

# STAFF REPORT

THE CORPORATION OF THE TOWN OF COBOURG



<b>Report to:</b>	Mayor and Council Members	<b>Priority:</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> High <input type="checkbox"/> Low
<b>Submitted by:</b>	Anne Taylor Scott, MCIP, RPP, Director, Planning and Development Division, ataylorsscott@cobourg.ca	<b>Meeting Type:</b>	Open Session <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Closed Session <input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Meeting Date:</b>	<b>September 26, 2022</b>		
<b>Report No.:</b>	Planning and Development-076-22		
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**Subject/Title: Municipal Land Inventory Engagement Results and Next Steps**

## RECOMMENDATION:

THAT Council receive this Staff Report for information.

THAT Council approve Priority Site #1 being the lands to the west of Memorial Area as a site to be further reviewed for the potential disposition of land for housing purposes.

FURTHER THAT Council direct Planning Staff to further explore one of the following housing options for Priority Site #1:

1. Tiny Home Demonstration Development
2. Transitional Housing
3. Affordable Rental Apartment Building

FURTHER THAT Staff report back on the feasibility and options for delivering a housing special project on Priority Site #1 no later than January 31, 2023.

FURTHER THAT Staff maintain a roster list of the seven remaining sites to form part of the Planning & Development Division's work program; and to further investigate the remaining sites upon completing the investigation and implementation of any opportunity identified for Priority Site #1.

## 1. STRATEGIC PLAN

The recommendations of this report support the pillar of “People” whereby the Town supports and cares for the social and physical well-being of its citizens.

Identifying a municipally owned parcel that could be used for housing supports both the Town of Cobourg and Northumberland County’s housing strategy

Advancing this project will assist people in finding attainable housing and supports the creation of a variety of housing options to suit the broadest range of needs.

## 2. PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

The topic of a municipal land inventory to identify potential lands, buildings and/or facilities that could be used for affordable and/or rental housing opportunities was discussed at by Council in November 2020, April 2021 and most recently November 15, 2021.

A public engagement period on the 8 identified sites took place between April 27, 2022, and May 20, 2022.

This report was made available a minimum of 10 days prior to the September 26, 2022, Committee of the Whole meeting.

## 3. PURPOSE

The purpose of this Staff report is to report back on the public engagement findings from April 27, 2022 and May 20, 2022, and to provide a recommended strategy should Council wish to advance the development of housing project on municipal lands.

## 4. ORIGIN AND LEGISLATION

As part of the work on the Affordable and Rental Housing CIP program, Council identified an opportunity to review and consider existing town-owned lands that could be deemed surplus and potentially development for housing purposes

On November 22, 2021 Council passed the following resolution:

*WHEREAS at the Committee of the Whole Meeting on November 15, 2021, Council considered a Memo from the Acting Director of Planning & Development regarding the Cobourg Municipal Land Inventory for Potential Affordable Housing Sites – Inventory Short-List and Recommendations from the Municipal Land Inventory Ad-Hoc Working Group;*

*NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED 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 the Staff 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.*

## 5. BACKGROUND

In November 2020, Cobourg Municipal Council approved the Affordable and Rental Housing and Community Improvement Plan. At this time, in recognition of the current need for affordable housing in Northumberland County, Council further directed staff to create an inventory of potential municipal-owned surplus lands, buildings and/or facilities to consider as potential support for the donation or sale of surplus lands.

This work continued in 2021 and included the efforts of an internal ad-hoc working group. Following extensive review, in November 2021 a staff report was submitted to Council identifying eight shortlisted properties that form the basis of this public engagement opportunity.

The public engagement objective for the Potential Affordable Housing Sites project was to:

- Inform residents and the development community of the land use inventory results and sites identified.
- Hear feedback from Cobourg residents on these sites including ideas, questions, or concerns from neighbouring community members.
- Explore development opportunities with the development industry and housing provider community.

## 6. ANALYSIS

As part of the engagement process, Staff prepared information sheets for each of the 8 sites. The information sheets contained key information including a context map, high-level information on servicing and planning considerations i.e., what the suitable built form may be.

Key metrics coming out of the Engage Cobourg site are provided in Appendix IX and can be summarized as follows:

- A total of 485 visits to this initiative on Engage Cobourg
- 191 residents participated including 188 survey responses and 17 contributions in the forum

Results of the surveys are included in Appendix X and were used to support Staff's analysis below and recommendations.

### **Parkland sites**

The engagement period uncovered that residents do not wish to see parkland developed for residential purposes.

Staff understand there may still be a general understanding by the public that it would be the entire park being developed even though the Engage Cobourg site provided clarity:

#### *Important Note Regarding Park Spaces*

*Any park spaces listed 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.*

In the context of the 8 sites, parkland is not recommended as a priority site at this time for the following reasons:

- General sentiment from residents who participated that they would be unsupportive.
- Residents could appeal Planning Act decisions thereby triggering unforeseen delays to the project.
- Development yield would be low in these predominately suburban neighbourhoods i.e., these are generally not lands that could support higher densities and/or taller buildings.
- Council recently made progress on the development of a new home for Habitat for Humanity along Daintry Crescent. This is a similar concept/model that would likely be pursued should a park site be used for housing. Council may wish to diversify their approach for this next project.

### **Tannery District**

The Tannery District is a logical and preferred site to advance for affordable, attainable, and rental housing purposes. At this time and given the last steps in the approval process for the implementing planning documents, Staff are of the opinion that the development of these lands, while still a priority, are a bit further down the horizon.

### **Downtown Parking Lots**

The use of downtown parking lots such as the Hibernia Street Lot and the Charles Street lot pose concerns relating to the loss of parking in the downtown.

There are increasing development pressures in the Town and existing parking supply is anticipated to decrease over time as privately owned lots intensify.

While the 2 lots in question are not large parking lots Staff recommend that the lots not be pursued for housing at this time. The lots could be relooked at in the future and pending:

- Changes to the Zoning By-law that would reduce parking rates in the downtown;
- A formal cash-in-lieu of parking by-law and strategy;
- Update to the Downtown Parking Study provided by Paradigm 2014; and
- Progress being made on additional parking supply whether that be a new parking structure or some other downtown parking initiative.

### **Recommended Priority Site – Lands to the West of Memorial Arena**

Given the limitations found on the other seven sites, the lands to the west of Memorial Arena are preferred.

Through the engagement period, participants did not oppose residential development on this site.

The site also does not impact the downtown parking supply nor affect parkland.

The site is in a location that could also support some gentle density therefore Staff anticipate a higher yield of units on this site versus parkland sites.

To that end it appears that development on this site could happen the quickest and while at the same time yielding a number of units to address the housing shortfall in the community.

### **Summary**

The lands west of Memorial Arena together with the repurposing of the facility as provided in the report by Community Services Report-130-22 appear to be a 'quick win' in the provision of lands for housing by the Town of Cobourg.

This is not to say that other sites are 'off the table' but rather the remaining sites can be revisited over time as time and resources allow.

It is important to note that the Town of Cobourg through the lens of providing housing for all is also supportive of creating affordable and attainable housing on other key sites, including Brookside and other vacant lands as they may become

available to the Town, other levels of government and/or partner organizations for housing.

### **Next Steps**

Staff can commit to reporting back to Council in January 2023. Pending approval of the subject recommendation Staff will review best practices relating to a Call for Proposal that could be established seeking interested parties who wish to pursue a project of this nature. The Town's declaration of surplus land and land disposition policies would apply. These factors and others will be included in the strategy report that would be presented to Council in 2023.

## **7. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS/BUDGET IMPACTS**

Not applicable at this time. Financial implications and budget impacts are likely to occur as the project advances and will be discussed in subsequent reporting.

## **8. CONCLUSION**

Identifying, studying, and planning for a development site involves a considerable amount of time and resources. Much work has gone into this initiative and will continue should a site be selected. This work must be balanced with other Planning priorities, such as development application review, special projects like the ICSP and Green Development Standards, and updating Planning documents including the Zoning By-law review and Official Plan update. While it would be great to pursue projects on all 8 sites, Planning Staff prefer to focus efforts on one site at the present time.

Through this process it became evident that one site stands out as providing an opportunity for this Council to set the priority for Staff to pursue as a site that could be developed for housing purposes. This site appears to have minimal challenges or barriers to development and dovetails nicely with ongoing work on the future of Memorial Arena.

While other sites may also have good merit, in Staff's opinion the other 7 sites could take longer to be 'shovel-ready' while the subject site west of Memorial Arena could be developed more quickly.

Staff's recommendation would advance a key priority of this Council being a focus on the provision of affordable and attainable housing for all residents in the Town of Cobourg.

## **9. APPENDICES**

Appendix I to VIII – Information Sheets for the 8 Priority Sites  
Appendix IX – Engage Cobourg Bang the Table Report



## Report Approval Details

Document Title:	Municipal Land Inventory Engagement and Next Steps - Planning and Development-076-22.docx
Attachments:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Appendix I 17_Charles_Street_-_Data_Sheet.pdf</li><li>- Appendix II_216_Furnace_Street_-_Data_Sheet.pdf</li><li>- Appendix III 69_Ballantyne_Street_-_Data_Sheet.pdf</li><li>- Appendix IV_521_Delanty_Road_-_Data_Sheet.pdf</li><li>- Appendix V_Tracey_Park_-_Data_Sheet.pdf</li><li>- Appendix VI_96_Alice_Street_-_Data_Sheet.pdf</li><li>- Appendix VII_Westwood_Park_-_Data_Sheet.pdf</li><li>- Appendix VIII_Hibernia_Street_Parking_Lot_-_Data_Sheet.pdf</li><li>- Appendix IX - Engagement Report - Potential Affordable Housing - Engagement Summary.pdf</li><li>- Appendix X - Land Inventory Survey Results.pdf</li></ul>
Final Approval Date:	Sep 16, 2022

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

**Tracey Vaughan, Chief Administrative Officer - Sep 16, 2022 - 12:03 PM**