

2054 Dufferin Street - Potential Future Use

Date:	May 14, 2010
To:	Affordable Housing Committee
From:	Sue Corke, Deputy City Manager
Wards:	17, Davenport
Reference Number:	AFS - 11436

SUMMARY

This report responds to a motion from Councillor Palacio, Ward 17 Davenport, for staff to assess the feasibility of using a surplus Toronto Parking Authority site at 2054 Dufferin Street for either parkland or affordable ownership housing built by Habitat for Humanity Toronto.

The site is located in the interior of a city block, surrounded by homes and businesses that front onto Dufferin Street, Boon Avenue, Eversfield Road and Bloem Avenue. It can only be accessed by laneways. This “land-locked” aspect makes the site unsuitable for either a park or affordable housing because of inaccessibility, and more specifically, that it cannot be serviced by fire trucks. Due to the costs associated with providing fire truck access, Habitat for Humanity has determined that this site is not financially feasible for affordable housing.

Financial Impact

There are no financial impacts arising from this report.

Equity Statement

This report is limited to information regarding the suitability of a parcel of surplus Toronto Parking Authority land for parkland or affordable housing. An equity impact analysis is not applicable.

DECISION HISTORY

At the Affordable Housing Committee meeting of October 20, 2009, Councillor Cesar Palacio, Ward 17 Davenport, requested a report on the feasibility of 2054 Dufferin Street regarding its potential use as either parkland or affordable ownership housing developed by Habitat for Humanity.

Decision documents and background information on this matter can be found at:

October, 20 2009 Affordable Housing Committee Decision Document:

<http://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2009/ah/decisions/2009-10-20-ah11-dd.htm>

Letter from Councillor Cesar Palacio, Ward 17 Davenport

<http://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2009/ah/bgrd/backgroundfile-24235.pdf>

Member Motion from Councillor Cesar Palacio, Ward 17 Davenport

<http://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2009/ah/bgrd/backgroundfile-24545.pdf>

Attachment 1 - Letter from Habitat for Humanity, Toronto

<http://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2009/ah/bgrd/backgroundfile-24548.pdf>

Attachment 2 - Letter from Habitat for Humanity, Toronto

<http://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2009/ah/bgrd/backgroundfile-24549.pdf>

ISSUE BACKGROUND

2054 Dufferin Street is owned by Toronto Parking Authority and has been deemed surplus. The site is currently used for parking and is located within the former City of York, Ward 17, near the intersection of Dufferin St. and Eglinton Ave. The property is flanked on all sides by small public laneways with no frontage on Dufferin St. or any of the surrounding neighbourhood streets.

Councillor Palacio moved a motion at the October 20, 2009 Affordable Housing Committee to consider the site firstly for parkland if deemed appropriate by Parks, Forestry and Recreation. If not appropriate for parkland, Councillor Palacio asked that the site be considered for affordable housing as consistent with the Housing First policy.

In October 2009, Habitat for Humanity expressed an interest in the land and began compiling information to assess its appropriateness for housing.

COMMENTS

Parks, Forestry, & Recreation Division has assessed the parkland potential of 2054 Dufferin Street. Despite the location of this property in an area with a low level of parkland provision, it has been determined that this property is unsuitable for parkland. The property is “land-locked” being located in the interior of a city block behind buildings on Dufferin St. as well as homes on the feeder streets connecting to Dufferin St. This means that a park at this location would not have frontage on any street and could

only be accessed through laneways or rights-of-way by both park users and maintenance crews. The size and shape of this property are also not very conducive to good park design and function. The shape of the site is an elongated rectangle which has an area of approximately 0.28 hectares. The elongated shape provides few options for park design and programming. Finally, the state of environmental contamination of this property is not known and could result in substantial remediation.

2054 Dufferin Street also presents many challenges for residential use, especially for an affordable ownership developer such as Habitat for Humanity. To provide housing at affordable costs to lower-income families, Habitat must keep construction, and site servicing, costs at a minimum. Providing standard municipal services such as water and sewer, and other services such as electricity and natural gas at this location is too costly and, in the case of fire truck access, financially impossible.

In order to develop the site for housing, a plan for accommodating a standard fire access route would be required. This would require a larger turning area than the site can provide, meaning that Habitat would have to purchase additional land from adjacent homeowners to create the necessary turning area. Upon investigation, Habitat for Humanity has decided that this makes the site financially unsuitable for its housing.

The 2054 Dufferin Street site will now be brought to the Property Management Committee by the Toronto Parking Authority for the normal surplus and disposition processes.

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SIGNATURE

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