

Ogilvie Ridge Building Housing Choices

Site Location Review

Recommendation

That Executive Committee recommend to City Council:

That the lands identified as Alternate Building Site, outlined in red in Attachment 1 of the November 30, 2020, Citizen Services report CR_8069, be approved as an alternative site for the Ogilvie Ridge Building Housing Choices development.

Executive Summary

In 2009, Edmonton Public Schools declared the vacant school site at 915 Ogilvie Boulevard NW in Ogilvie Ridge as surplus. A parcel of 0.8 hectares, originally identified for the school building, was selected as a potential site for a future housing development. In 2015, City Council approved the site for a housing development under the Building Housing Choices program.

Administration has identified an alternate 0.8 hectare portion of land on the same surplus school site and is seeking approval to use the alternate location. The decision to identify an alternate site responds to public engagement findings. The location improves the park functionally and contributes to the development potential of the site.

Report

Since 2006, the City has used surplus school sites not required for civic purposes to create new affordable housing to meet the current and future needs of Edmonton residents. The Building Housing Choices program is one of the key initiatives of the Affordable Housing Investment Plan. The Building Housing Choices program was created to build affordable housing on surplus school sites. Local school boards have declared 49 school sites as surplus since 2006. Of those, eight have been approved for the development of a mix of market and affordable housing and seven have been approved for the development of seniors housing. The development of the sites is governed by the following City policies:

- Guidelines for Development of the 2009 Surplus School Sites (C583)
- The Lease or Sale of City-Owned Land for Social Housing Development (C437)
- Sustainable Building Policy (C532)
- Public Engagement Policy (C593)

- Policy to Govern the Use of Funds from the Sale of Surplus School Sites (C468A)

Generally, the development of surplus school sites involves site preparation, engagement, and a process to award sites to a developer/operator.

Ogilvie Ridge Building Housing Choices Development

The school site at 915 Ogilvie Boulevard NW was declared surplus by the Edmonton Public School Board in 2009 and a 0.8 hectare site was approved by City Council for affordable housing development in 2015 (the “Approved Site”). The City hosted three open houses between 2015 and 2018 as part of the public engagement process. At the engagement sessions, community members expressed a strong preference for the development to be moved to an alternate building location within Ogilvie Ridge Park. The community felt an alternate site would reduce traffic and parking congestion, allow better access to playgrounds and soccer fields, and allow the space to be used for sports and recreation. The information collected during engagement was compiled into a What We Heard document (Attachment 2).

In response to resident feedback at engagement sessions, Administration investigated the technical feasibility of moving the building site from the Approved Site to an alternate location (the “Alternate Site”). The technical analysis confirmed that the community’s preference for the Alternate Site was feasible.

Site Locations

City Policy C583 - Guidelines for Development of the 2009 Surplus School Sites provides the following direction on the location of residential development on surplus school sites:

Wherever reasonably possible, residential developments on surplus school sites will be located on the portion of the site that was originally designated for the school. Where Administration finds that economics permit and improved community outcomes can be achieved, the equivalent area may be allocated elsewhere within the adjacent green space with Council’s approval.

The policy recognizes that there may be merit in exploring an alternative development location on a surplus school site, specifically where the alternative location is financially feasible (economics permit) and would result in improved community outcomes. Any alternate development location requires City Council’s approval.

Approved Site

The Approved Site is situated in the north-central portion of the green space along Ogilvie Boulevard N.W. A portion of the Approved Site is currently being used as two temporary soccer fields. This location has some drawbacks identified by the public including that it compromises future use of two popular soccer fields and divides the park in half.

Alternate Site

The Alternate Site is situated in the southeast portion of the green space. A portion of the Alternate Site is being used as a baseball diamond. The advantages identified by relocating to this site are the ability to maintain the soccer fields and keep the remaining park in a more intact and functional layout.

Financial Feasibility (Economics)

The following factors form the financial feasibility for the project:

A. Marketability

In 2019, Administration issued a Request for Expression of Interest for the Alternate Site for planning and understanding purposes. A total of four submissions were received. The Request for Expression of Interest confirmed the marketability of the Alternate Site.

B. Technical Feasibility

Administration has conducted a preliminary review of the Alternate Site. Site grading, extension of servicing, as well as noise attenuation, are needed to prepare the site for development. Realignment of existing soccer fields and removal of the baseball diamond will also be needed. As part of the change management process, Administration will communicate with the community and sport field users about the sport field impacted by approval of the Alternate Site.

Administration will complete a number of technical studies to inform and fulfill regulatory requirements for future rezoning and subdivision applications.

C. Costs

Based on Administration's preliminary review, relocating the building site to the Alternate Site will increase site preparation costs by approximately \$500,000 in comparison to the Approved Site for a total of approximately \$1.4 million.

Next Steps

If approved, Administration will take necessary steps to prepare the Alternate Site for public offering. Once a developer is selected and agreement(s) relating to the disposition have been executed, Administration will work with the developer on a public engagement and communication plan.

A future public hearing will be held for City Council to consider a plan amendment, rezoning application based on the recommended housing concept and to remove the municipal reserve designation to enable the disposition of the applicable portion of the surplus school site.

Budget/Financial Implications

If the Alternate Site is approved, site preparation costs are estimated at \$1.4 million, with funding coming from approved Capital Profile 19-90-4100 Affordable Housing Land Acquisition and Site Development.

Public Engagement

On June 21, 2018, Administration held a drop-in public engagement session, with a total of 112 attendees — the third in a series of community conversations for residents of Ogilvie Ridge to:

- share their feedback and perspectives on the building site location for the Ogilvie Ridge Building Housing Choices development; and
- to learn about next steps in the process.

In addition 27 individuals participated in the online survey. The feedback received was compiled into a What We Heard document (Attachment 2).

Corporate Outcomes and Performance Management

Corporate Outcome(s): Edmonton is a safe city			
Outcome(s)	Measure(s)	Result(s)	Target(s)
Increased supply of affordable housing units in all areas of the city	Number of new affordable housing units supported	2018-2020: 807	By 2022: 2,500 total

Risk Assessment

Risk Element	Risk Description	Likelihood	Impact	Risk Score (with current mitigations)	Current Mitigations	Potential Future Mitigations
If recommendation is approved						
Public Perception	Revisiting the location of future housing developments within the larger school/park site may set a precedent for other surplus school sites in the Building Housing Choices Program. It would also have the potential to lead to community conflicts over the location preferences and increased cost to	Possible (3)	Moderate (2)	Low (6)	Policy C583 is in place to guide the development of the 2009 surplus school sites. Criteria is provided to determine the merits of site relocation.	Administration will continue to evaluate the most suitable location for residential development on surplus school sites.

	relocate park improvements.					
If recommendation is not approved						
Public Perception	Results of public engagement and request for expression of interests have indicated the feasibility of development on the Alternate Site. If the recommendation is not approved, it may appear that the City does not consider public input.	Possible (3)	Moderate (2)	Low (6)	Throughout the engagement process, Administration has informed the community of the process for site relocation, including that the decision will be up to Council for consideration.	Administration will continue to evaluate the most suitable location for residential development on surplus school sites.

Attachments

1. Ogilvie Ridge Building Housing Choices development - Approved v.s. Alternate Site
2. What We Heard - Building Housing Choices in Ogilvie Ridge - Phase 2A Drop-in Information Session

Others Reviewing this Report

- C. Owen, Deputy City Manager, Communications and Engagement
- M. Persson, Chief Financial Officer and Deputy City Manager, Financial and Corporate Services
- S. McCabe, Deputy City Manager, Urban Form and Corporate Strategic Development
- B. Andriachuk, City Solicitor