



REPORT

Development Services

To: Mayor Côté and Members of Council **Date:** 7/13/2020

From: Emilie K Adin, MCIP **File:** 13.2620.20
 Director of Development Services

Item #: 260/2020

Subject: **Small Sites Affordable Housing Initiative: Next Steps**

RECOMMENDATION

THAT Council receive this report for information.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to provide Council with an update on the small sites affordable housing initiative.

BACKGROUND

As part of its 2019-2022 Strategic Plan, New Westminster City Council resolved to leverage City resources to secure development of below- and non-market housing. One of the most direct ways that Council can deliver affordable housing options is to identify City-owned sites suitable for housing. On October 28, 2019 Council endorsed in principle the use of the City-owned properties at 2035 London Street and 2038 Ninth Avenue, and 350 to 362 Fenton Street, for the development of small sites affordable housing projects. Further details about the process for selecting these sites was outlined in a report to Council on October 28, 2019 (Attachment 1).

Issuance of the Request for Proposals

At the October 2019 meeting, Council further directed staff to proceed with the issuance of Requests for Proposals (RFPs) inviting housing providers to propose how they would

develop these the two small sites affordable housing projects. The two RFPs were not prescriptive in terms of the details of the projects being requested. Instead, a set of evaluation criteria was established in the RFPs that would identify those projects that best meet objectives for the project to:

- demonstrate elements that enhance long term affordability;
- be sympathetic in design with existing neighbourhoods;
- incorporate units that are suitable for families with children;
- be replicable elsewhere in the city; and
- be completed by fall 2022.

Attachment 2 includes the full list of evaluation criteria that were included in the RFP. The City posted an RFP for each site from the first week of January 2020 to the first week of March 2020.

DISCUSSION

Received Submissions

Seven proposals for each site were received in response (14 proposals total) to the RFPs. Most of the proposals are based on a mix of incomes, and include affordable rental or affordable homeowner units. There are a range of affordability levels, with most aligning with the City's definition of below- and non-market housing, which are defined as:

***Below-market** rental units intended to meet rental demand for households earning between \$30,000 and \$75,000 per year (in 2020).*

***Non-market** rental units intended to meet rental demand for very low-income households with incomes under \$30,000 per year (in 2020).*

The proposals contain proprietary information and cannot be released publicly. The two successful proponents will be required to submit rezoning and OCP amendment applications that will make public the details of the proposal.

Preliminary Review Process

In early June 2020, staff conducted their initial evaluation of the 14 proposals received against the evaluation criteria included in the RFP (see Attachment 2). A consultant was retained to provide a more detailed analysis of the financial components.

Staff originally expected to recommend small sites proponents who had scored highest in the RFP evaluation process to Council at the time of this report; however, a significant amount of due diligence is still required to be completed in relation to the applications. The due

diligence process allows staff to request further information from proponents, discuss with applicants how projects could better align with the application criteria, and provide the applicant with preliminary feedback from Council, staff and received from the community.

Once the due diligence process is complete, staff will return to Council with recommendations. Should Council endorse a proponent for one or both of the identified properties, the development review process would then be launched.

Community Information Sessions

Virtual public information meetings were held for the respective proposed small sites. At each meeting staff provided an overview of the small sites affordable housing initiative and the criteria developed to evaluate the submitted proposals. The presentation was followed by a questions and answers session. Community members had the opportunity to submit their questions into a chat box and then vote on questions to be answered by staff. Participants also had the opportunity to call in directly and ask their questions.

The Connaught Heights session was held on Monday, June 29th, 2020, with approximately 79 community members participating and 197 questions and comments received. The Queensborough session was held on Wednesday July 8th, 2020, with approximately 17 community members participating and 24 questions and comments received.

A project webpage (www.newwestcity.ca/ssah) has been created to provide information about both projects, including a list of frequent questions (FAQ). The FAQ section of the project website will be updated to include the questions and answers from the virtual info sessions. In addition, a “what we heard” document will be created for each event.

Next Steps

The expected timeline for the projects will need to be updated to reflect the temporary pause to the process that enabled staff to focus their attention on the City’s COVID-19 response. Staff will work with the proponents to develop a revised project timeline, including the timing and approach to community consultation, and report back to Council as part of a future report.

Both projects would require a development approvals process related to an Official Community Plan (OCP) amendment and a Zoning Bylaw amendment (rezoning). The review of the application for each site would include opportunities for community members and stakeholders to provide feedback, including a Public Hearing for the OCP amendments. The final decision as to whether to support the OCP and Zoning Bylaw amendments would be made by Council.

OPTIONS

The following options are presented for Council’s consideration:

1. That Council receive this report for information.
2. That Council provide staff with other direction.

Staff recommends options 1.

ATTACHMENTS

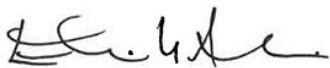
Attachment 1: October 28, 2019 Council Report: Identification of Sites

Attachment 2: Proposal Evaluation Criteria

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Approved for Presentation to Council



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