

CITY OF FORT SASKATCHEWAN

Habitat for Humanity Land Selection Project Update

Purpose:

To provide an update on the public engagement process related to the development and donation of the site at 9507 – 93 Avenue to Habitat for Humanity for the purpose of constructing single family homes, as directed by Council on January 26, 2016.

Background:

Habitat for Humanity is a successful, world-wide, not-for-profit organization that assists families achieve home ownership. The City of Fort Saskatchewan and Habitat for Humanity have worked together on three projects within the community. There have been a total of 12 units built for families in Fort Saskatchewan as part of the City's affordable housing block funding from the Province. Two were built in 2008, eight were built in 2009, and 2 more were built in 2012.

Administration has been in discussions with Habitat over the last year regarding the need to start looking for another project location. Habitat for Humanity has a unique model that allows families to get their first step onto the property ladder. It truly is a perpetual affordability model. Over the last few years Habitat has moved from developing single family housing to duplex and multi-family housing. Their objective is to develop another project within Fort Saskatchewan using the funds generated from previous projects.

With each project that is completed in a community it generates revenue for Habitat to continue providing more homes. In order to develop these homes, Habitat for Humanity relies on the donation of land, materials, and in some instances labour.

In October of 2014, Council directed Administration to undertake an analysis of all City owned properties that would be suitable for a multi-unit Habitat for Humanity build. That work was undertaken and based on the outcomes of that analysis, Council directed Administration to move ahead with public consultation with respect to the property at 9507 - 93 Avenue. This site was deemed to be the only suitable City owned property for this type of project.

Administration has worked with Habitat for Humanity to determine if the site is technically suitable to them. They have produced a concept drawing for discussion purposes.

On February 24, a focus group was held at City Hall with the landowners residing adjacent to the proposed project site. A total of 11 properties were sent invitations. There were 6 properties represented by 11 individuals in attendance. Administration was extremely impressed with the depth of understanding and research undertaken by those in attendance and wish to thank those who attended the focus group for the respectful dialogue and feedback.

In addition to the focus group, to date, Administration has officially logged 20 comments received from citizens. This does not include questions asked by Council that may have been passed along by a resident.

The significant points of feedback received from the focus group and submitted comments are:

- Traffic – Concerns were raised regarding the impact of additional vehicle traffic in the Sherridon neighborhood.
- Property values – The loss of green space would negatively affect the property values for the adjacent landowners.

- Loss of green space – The green space at 9507 - 93 Avenue is used by families and local residents and the loss would negatively affect quality of life.
- Children – There would be additional children in the neighborhood which may cause problems.
- Water reservoir – What are the impacts to the reservoir if this project goes forward? Can the reservoir handle construction in close proximity?
- Zoning – Why can a PU zoning be changed so easily?
- Crime rates – Increased density will result in additional crime to the neighborhood.
- Neighborhood character – New builds don't fit in a 40 year old neighborhood. These are two story builds amongst bungalows.
- Social segregation – Concern that putting so many Habitat for Humanity homes within one location will make them feel alienated.
- Site plan concerns – Issues brought up such as trail system modification, dumpster location, highway proximity, and visitor parking stalls.
- City development costs – With the costs the City will invest in this site, why don't we just buy land somewhere else?
- Support for Habitat for Humanity and the need to address housing affordability.

Administration will continue to log feedback including any comments made tonight and from the March 16 public open house. In addition, further technical analysis of the site will be done by Administration to address concerns arising from the engagement process as to any impact on the reservoir.

The intent at this point is to bring back the final public engagement report on April 12, 2016 for Council's consideration.

Plans/Standards/Legislation:

This initiative is consistent with the City's Corporate Strategic Goals of:

- Promote sustainability through infill development
- Opportunity to increase accessible and affordable housing within the community

Financial Implications:

Section 70(1) of the *Municipal Government Act* allows a municipality to transfer or grant land for less than its market value without having to advertise the proposal if the land is to be used by a non-profit organization as defined in Section 241(f). Habitat for Humanity Canada is a national, non-profit organization and fits the definition of "non-profit organization" outlined in Section 241(f) (iii) "any other entity established under a law of Canada or Alberta for a purpose other than to make a profit".

As Habitat for Humanity acts as the developer for this project, approving the use of this site and the subsequent donation of land, no additional costs are anticipated from the City of Fort Saskatchewan.

Internal Impacts:

Significant time and internal resources are being used on the public engagement process. If the project is approved, the impacts to the City will predominantly be in a liaison capacity.



Attachments:

1. Appendix A - October 14, 2014 regular Council Meeting, Habitat for Humanity Memo
2. Appendix B – 9507 - 93 Avenue Habitat for Humanity Preliminary Site Analysis

File No.:

Approved by: Troy Fleming
General Manager, Infrastructure
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Date: March 1, 2016

Reviewed by: Kelly Kloss
City Manager

Date: March 2, 2016

Submitted to: City Council

Date: March 8, 2016