

To: COUNCIL

Meeting Date: 8/6/2024

Subject: 24-052-CD City Owned Sites – Affordable Housing Concepts

Submitted By: Hardy Bromberg – Deputy City Manager – Community Development

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Report No.: 24-052-CD

File No.: D04.01.01

Wards Affected: Ward 2
Ward 3
Ward 4
Ward 5
Ward 6
Ward 8

RECOMMENDATIONS:

THAT Report 24-052-CD City Owned Sites – Affordable Housing Concepts be received;

AND THAT Council direct staff to not advance any further work on the 0 Dando Avenue site due to the land acquisition requirements needed for a feasible development option;

AND THAT Council direct staff to not advance any further work on the 0 Bishop Street site due to the lack of developable land on the property;

AND THAT Council direct staff to initiate Official Plan and Zoning By-law Amendment applications for 10 Ethel Street for an increase in maximum permitted density from 40 Units Per Hectare (UPH) to 76 UPH and a reduction in parking to facilitate up to 14 stacked townhouse units to advance the Moderate Density Development Concept;

AND THAT Council direct staff to initiate Official Plan and Zoning By-law Amendment applications for 1580 Queenston Road for an increase in maximum permitted density from 40 Units Per Hectare (UPH) to 89 UPH and a reduction in parking to facilitate a three storey apartment building with up to 24 units to advance the Walk-up Apartments Development Concept;

AND THAT Council direct staff to initiate Official Plan and Zoning By-law Amendment applications for 25 Chalmers Street S to redesignate the property to High Density Residential with a permitted maximum density of 315 Units Per Hectare and a reduction in parking to facilitate three apartment buildings with a total of up to 360 units to advance the Mid-Rise Apartment with future phase and municipal facility Development Concept;

AND FURTHER THAT Council direct staff to initiate Official Plan and Zoning By-law Amendment applications for 0 Grandridge Drive to redesignate the property to High Density Residential with a permitted maximum density of 116 Units Per Hectare (UPH) and a reduction in parking to facilitate a four storey apartment building with a maximum of 50 units.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to report back to Council to address the direction received regarding Report 21-018(CD) and for direction to initiate Official Plan and Zoning By-law amendments on four of the six identified city owned properties.

Key Findings

- Staff recommend initiating Official Plan and Zoning By-law Amendment applications for four of the six sites
 - 10 Ethel Street: 14 stacked townhouse units;
 - 1580 Queenston Rd.: 3-storey apartment with 24 units;
 - 25 Chalmers St. S.: mid-rise apartments with up to 360 units & community amenities; and
 - 0 Grandridge Dr.: 4-storey apartment with 50 units.
- Staff recommend no further action for 0 Dando Ave. and 0 Bishop St.

Financial Implications

There are no immediate financial implications to the City arising from this report. Any financial impacts associated with future steps in the proposed process will be set out in future staff report(s). This project work will include support from the Housing Accelerator Funding (HAF) received by the City.

STRATEGIC ALIGNMENT:

☒ Strategic Action

Objective(s): PLANNING FOR GROWTH - Provide for a mix of development, uses and amenities in order to meet the needs of a changing and diverse population

Strategic Action: Increase housing options

OR

☐ Core Service

Program: Not Applicable

Core Service: Not Applicable

BACKGROUND:

At its meeting of August 25, 2020, after receiving report 20-197(CD) – Alternative Housing Proposal for Churchill Park, Council directed staff to review other opportunities for City owned land to be used for affordable housing projects.

Accordingly, staff brought forward report 21-018(CD) in April of 2021 with a short list of City owned properties that could potentially accommodate affordable developments. Council passed a resolution related to this report (See Appendix A) that “Option #3, as outlined in Report 21-018(CD) be included in the 2022 Planning Services Workplan.”

Option 3 from Report 21-018(CD) “Public Consultation with Guidelines” recommends that staff prepare potential renderings for public consultation and then report back to Council with a consultation strategy.

Council Workshop

A Council Workshop was held on Thursday, July, 4, 2024 to provide Council with some additional information as to how the proposed options were identified and what the process was behind the proposed staff recommendations. A copy of the staff presentation is available on the Council Calendar

<https://calendar.cambridge.ca/Council/Detail/2024-07-04-1700-Council-Workshop/5ffe07d0-35c7-40d9-94be-b19d01288046>

During the workshop, a number of questions were raised and staff committed to reporting back to Council with that information.

Q. Have there been any delays in processing the applications from the Region of Waterloo for 30 Lauris Avenue?

A. There have not been any significant delays in processing the applications associated with 30 Lauris by City Staff.

Q. What, from a builder's perspective, is the fastest path to construction of new units?

A. Staff have been approached recently by a developer, in the affordable space, and asked why the City doesn't provide more 'shovel ready' land for affordable developments. Staff believe that pre-zoning land for partners is the most efficient path.

Q. How long does it take to get the land into the hands of the developer to allow construction to start?

A. The lands would first need to be declared surplus by the City and then go through a competitive procurement process. The combined process would take approximately 4 months to complete.

Q. What are the current property values of the properties in question?

A. Information on property values was included in Report 23-050-OCM as part of the closed Council meeting held June 27, 2023. Those property valuations remain confidential.

Q. Could the property at 1580 Queenston Road (Preston Scout House) be included in a larger community amenity hub?

A. With the proximity to the Preston Auditorium and the Karl Holmuth Arena, staff could look at the potential for a community hub to provide some additional space on site for options with less impact on the designated heritage structure.

Staff recommend that Official Plan and Zoning By-law Amendments be initiated to advance public consultation on a preferred development concept for four of the six sites. Staff have recommended parameters based on the visualizations prepared by our consultant.

This future work supports housing project commitments as outlined in the agreement with CMHC as part of the Housing Accelerator Fund Program. (HAF).

Location

Four properties were short listed by Council for consideration for affordable rental housing: 10 Ethel Street, 1580 Queenston Road, 0 Dando Avenue and the former St. Ambrose School site at 25 Chalmers Street S.

In addition to shortlisting the above properties, Council endorsed the property at 0 Grand Ridge Drive to submit to the Region for consideration under the Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) Rapid Housing Initiative (RHI). CMHC did not select the property for the RHI and as a result, Council has requested that it be added to the short list of properties considered in this report. Council has also requested the inclusion of the property at 0 Bishop Street North for consideration.

10 Ethel Street

10 Ethel Street is the location of a former regional water tower and is located on the north side of Ethel Street, west of Johnson Avenue and is generally surrounded by single and semi-detached residential dwellings. The property is approximately 0.18 hectares (0.4 acres) in size with frontage on Ethel Street and Harvey Lane.

The property is outlined in red in Figure 1.



Figure 1: Location Map – 10 Ethel Street

1580 Queenston Road

1580 Queenston Road is the former Preston Scout House which is a designated heritage structure and is being leased to two community groups for a term of two years. The proposed concepts have been designed as additions to the structure to demonstrate possible options to provide additional density through sympathetic additions to a heritage structure. The property is located on the south side of Queenston Road at the intersection of Queenston Road and Brown Street and is generally surrounded by townhouses, three-storey walk-up apartments with single detached dwellings to the north and east and the Preston Auditorium Complex to the west. The property is approximately 0.3 hectares (0.7 acres) in size with frontage on Queenston

Road. Development on the site is unlikely to occur before the term of the leases is complete and the option to retain community space within the development could be pursued through the surplusing and procurement processes.

The property is outlined in red in Figure 2.



Figure 2: Location Map – 1580 Queenston Road

25 Chalmers Street S (St. Ambrose school property)

The former St. Ambrose school property is located on the east side of Chalmers Street South at the intersection of Chalmers St S and Elliott St. The site also contains existing community facilities. The property is generally surrounded by single detached residential with two places of worship to the south and a light industrial property to the southeast. The property is approximately 1.14 hectares (2.8 acres) in size with frontage on Chalmers Street S and Elliot Street.

The property is outlined in red in Figure 3.

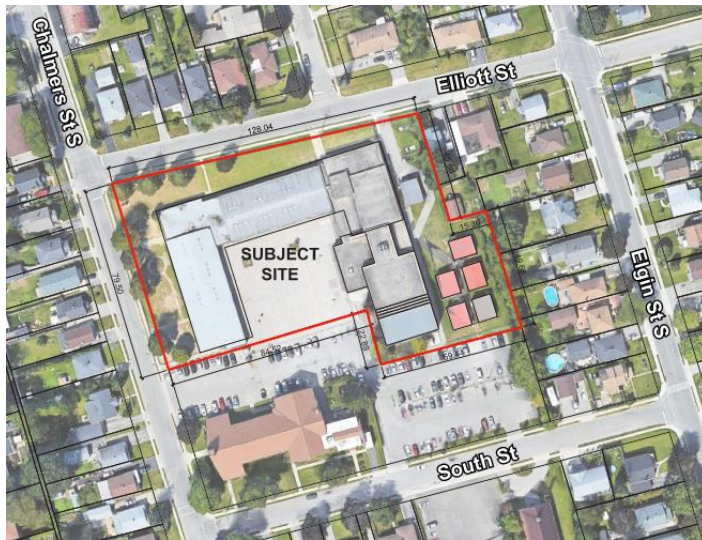


Figure 3: Location Map – 25 Chalmers Street S

0 Grand Ridge Drive (Southwest corner of Cedar Street and Grand Ridge Drive)

The subject property is a vacant parcel located at the western boundary of the City at the corner of Cedar Street and Grand Ridge Drive. The property is generally surrounded by single detached residential with Open Space land to the north and east and Southwood Secondary School further to the east. The property is approximately 0.43 hectares (1.07 acres) in size with frontage on Grand Ridge Drive and Cedar Street.

The property is outlined in red in Figure 4.



Figure 4: Location Map – 0 Grand Ridge Drive

0 Bishop Street

0 Bishop Street is a vacant parcel located on the south side of Bishop Street with frontage on the east side of Conestoga Boulevard and the north side of Can-Amara Parkway. The property contains a Provincially Significant Wetland (PSW) shown by the inner circle in Figure 5, and a Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry identified woodlot outlined in the out circle in Figure 5. The property also abuts a Hydro One transmission corridor and would need permission from Hydro One, Grandbridge Energy and a Condominium Corporation on Lena Crescent who all have easements over the lands separating the developable portion of 0 Bishop Street and the available access from Conestoga Boulevard. In addition, any proposed development abutting the Hydro One corridor requires an application for review and approval from Hydro One.

Figure 5 below shows the available, developable, portion of the site as the green portion fronting Conestoga Boulevard. The approximately 0.15 hectares (0.37 acres) could potentially accommodate a duplex or triplex. The complete map is attached as Appendix D.



Figure 5: Location Map – 0 Bishop Street North with potential developable area in green.

0 Dando Avenue

0 Dando Avenue is a vacant parcel located on the north side of Dando Avenue and most of the property falls within the floodplain of the Grand River. The property is generally surrounded by single detached residential to the north, the Grand River to the west and Galt Collegiate Institute (GCI) to the south and a sports field for GCI to the east. The property is approximately 0.4 hectares (0.98 acres) in size with frontage on Dando Avenue.

The property is outlined in red in Figure 6.



Figure 6: Location Map – 0 Dando Avenue

ANALYSIS:

The City's consultant has prepared visualizations that demonstrate potential development concepts for each of the four sites at a low, moderate and high density based on general urban design principles for minimum viable unit sizes and consideration of the minimum parking requirements of the zoning by-law. (Appendix C). The development concepts also take into consideration missing middle building typologies such as stacked townhouse and walk-up apartment buildings.

The addition of gentle density in existing neighbourhoods allows for more residents to age in place as it presents opportunities to downsize without having to move out of their neighbourhood. The proposed infill developments would also work towards fulfilling the recent housing pledge made to the Province.

The concepts do not show detailed designs but general massing to allow Council and the area residents to understand what infill intensification at the three levels could look

like. The design concepts were created to form a basis for municipally initiated amendments on the properties and to facilitate public engagement through the development application process. The intent of the amendments would be to set a maximum building envelope for each property and then declare the properties as surplus to sell through a procurement process to the private sector for the construction of affordable rental housing.

Appendix C provides a site-by-site analysis of the proposed concepts for four of the six properties. Staff has reviewed the concepts and provided recommendations to Council below for the preferred option for each property.

10 Ethel Street

The options range from seven townhouses to 24 walk-up apartment units. Staff recommend the moderate density concept which proposes a four-storey building containing 14 stacked townhouse units with one parking space per unit accessed from Harvey Lane. Stacked townhouse units have a density of 76 Units Per Hectare (UPH) which would necessitate an Official Plan Amendment for an increase in maximum permitted density. A reduction in parking would be required from the 18 required spaces to the 14 proposed. This concept would allow for a moderate increase in density through an infill project while maintaining amenity space for the future residents and maximizing the separation distances between the existing dwellings on the two abutting properties and the proposed future units.

1580 Queenston Road

1580 Queenston Road contains the former Preston Scout House which is a designated heritage structure. The options provided for this property have been designed using the concept of respectful additions to a heritage structure. The detailed design of the project would be left to the future developer and would be subject to the site plan process so consideration could be given for the style of the addition and determine if it is preferable to have a more traditional addition that blends in with the existing structure or a sympathetic but more modern addition to complement the heritage structure. The overall impacts of the addition would need to be evaluated through a Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA). More specific direction on the style of the addition can be provided through review of the HIA by staff and the Municipal Heritage Advisory Committee (MHAC).

The three options provided for this site include two designs for 16, four storey stacked townhouse units or a 24-unit, three storey, walk-up apartment building. All three concepts propose parking at a rate of one space per unit and would require an Official Plan Amendment for an increase in density and Zoning By-law Amendment for, at minimum, a reduction in parking. Care and consideration will need to be given at the

detailed design stage to ensure a development that protects and enhances the heritage structure. Staff recommend the three storey, 24 unit, apartment building at a density of 89 UPH as it will provide the most affordable units with less visual impact than the four storey designs. Further reductions in required parking would allow for outdoor amenity space but the property is in close proximity to a public park and the Preston Auditorium Complex which provide opportunities for outdoor and indoor recreation.

25 Chalmers Street S (former St. Ambrose School)

The former St. Ambrose school site at 25 Chalmers Street S presents an infill opportunity to provide more density on an underutilized site in an area with a wide range of unit types from single detached dwellings through to apartment buildings with several commercial, institutional, and light industrial buildings in the surrounding area.

The options proposed for this site are broken out to two or three building options with the third building listed as a future phase. The unit count for the future phase currently includes community related facilities within the new building. If the facilities are relocated to a different site, there could potentially be additional units or the inclusion of community space in the third building.

Concepts with Community Facilities Remaining in Existing Building

Regulation	Moderate Density	High Density
Height (in storeys)	5 with step back at 5 th floor	7 and 9 with step backs at 5, 7 and 9 th floors
Unit count	190	276
Parking (surface and one underground level)	192 (1.01 space per unit)	320 (1.16 space per unit)
Density (Units Per Hectare)	166	242

Concepts with Community Facilities Included in Third Building (future phase).

Regulation	Moderate Density	High Density
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Height (in storeys)	5 with step back at 5 th floor	7 and 9 with step backs at 5, 7 and 9 th floors
Unit count	253	360
Parking (surface and one underground level)	253 (1 space per unit)	410 (1.14 space per unit)
Density (Units Per Hectare)	220	315

It is the opinion of staff that the high density option represents the best opportunity for this site. With appropriate building design, the visual impact on surrounding residents will be similar to the existing school building and it will provide the opportunity for up to an additional 360 affordable rental units. The property is in close proximity to bus routes and commercial areas at the intersection of Main St and Dundas St. S which include, amongst other stores, a pharmacy, grocery stores, a bank and Canadian Tire.

0 Grand Ridge Drive

The property at 0 Grand Ridge Drive represents an infill opportunity to provide more density on an underutilized gateway site in close proximity to parks, schools and approximately one kilometer from a commercial plaza that contains a grocery store, pharmacy, and convenience commercial uses. The property also has a GRT bus stop immediately abutting the site.

The options proposed for this site are 16, three storey, townhouses for the low density (37.2 UPH) and a 50 unit, four storey, apartment building (116 UPH). With strong urban design this gateway site can support a higher density development. Further to the east there are several higher density developments including an eight-storey apartment building abutting the commercial plaza.

It is the opinion of staff that the high density option represents the best opportunity for this site. With appropriate building design, the visual impact on surrounding residents can be minimized. The property is in close proximity to bus routes, schools, parks and a commercial area.

0 Dando Avenue

0 Dando Avenue was included on the short list of properties but its location in the Grand River floodplain and the overall site topography means that the property on its own is

not developable. The consultants provided potential development concepts that involve acquisition of some of the abutting lands owned by the Waterloo District School Board. Accordingly, staff recommends that no further action be taken on 0 Dando Avenue and that the provision of this report satisfy the prior Council direction from Report 21-018(CD).

0 Bishop Street North

0 Bishop Street North was included on the short list of properties but the Provincially Significant Wetland (PSW) and MNR Woodlot and their associated buffers mean that the majority of the property is not developable. The additional constraint of a Hydro One transmission corridor and three easements over the road allowance that abuts the only developable portion of the property represents additional cost and process to access the lands. Conceptually, with a 0 m front yard setback, a lot could be created for a duplex or triplex with frontage on Conestoga Boulevard. There could be additional constraints on available parking and there is an increased chance of contamination of the natural features through establishing new development. It remains the opinion of staff that this property should be preserved and that no further action be taken on 0 Bishop Street North.

Planning Process and Future Steps

Report 21-018(CD), in Option 3, set out that public consultation with some parameters needed to be undertaken to assess the potential to facilitate construction of affordable rental housing on the short-listed properties. The high-level development concepts in Appendix C have been prepared to provide the requested parameters and staff's recommendations are based on these concepts. Accordingly, staff has requested direction to initiate Official Plan and Zoning By-law Amendment applications on four of the six sites based on the recommended development concepts. The public will have an opportunity to provide feedback through the public participation components of the OPA and ZBA application processes.

Staff are recommending the following through this report to Council.

10 Ethel Street:

Official Plan and Zoning By-law Amendments for an increase in maximum permitted density from 40 Units Per Hectare (UPH) to 76 UPH and a reduction in parking to facilitate up to 14 stacked townhouse units.

1580 Queenston Road:

Official Plan and Zoning By-law Amendments for an increase in maximum permitted density from 40 UPH to 89 UPH and a reduction in parking to facilitate a three-storey walk-up apartment building with up to 24 units.

0 Dando Avenue:

No further action be taken by staff.

25 Chalmers Street S

Official Plan and Zoning By-law Amendments to redesignate the property to High Density Residential with a permitted maximum density of 315 UPH and a reduction in parking to facilitate three apartment buildings with a total of up to 360 units.

0 Bishop Street N

No further action to be taken by staff.

0 Grand Ridge Drive

Official Plan and Zoning By-law Amendments to redesignate the property to High Density Residential with a permitted maximum density of 116 UPH and a reduction in parking to facilitate a four-storey apartment building with up to 50 units.

EXISTING POLICY / BY-LAW(S)

City of Cambridge Official Plan, 2012, as amended

Five of the six properties are designated “Low/Medium Density Residential” in the City of Cambridge Official Plan which permits a range of residential dwelling types from single detached residential to walk-up style apartment buildings to a maximum density of 40 Units Per Hectare (UPH). A portion of 0 Dando Avenue and all of 0 Bishop Street North are designated as Natural Open Space which does not permit residential development.

Policy 2.6.1 provides guidance for intensification and infill development within the built-up area. In particular, 2.6.1.6 b) indicates that intensification within the built-up area will be planned and designed to provide for a range and mix of housing that takes into account affordable housing needs. Additionally, 2.6.1.6 indicates that infill development will be planned and designed to support the cultural heritage of the area (2.6.1.6 e) and generally achieve higher densities than surrounding areas (2.6.1.6 f).

City of Cambridge Zoning By-law 150-85, as amended

10 Ethel and 0 Dando are zoned R4 (Single Residential), 1580 Queenston is zoned N1 (Institutional) and 25 Chalmers is zoned N1R4 (Institutional) (Single Detached

Residential). 0 Grand Ridge Drive is zoned R5 (Single Residential) and a portion with residual OS1 (Open Space). 0 Bishop Street is zoned OS1 (Open Space) and M3(Heavy Industrial). The R4 and R5 zoning permits single detached residential (with up to two Additional Residential Units (ARUs) to a total of three units per property and the N1 zoning permits a range of institutional uses including publicly funded schools, public hospitals and a municipal home for the aged or municipal rest home. Neither OS1 nor M3 zoning permits stand alone residential uses.

FINANCIAL IMPACT:

There are no immediate financial implications to the City arising from this report. Any financial impacts associated with future steps in the proposed process will be set out in future staff report(s). This project work will include support from the HAF.

If Council directs staff to initiate Official Plan and Zoning By-law Amendment applications on the four properties, the applications will need to be added to the Planning Services workplan to account for the staff resources needed to process the applications. There is no incremental change anticipated at this time to the existing staff complement or approved budgeted cost and the staff time to process these applications will be supported from the HAF

PUBLIC VALUE:

The purpose of this report is to fulfill Council direction to staff provided in Report 21-018(CD) and to propose a strategy to engage the public to facilitate construction of affordable rental property on vacant or underutilised lands currently owned by the City.

ADVISORY COMMITTEE INPUT:

Not Applicable

PUBLIC INPUT:

This report is not part of a public process. It recommends municipally initiated planning applications for City owned lands which include public notice and participation for four of the six properties. Staff recommend no further action on 0 Dando Avenue and 0 Bishop Street N.

INTERNAL / EXTERNAL CONSULTATION:

The proposed development concepts have not been circulated or released to the public prior to their inclusion in this report. Staff have recommended municipally initiated planning applications. Planning applications include a public consultation process and the applications will be circulated for comment to internal departments and external agencies.

CONCLUSION:

Staff recommend that the proposed densities, outlined above, be supported by Council and that staff be directed to initiate Official Plan and Zoning By-law amendment applications for 10 Ethel Street, 1580 Queenston Road, 25 Chalmers Street S, and 0 Grand Ridge Drive and to take no further action with regards to 0 Dando Avenue and 0 Bishop Street N.

REPORT IMPACTS:

Agreement: **No**

By-law: **No**

Budget Amendment: **No**

Policy: **No**

APPROVALS:

This report has gone through the appropriate workflow and has been reviewed and or approved by the following as required:

Director

Deputy City Manager

Chief Financial Officer

City Solicitor

City Manager

ATTACHMENTS:

1. 24-052-CD Appendix A – Excerpt from Council Minutes – April 27, 2021
2. 24-052-CD Appendix B – Report 21-018(CD) Affordable Rental Housing – City Owned Land
3. 24-052-CD Appendix C – City Surplus Sites Visualizations
4. 24-052-CD Appendix D – Map of 0 Bishop Street N showing development constraints