

AGENDA INFORMATION	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Regular Meeting	Date: July 4, 2022
<input type="checkbox"/> Other:	Date: _____



The District of North Vancouver REPORT TO COUNCIL

June 15, 2022
File: 13.6530.20/013.000

AUTHOR: Joshua Cairns, Community Planner

SUBJECT: Utilizing District-owned Land for Rental, Social, and Affordable Housing:
What We Heard

RECOMMENDATION:

THAT the June 15, 2022 report from the Community Planner entitled *Utilizing District-owned Land for Rental, Social, and Affordable Housing: What We Heard* is received for information.

REASON FOR REPORT:

This report provides Council with the results of public engagement that took place from April to May, 2022, regarding the conceptual development scenarios that were prepared for two District-owned sites to support affordable housing.

SUMMARY:

In response to Council direction provided on [December 13, 2021](#), staff undertook public engagement on conceptual development scenarios for two District-owned sites: 900 St Denis Avenue and the southeast corner of Mountain Highway/Hunter Street (480 Mountain Highway, 1519-1543 Hunter Street). Feedback was positive, with strong support for the higher-density alternatives for each site to achieve more affordable housing. Results from the public engagement will be used to help inform the vision for the future of these sites and will be considered alongside further technical analysis and Council input. A full summary of "What We Heard" is provided in **Attachment 1**.

BACKGROUND:

Council has demonstrated a continued commitment to the strategy of leveraging District-owned lands to provide housing not typically delivered by the market (e.g., rental, social, and supportive housing). The continued success of this strategy relies, in part, on having suitable District-owned lands identified and available for affordable housing. This will improve the District's ability to respond to funding and partnership opportunities as they arise and increase the probability of a project proceeding.

On [November 2, 2020](#), Council directed staff to study several District-owned sites by preparing scenarios that would support the provision of affordable housing. Staff subsequently prepared two conceptual development scenarios for each site to illustrate the

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trade-offs between different building forms that could be considered and the potential number of housing units that could be achieved.

On [December 13, 2021](#), Council directed staff to proceed with public engagement on two priority sites: 900 St Denis Avenue and the southeast corner of Mountain Highway and Hunter Street. A public engagement plan for the two sites was subsequently presented at the [Regular Meeting of Council on March 21, 2022](#).

ANALYSIS:

Engagement Overview

The purpose of public engagement was to understand the community's viewpoints on using the two sites for affordable housing, gather input on potential building types and density, and learn about preferences for affordable housing more broadly. Engagement took place from April to May, 2022, and used a variety of techniques for community and stakeholder input (Table 1). Engagement opportunities were broadly promoted through multiple advertisements in the North Shore News, large signs installed at the sites, the District's website, social media posts (organic and paid), in-person distribution of 500 postcards, in-person pop-ups, and notification to social service providers and District committees.

There were approximately 530 interactions with the community and stakeholder groups across the 11 engagement opportunities. In addition, there were 732 unique visitors to the project webpage during the engagement period. Overall, feedback was positive with a strong interest in providing affordable housing on both sites. A brief overview of engagement results is provided below; a comprehensive summary of what we heard is provided in **Attachment 1**.

Table 1: Summary of engagement activities

Type	Date (2022)	Location	Participation
Online Engagement Tool	April 13 to May 15	Virtual	242
In-person Pop-ups	April 20	In-person (Phibbs Exchange)	150
	April 22	In-person (Seylynn Park)	40
	April 24	In-person (St Denis Ave at entrance to Inter River Park)	60
Open Houses	April 21	Virtual	5
	April 26	Virtual	6
	May 4	In-person (Holiday Inn)	23
Stakeholder Meetings & Presentations	May 9	Virtual	BC Non-profit Housing Association
	May 9	Virtual	Habitat for Humanity
	May 12	Virtual	Community Housing Action Committee (North Shore Community Resources)
	May 19	Virtual	Sanford Housing

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Key Themes

Several key themes emerged through feedback collected across the various engagement activities related to the two sites:

- Strong support for using both sites for affordable housing in the future;
- Support for higher-density options on both sites:
 - Preference for 4-storey apartment buildings rather than townhomes at 900 St. Denis Ave;
 - Preference for 25-storey high-rise rather than 22-storeys at the southeast corner of Mountain Highway/Hunter Street;
- General preference for the trade-off of allowing higher-density buildings in the District in exchange for more housing units or lower rents (rather than lower-density with fewer units or higher rents);
- Interest in seeing affordable housing provided in a mix of both stand-alone rental buildings and incorporated into other types of buildings; and,
- Access to public transportation seen as the most important consideration for the location of new affordable housing, followed closely by access to community facilities/schools, food services/retail, and jobs and employment.

A more detailed analysis of what we heard is provided in **Attachment 1**.

Next Steps

Results from the public engagement will be used to inform the refinement of the scenarios and vision for the future of these sites. This input will be considered alongside further technical analysis, consultation with potential non-profit housing providers (e.g. BC Housing), and Council input to determine potential implementation actions. This will be brought back to Council for consideration in late 2022 or early 2023.

CONCLUSION:

Staff undertook public engagement on the conceptual development scenarios prepared for 900 St Denis Avenue and the southeast corner of Mountain Highway and Hunter Street. In total, there were 530 interactions with members of the community and stakeholder groups that generated robust feedback on the sites, scenarios, and affordable housing more broadly. Results from the public engagement period suggest a strong level of support for using these sites to provide affordable housing in the future, with a preference for higher-density options in order to maximize the number of units that can be provided on both sites.

OPTIONS:

1. THAT the June 15, 2022 report from the Community Planner entitled *Utilizing District-owned Land for Rental, Social, and Affordable Housing: What We Heard* is received for information (**staff recommendation**).

OR

2. THAT Council provide staff with alternative direction.

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Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'JC' followed by a horizontal line.

Joshua Cairns
Community Planner

Attachment 1: What We Heard: Utilizing District-owned Land for Rental, Social, and Affordable Housing Report

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<input type="checkbox"/> Utilities	_____	<input type="checkbox"/> Fire Services
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External Agencies:

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