

STAFF REPORT



THE CORPORATION OF THE TOWN OF COBOURG

Report to:	Mayor and Council Members	Priority:	<input type="checkbox"/> High <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Low
Submitted by:	Rob Franklin, MCIP, RPP Acting Director of Planning & Development rfranklin@cobourg.ca	Meeting Type: Open Session <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Closed Session <input type="checkbox"/>	
Meeting Date:	November 15, 2021		
Report No.:	[Report Number]		
Submit comments to Council			

Subject/Title: Cobourg Municipal Land Inventory for Potential Affordable Housing Sites – Inventory Short-List and Recommendations from the Municipal Land Inventory Ad-Hoc Working Group

RECOMMENDATION:

THAT Council receive this Report for information purposes; and,

FURTHER THAT Council direct staff to develop and implement a comprehensive community consultation and engagement plan with respect to the short-listed inventory of municipally-owned properties identified in this Report for the purpose of potentially disposing of portions of the lands and/or using such lands to facilitate the creation of affordable housing in the community with information to come back to Council the end of April 2022; and,

FURTHER THAT Council direct staff to examine the short-list inventory with respect to high-level opportunities/constraints associated with servicing, infrastructure, and public parkland/facility loss/impact by mid-March 2022.

1. STRATEGIC PLAN

PILLAR: People -- the Town supports and cares for the social and physical well-being of its citizens.

2. PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

This Report is placed on the Committee of the Whole Agenda 10 days in advance of the meeting and will be considered by Council in open session.

3. PURPOSE

This Report is intended to provide Council with a summary of the Municipal Land Inventory Ad-Hoc Working Group's recommendations, including a site short-list and an implementation plan, regarding the potential use of municipally-owned lands in the town for affordable housing sites in accordance with the provisions of the County & Town Affordable Housing Strategies and the Town of Cobourg Affordable & Rental Housing Community Improvement Plan (CIP). This Report should be read in conjunction with the Staff Report of April 19, 2021 for additional background and clarity.

4. ORIGIN AND LEGISLATION

On November 16, 2020, Council passed a Motion to adopt the Affordable & Rental Housing CIP pursuant to Section 28 of the *Planning Act*. This Motion also included the following action:

FURTHER THAT Council direct staff to put together an inventory of potential municipal-owned surplus lands, buildings and/or facilities by March 22, 2021 for it to consider as potential support for Section 3.8.8 Donation or Sale of Surplus Lands of the Affordable and Rental Housing Community Improvement Plan;

At its meeting dated April 26, 2021, Council passed the following Motion:

THAT Council continue with the review of municipally-owned properties for the purpose of potentially disposing of and/or using such lands to facilitate the creation of affordable housing by establishing an internal ad-hoc working group comprised of:

- *Coordinator of Planning and Development*
- *Coordinator of Public Works*
- *Coordinator of Parks and Recreation*
- *Member from the Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee*
- *Member from the Planning and Development Advisory Committee*

AND FURTHER THAT a member from the Northumberland Affordable Housing Committee, staff from Northumberland County's Housing Services and staff from the Town of Cobourg's Community Services (Parks), Public Works and Planning divisions be invited to attend meetings of the internal ad-hoc working group when required to act as resources; and

FURTHER THAT the recommendations of the internal ad-hoc working group be provided to Staff and brought forward to Council in a Staff Report; And further that the ad-hoc working group provide a recommended shortlist and implementation plan to Council by September 13, 2021.

5. BACKGROUND

Since 2019, the Municipal Council of the Town of Cobourg has implemented a number of initiatives and recommendations associated with the Northumberland and Cobourg Affordable Housing Strategies (AHS), including but not limited to:

- the provision of various financial incentives to affordable and rental housing providers, including Trinity Housing of Cobourg, Habitat for Humanity and Balder Corporation, in 2019;
- the consideration of an Affordable Housing Financial Support Policy and Strategy in April, 2019;
- a comprehensive legal review of legislation and options pertaining to affordable housing in May, 2019;
- enactment of legislative changes to permit waivers, reductions and/or deferrals of planning, building and development charges/fees for affordable and rental housing projects in September, 2019;
- approval of an agreement of purchase and sale of surplus municipal land to Habitat for Humanity for the development of an affordable housing project in September, 2019;
- the endorsement of the policy framework and recommended Actions contained within the County and Town Affordable Housing Strategies in January, 2020;
- the deferral of Development Charges and waiver of interest for a mixed affordable housing project at 82 Munroe Street in June, 2020;
- the waiver of interest on the Development Charge deferral for a mixed affordable housing project at 311-325 University Avenue West/387 William Street in August, 2020; and,
- the adoption of a town-wide Affordable & Rental Housing CIP in November, 2020;

Section 3.8.8 of the Affordable & Rental Housing CIP specifies that the Town may, in its discretion, donate, lease or sell any surplus property of the municipality at below fair market value for the purposes of redeveloping such surplus lands for the purposes of affordable and/or rental housing, and that the Town may, in its discretion, guarantee borrowing, or provide for a total or partial exemption from any levy, charge or fee for the purposes of affordable and/or rental housing.

The following provides a general synopsis of the results of the municipal land inventory compiled as part of the April 19, 2021 Staff Report to Council¹. The Staff Report provided Council with GIS mapping and data of municipally-owned properties in town. Based on this research, it was discovered that the Town of Cobourg owns a total of ~226 ha (558 ac) of land within the municipal boundary or just over 10% of the total land area of the municipality (@ 2,237 ha).

Table 1 below provides a consolidated summary of municipally-owned lands grouped by zone category and status:

Zoning Category	Status	Land Area (ha)	% of Total Municipally-Owned Land
Environmental Constraint/Floodplain	Physical/Environmental	58	26
Employment Lands*	Hazards, Land Use Policy	71	31
Transportation/Road Allowances	Constraints,	7	3
Development/Road Allowances	Unopened/Future Road	2	1
Glen Watford Road Tax Sale Lots	Allowances	3	1
		141	62
Parkland Open Space	Public Open Space System	60	27
Institutional	Existing Municipal Facilities,	15	7
Main Central Commercial	Parking Lots, Vacant	2	1
Industrial (Tannery site)	Industrial/Mixed Use, Place of Worship	3	1
		20	9
District Commercial	Road Allowances, Pumping Station, SWM Pond, Creek Lands, Future Road Allowance	3	1
Residential	Parkland, Walkways, Creek Lands, Dressler House	2	1
Total		226	100

Table 1 – Summary of Municipally-Owned Land

* Excludes the Tannery site

Attached to this Report as **Appendix “I”** is a table spreadsheet and associated mapping consisting of data on numerous municipally-owned properties extracted from the Town’s GIS system and outlined in the original Staff Report to Council in April, 2021. Based on a very preliminary ‘high-level’ review, a brief description of the existing site functions, features and facilities are included in the data together with some general commentary regarding their potential for consideration as possible infill development from a physical perspective only.

Further detailed assessments in a number of areas of expertise (ie. land use compatibility, parkland needs, parking needs, engineering, environmental/natural heritage, noise impact, soils investigation, etc.) and public/stakeholder consultations are recommended for these sites to be considered for potential development. It should be noted that the GIS system contains a certain degree of

¹ Reference to the original Staff Report should be made to ensure accuracy and completeness

error and not all municipal properties may be listed based on search criteria, data matches and anomalies – every attempt was made to cross-check and ensure that all relevant data has been captured.

As the data indicates, almost 2/3 of municipally-owned land is undevelopable due to physical and/or policy-related constraints and should not be considered for residential use as part of the inventory moving forward. Specifically, Environmental Constraint areas (ie. floodplains, Lake Ontario shoreline, woodlots, sensitive lands, etc.) are undevelopable for any residential use without comprehensive environmental and floodplain analyses and approval by the GRCA and/or MNRF.

Lands designated for employment uses are not permitted for residential use without an extensive employment conversion exercise being conducted in accordance with Provincial, County and municipal policies through a Municipal Comprehensive Review (MCR), in addition to land use compatibility and noise impact analyses due to residential encroachment into employment areas. Given the limited supply of employment land and the generous supply of designated residential land in the municipality, it is unlikely that a conversion would be justified. The only exception is the Tannery site – a 2.7 ha (6.6 ac) parcel in the Tannery District which is designated as a Mixed Use Area – Unique Site in the Official Plan and is currently subject to a master planning exercise to permit a mix of residential and non-residential uses.

Approximately 12 ha of land is comprised of small and/or irregular parcels forming unopened/future road allowances (Kerr Street, Roger's Road, White Street), stormwater management facilities, creek/floodplain lands, and sewage pumping stations. Just over 3 ha is comprised of municipally-acquired tax sale lots located west of Glen Watford Road that have no services, no road frontage or safe, secondary means of emergency access. A number of very small parcels, such as pedestrian walkway links, creek parcels and minor remnants were discounted due to their size and unsuitability for development and were not included in the inventory.

Based on the above, the Staff Report found that a net land area of approx. 82 ha remains available for further consideration in the inventory, almost $\frac{3}{4}$ of which (60 ha) is comprised of public parkland/open space. Approx. 22 ha is occupied by existing municipal facilities and landholdings, such as the CCC, Memorial/Heenan arenas, Cobourg Police Service building, Victoria Hall, Dressler House, Cobourg Public Library, St. Paul's Lutheran Church, the vacant Tannery site and various municipal parking lots.

6. ANALYSIS

During the period of June -- September of 2021, the Municipal Land Inventory Ad-Hoc Working Group met seven (7) times to review the inventory and analyze the potential for sites to be considered for affordable housing projects. Representatives from the County of Northumberland Community and Social Services Department (Rebecca Carman, County Housing Services Manager) and

the Northumberland Affordable Housing Committee (Patricia Orantes, Executive Director - The Help Centre) attended the August 20th meeting, while municipal staff attended all the meetings to provide input and support to the Working Group. The discussion was open and collaborative, with input welcomed from all members of the Group.

Municipally-owned properties within each “sector” or quadrant of the inventory (A, B, C and D) were reviewed and discussed by the Working Group in greater detail. Among the criteria examined included:

- physical, servicing and land use opportunities/constraints (ie. land suitability, land size/configuration, serviceability, development potential);
- neighbourhood/community needs and impacts (ie. parkland, community facilities, socio-economic factors);
- municipal operational needs (ie. capital infrastructure, parking, administrative/recreational facilities);
- potential unit yield (ie. economics, impact on addressing housing needs);
- potential partnership opportunities;
- proximity to community facilities, commercial areas and support services;
- proximity to transit and active transportation modes of travel;

The last 2 items were added formally after the August 20th meeting at the suggestion of our Housing partners to further refine the sites and were based on CMHC review criteria that included: distance to a transit stop; neighbourhood park; community centre; library; elementary school; hospital; and if there are job opportunities. There were some additional criteria however, it was difficult to map in GIS the distance to a grocery store, pharmacy, childcare or health care services as individual retail and commercial service locations are subject to tenant changes on a regular basis although they could be checked during detailed review. Attached to this Report as **Appendix “III”** is a table spreadsheet showing these additional review items.

Following extensive discussion, and based on an examination of all information available, the Working Group used a process of elimination and short-listed the inventory to include the following municipally-owned properties for further consideration as part of a comprehensive public consultation and engagement process:

A. Priority List

1. Charles Street Parking Lot (see **C22** on the inventory short-list attached as **Appendix “II”**)
2. Hibernia Street Parking Lot (see **C30**)
3. 96 Alice Street - Former Tannery Property (**C31**)
4. Cobourg Memorial Arena (**D3**)
5. Tracey Park (see **C18**)

Although included in the Priority List, the above properties will require further examination with respect to land use categories and approvals, servicing opportunities/constraints, and innovative site planning & design approaches.

B. Secondary List

The following properties were identified as having some potential for use as affordable housing sites, however further investigation would be required with respect to infrastructure (services, stormwater management), parkland demand/impact, and potential for partnership opportunities before they could be deemed feasible for development:

1. Westwood Park (see **A10**)
2. Morley Cane Park (see **B1**)
3. Peter Delanty Park (see **C11**)

Appendix “II” provides some commentary with respect to the opportunities and constraints associated with each of the aforementioned sites. The short-list includes both park lands and municipal facilities, and thus it will be important to carefully examine the pros and cons, and costs and benefits, of reducing public spaces and facilities in the name of creating affordable housing. It should also be noted that the use of some or all of these parcels may be limited by servicing and/or other physical constraints and that further review will be required.

PLEASE NOTE that any park spaces listed above are not identifying the entire park for housing, nor eliminating existing playground and other park amenity features but only potentially using a portion of the site for infill residential uses. These parks are critical for the health and well-being of the neighbourhoods in which they are located. If alteration to Park spaces were to occur, possible conversion of Open Space to Park Space may be considered at other sites to offset the loss and meet the Parks Master Plan general direction for additional park space in Cobourg.

An amendment to the Official Plan and/or Zoning By-law, together with Site Plan Approval, and various supporting studies would be required in most cases to permit residential uses on these municipal lands. It is suggested that the ultimate proponent(s) of affordable housing projects be responsible for exercising due diligence and obtaining all municipal approvals with respect to the applicable site(s).

Finally, a comment/suggestion was placed on the floor of the Working Group meeting of August 17th by Member M. Mutton for the County of Northumberland to consider re-purposing the existing County-owned Golden Plough Lodge building for affordable and rental housing.

Next Steps

In accordance with Council's direction, this Report is intended to provide Council with a short-list summary of municipally-owned land in the town and recommendations regarding the use of potential sites for further development for affordable housing purposes as developed by the Working Group.

Should Council wish to advance the process and examine the above-referenced sites for possible disposal and/or use as affordable housing, it is recommended that a comprehensive public engagement and communications plan (i.e. EngageCobourg, social media, print/radio media, neighbourhood meetings, etc.) be developed in collaboration with the Communications Department in order to provide residents with an opportunity to review the various options and provide feedback prior to a decision being made by Council.

It is further recommended that Council direct staff to examine the eight (8) short-listed properties with respect to servicing and/or other physical constraints, and the pros and cons, and costs and benefits, of reducing public spaces and facilities.

7. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS/BUDGET IMPACTS

There are no financial implications as a result of this Report, however future actions and decisions of Council and municipal staff on this issue may impose some degree of cost to the Municipality, including but not limited to the further examination of potential sites for suitability, serviceability, and municipal park/facility loss & impact by municipal staff and/or consultants as well as possible engagement tools.

8. CONCLUSION

In accordance with Council's direction of April 26, 2021, a Municipal Land Inventory Ad-Hoc Working Group was established to review the inventory of municipally-owned properties in the community. Following extensive review, the Working Group created a short-list of five (5) *priority* sites, as follows:

1. Charles Street Parking Lot (see **C22** on the inventory short-list attached as **Appendix "II"**)
2. Hibernia Street Parking Lot (see **C30**)
3. 96 Alice Street - Former Tannery Property (**C31**)
4. Cobourg Memorial Arena (**D3**)
5. Tracey Park (see **C18**)

The Working Group also developed a *contingency*, or *secondary*, list of three (3) properties as outlined below:

1. Westwood Park (see **A10**)
2. Morley Cane Park (see **B1**)
3. Peter Delanty Park (see **C11**)

Moving forward, it will be important for Council to carefully examine the potential infill sites with respect to suitability, serviceability and other physical limitations, development potential, and to consider the opportunities and impacts on area neighbourhoods and the greater community. In addition, it is recommended that Council implement a comprehensive community consultation and engagement plan to obtain public feedback on the short-listed inventory prior to arriving at a decision.

Report Approval Details

Document Title:	Cobourg Municipal Land Inventory Final Report - Planning and Development-037-21.docx
Attachments:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Appendix I - Municipal Land Inventory Table_Final Revised_Oct 2021.pdf - Appendix I - Municipal Land Inventory Map_Final Revised_Apr 9 2021.pdf - Appendix II - Municipal Land Inventory Table_Short-List_Oct 2021.pdf - Appendix II - Municipal Land Inventory Map_Short-List_Oct 2021.pdf - Appendix III AffordableHousingShort Llist CMHC Criteria.pdf
Final Approval Date:	Nov 3, 2021

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

Tracey Vaughan, Chief Administrative Officer - Nov 3, 2021 - 6:09 PM