geographic region.

Amongst the Collaborative's first tasks has been to identify all municipally owned vacation lands across the City of Cornwall and S.D.&G. that could be designated for future affordable housing projects. To prepare for a long-term strategic development, it is imperative to begin work early to identify potential lands. Considerable time savings can be realized by pre-qualifying the land to make it "shovel-ready" when funding becomes available.

In the 2023 budget, Council approved the hiring of a consultant to complete a long-term housing development strategy. This will be completed in the latter half of 2023, once all Councils have approved designation of lands suitable for affordable housing.

This initiative also aligns with the Eastern Ontario Warden's Caucus (EOWC) priority of affordable and attainable housing, which includes their '7 in 7' Regional Housing Plan. This plan proposes building at least 7,000 community rental units over seven years across the EOWC region to address housing wait lists. Using a



mixed-model approach, the '7 in 7' plan has the added benefit to bring on 21,000 additional market rate units. This would total 28,000 housing units.

As per the Housing Revitalization Plan, some municipally owned lands were identified as suitable for affordable housing developments. Administration met to review options that currently exist within the city.

Initial reviews of municipally owned vacant land, indicate that there will not be enough municipally owned land to meet our development needs. As not all lands are suitable for affordable housing, as we reviewed existing vacant lands, we considered the following:

- Approximation to existing amenities, resources, and services (ie, grocery stores, hospitals, schools, churches, recreation facilities, etc.)
- On a transit route
- Enough square footage to develop a diverse housing community that includes mixed income profiles (including better tenant support)
- Operational efficiencies (ie, economies of scale when developing, ongoing maintenance, better tenant support)

Future Plans

330 Montreal Road

Existing Land Use - commercial parking space and the Cornwall Police Service auxiliary station.

Future Land Use - as this is the current location of the Cornwall Police Services auxiliary station, we have had some initial discussions with them as it relates to their future facility needs analysis, which is currently underway. They have extended an offer for us to engage with their consultant with respect to discussion on a future joint development opportunity.



In addition to ground floor commercial space (potential collaboration with CPS and some basic housing operational space), this development would also include 3 – 4 additional floors of affordable housing units.

This site would be included in our long-term housing development plan and timelines would also coincide with any potential future development from CPS, should that be determined.

Accessibility Impact

Future development would meet or exceed requirements in the Ontario Building Code.

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| Document Title: | Vacant Land for Future Affordable Housing Developments - 2023-28-Cornwall SDG Human Services Department.docx |
| Attachments: | |
| Final Approval Date: | Apr 19, 2023 |

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

Lisa Smith - Apr 18, 2023 - 10:48 AM

Mellissa Morgan - Apr 18, 2023 - 10:49 AM

Tracey Bailey - Apr 18, 2023 - 10:04 PM

Mark A. Boileau - Apr 19, 2023 - 8:00 AM