

STAFF REPORT TO COUNCIL

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DATE: January 12, 2024

TO: MAYOR AND COUNCIL

NAME AND TITLE: Deanna Wasnik, Director of Planning and Development

SUBJECT: 397 3rd Avenue – HEART and HEARTH Project

ATTACHMENT(S):

- BC Housing Request for Contribution Letter dated January 12, 2024
- Servicing Brief prepared by L&M Engineering dated December 15, 2023
- Preliminary Servicing and Site Grading Estimate dated December 15, 2023
- MOU between the City and the Province signed June 16, 2023

RECOMMENDATION(S):

1. That in response to the letter dated January 12, 2024 from BC Housing Re: Request for Contribution – Site Servicing 397 3rd Avenue, Prince George, Council CONSIDERS APPROVING a capital project as described in the report dated January 12, 2024 from the Director of Planning and Development titled “397 3rd Avenue – HEART and HEARTH Project” to be added to the 2024 – 2028 Financial Plan with a total budget of \$468,126 to be funded from the Capital Expenditure Reserve in the amount of \$156,718, the Sewer Capital Expenditure Reserve in the amount of \$133,958, and the Water Capital Expenditure Reserve in the amount of \$177,450 subject to:
 - (a) Council approval of a temporary use permit to allow for the transitional housing facility use on the subject property;
 - (b) the City entering into a lease agreement with the Provincial Rental Housing Corporation (BC Housing) for use of the subject property for the proposed transitional housing facility on terms and conditions satisfactory to Administration; and
 - (c) BC Housing providing written confirmation to the City that the transitional housing facility project described in the staff report will be constructed and opened as soon as practicable following completion of the servicing and site grading work described in the Servicing Brief dated December 15, 2023 prepared by L&M Engineering.

PURPOSE:

The purpose of this report is for Council’s consideration of BC Housing’s request that the City fund and complete site preparation works for a proposed Transitional Housing Facility Project at 397 3rd Avenue.

BACKGROUND:

Memorandum of Understanding for Homeless Encampment Action Response Teams (HEART)/Homeless Encampment Response & Temporary Housing (HEARTH)

The attached Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was signed between the City and Province in June 2023 to reinforce the partnership and responsibilities of both government organizations with respect to suitable housing for the unhoused community.

The MOU indicates that the Province's responsibility is specific to housing, healthcare, and encampments. The Province's work, led through their HEART and HEARTH initiative, is being implemented through BC Housing. The City's role in the MOU process is to support and identify property for these initiatives.

Pursuant to the MOU, the City identified a City-owned site located at 397 3rd Avenue for the purpose of a proposed Transitional Housing Facility Project for the HEARTH program. This site was selected because it is owned by the City, the adjacent properties are owned by the Province, it is in close proximity to the court-protected Lower Patricia encampment, and it is in close proximity to many service agencies. Like most of the downtown, the property is located within a flood plain area which requires structures meet the flood construction level (FCL). The FCL for the proposed project has been considered and is addressed in the attached Servicing Brief.

As described in the attached Servicing Brief, the Transitional Housing Facility Project proposes to accommodate forty-four (44) units for overnight sheltering with additional amenity/storage trailers with use of temporary trailers (i.e. Atco trailers). The site design population has been calculated based on up to two people per unit for a maximum population of 88 people.

BC Housing has indicated that the Transitional Housing Facility Project would include drinking water and washroom facilities and food services.

DISCUSSION:

On December 18, 2023, BC Housing provided the attached Servicing Brief and Preliminary Servicing and Site Grading Estimate prepared by L&M Engineering Ltd. that outlines the technical works, and associated estimated costs of the technical works, that would facilitate the installation of the proposed Transitional Housing Facility Project.

The attached letter dated January 12, 2024 from BC Housing provides more information on the technical works and associated costs required to prepare 397 3rd Avenue for the installation of the proposed Transitional Housing Project. The technical works include surface works (stripping and fill) and water, sanitary sewer, and storm sewer works. The Preliminary Servicing and Site Grading Estimate prepared reflects the cost estimate for a contractor to complete the works.

The attached MOU between the City and the Ministry includes several sections related to the proposed Transitional Housing Project.

For example, the MOU states that the Ministry's role will include:

- Through BC Housing, provide unhoused people with access to health and sanitation services, including washrooms and shower facilities; food and drinking water; cultural and social support services; and services to promote safety and security.

- Through BC Housing, provide oversight and support in the development of shelter spaces, temporary and permanent housing options.
- Through BC Housing, lead operational planning and supports for temporary support services, transitions from encampments to temporary or permanent housing through coordinated access, selection of operators, and as a partner in other service coordination.

The MOU states that the City of Prince George will:

- Identify appropriate and feasible land/space for HEARTH shelter and/or temporary and permanent housing, and work with the Province and BC Housing to expedite land use decisions necessary for rapid provision of shelter and housing.
- Facilitate maintenance of land designated for temporary sheltering, including garbage pick up and water utility connections.
- Support the work of the Ministry and BC Housing to provide unhoused people with access to health services; sanitation services, including washrooms and shower facilities; food and drinking water; cultural and social support services; and services to promote safety and security.

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS:

BC Housing is requesting that the City cover the cost to service and grade the proposed site to prepare it for the construction of a temporary shelter facility for unhoused individuals. The attached Preliminary Servicing and Site Grading Estimate shows the estimated cost of this work to be \$468,125.

If approved by Council, the cost of the required work would be paid for from three different funds: general, sewer and water, broken down as follows:

| Fund | Amount |
|--------------|------------------|
| General | \$156,718 |
| Sewer | \$133,958 |
| Water | \$177,450 |
| Total | \$468,126 |

The General, Sewer and Water portions would all be funded by their respective capital expenditure reserves as described in the above recommendation in this report.

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS:

Land Use

Temporary Use Permit

A Temporary Use Permit will be needed to allow for the Transitional Housing Facility Project. A Temporary Use Permit application would need to be considered by Council at future Council meeting.

Lease Agreement

As the proposed site is owned by the City, a lease agreement will also need to be negotiated and entered into between the City and BC Housing, which would set out the terms and conditions of BC Housing's use of the land for the proposed transitional housing facility.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION:

BC Housing has requested that the City of Prince George provide a financial contribution to prepare and install services at 397 3rd Avenue for a proposed temporary housing facility. Administration is seeking Council direction in response to this request as provided in this report.

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED:

Deanna Wasnik, Director of Planning and Development

APPROVED:

Walter Babicz, City Manager

Meeting Date: [2024/01/15]