

CITY OF FORT SASKATCHEWAN

Habitat for Humanity

Recommendation:

That Council direct Administration to work with Habitat for Humanity to generate one or more options for Council's approval that will allow the future construction of a Habitat for Humanity Home within the City of Fort Saskatchewan.

Background:

Habitat for Humanity is a successful world-wide not-for-profit organization that provides affordable home ownership for families. The City of Fort Saskatchewan and Habitat for Humanity have worked together on two projects within the community. The first was a duplex unit located on 97 Avenue and the second was eight units (in Southfort Ridge) as part of the City's affordable housing block funding from the Province. With each project that is completed in a community it generates revenue for Habitat to continue providing more homes.

Administration has been in discussions with Habitat over the last year regarding the need to start looking for another project location.

Topic Identification/Outcomes:

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.

In order to develop property, Habitat for Humanity relies on things like the donation of land, materials, and in some cases labour. To move forward with a project in Fort Saskatchewan it does require that the land be provided at no cost to Habitat.

Alternatives:

1. That Council direct Administration to work with Habitat for Humanity to generate one or more options for Council's approval that will allow the future construction of a Habitat for Humanity Home within the City of Fort Saskatchewan.
2. That Council not direct Administration to work with Habitat for Humanity.
3. That Council provide other direction.

Preferred Alternative:

Alternative #1 is recommended by Administration, that Council direct Administration to work with Habitat for Humanity to generate one or more options for Council's approval that will allow the future construction of a Habitat for Humanity Home within the City of Fort Saskatchewan.

Staff Capacity:

Administration will require outside expertise to do a general site assessment and potentially undertake public engagement as well.

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."

Costs to the City will be in the form of surveying and subdividing the property before transferring to Habitat for Humanity. This is estimated to be in the range of \$5,000.00. There may also be additional costs of using outside expertise to do an assessment of potential sites to ensure that the site is appropriate from a technical perspective and to assist with public engagement. It is believed this work can be achieved within the current budget and would not exceed \$20,000.00.

Policy/Council Priorities:

Through Council's approval of the City's Affordable Housing Strategy in April 2010, working with Habitat for Humanity was identified as one of the ways to achieve the objectives of the strategy.

Community Sustainability Plan:

Working with Habitat for Humanity aligns with achieving the affordable housing component of the Community Sustainability Plan (CSP) in particular:

Principle F: A Complete Community - To promote a high quality of life, we will work to ensure that Fort Saskatchewan has a wide range of housing, employment, education, and leisure opportunities. We will develop mixed use neighbourhoods with a diversity of amenities and services so everyone has a place to call home that is close to essential community services. A complete community will enable everyone to meet their daily needs within the City.

Moving that principle forward the first section of the CSP, Compassionate Community & Sense of Community, states: "A compassionate community with a sense of identity offers a strong social fabric. When we are able to fulfill many of our social and cultural human needs such as participation in community, identity and affection, we are contributing to sustainability." Four priorities were developed, which one speaks directly to affordable and seniors housing: "Develop a long-term alternative housing strategy that includes affordable and seniors housing."

