



STAFF REPORT

TO: Committee **MEETING DATE:** March 1, 2016
FROM: André Boel, Director of Planning **FILE NO:** 3220-Stewart-folio 449.005
SUBJECT: possible sites Cluster Housing

RECOMMENDATION(S)

THAT the staff report regarding possible sites for Cluster Housing be received;

AND THAT it be recommended to Council that Council request further review of the Charman Creek Lands as a possible location for a Cluster Housing project by the Sunshine Coast Affordable Housing Society.

BACKGROUND/PURPOSE

The Sunshine Coast Affordable Housing Society and Click Homes requested the Town's support by identifying possible Town-owned sites for a Cluster Housing development. The purpose of this report is to brief Council on a review of possible locations.

DISCUSSION

On December 15, 2015 Council resolved the following:

THAT Phase 1 of the Sunshine Coast Housing Committee / Click Homes proposal be supported through Town staff working with Housing Society and Click Homes partners to identify whether existing parcels of Town owned land would be suitable and feasible for a new, affordable cluster of homes. (R2015-422)

Staff met with Matt Thomson in January to discuss locations and tentative land needs. Based on the concept of cluster development with a significant amount of green space and a tentative number of 15 – 20 small sized homes the estimated amount of land needed was set at approximately 0.6 ha (1.5 acre).

Staff reviewed the map of Town owned lands (see figure 1) and evaluated current and future needs of a range of parcels. Most Town lands are already in use for community use buildings, sport facilities and park land. Some lands are not developable because of the steepness of the terrain.

A few sites merit further consideration.

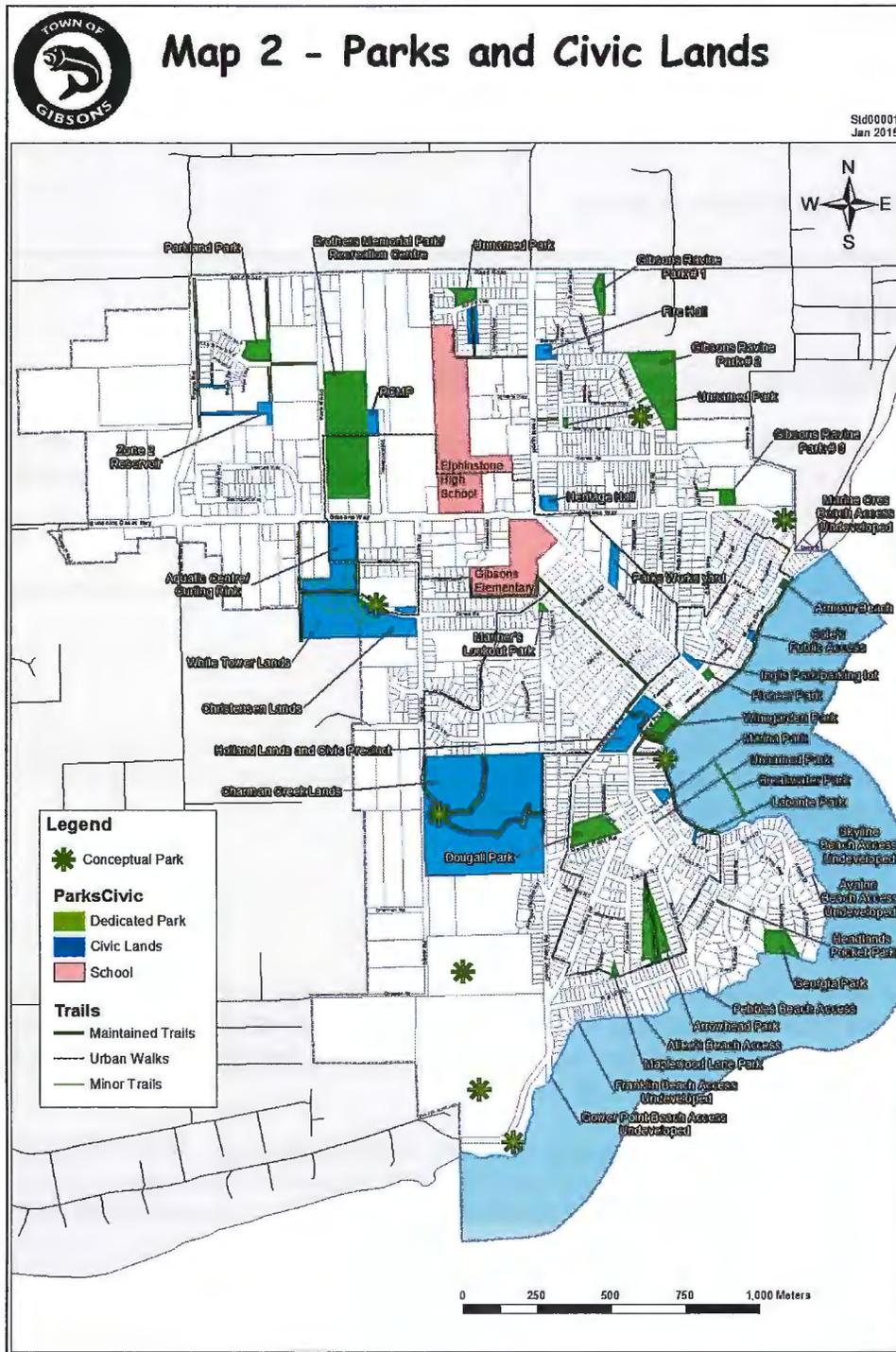


Figure 1: Map 2 from the Official Community Plan showing the location of Town owned lands

Shortlist of possible Town-owned sites

Staff identified the following Town lands as possible sites for the Cluster Housing proposal. This list was reviewed with other staff to investigate existing plans for the land in the near future. The list below summarises the results:

1. Charman Creek Lands (Stewart Road)
The Town records indicate this land was purchased in 1970 with the apparent goal to create a residential subdivision. The land is zoned residential. However, presently these lands are designated for Public and Community Uses in the Official Community Plan. There are no expected new claims for these lands. Staff note that another not-for-profit organisation expressed some interest in these lands in 2014. The current use is recreational with trails.
2. Christenson Lands (Shaw Road)
These lands were transferred to the Town by the Christenson family with the restriction that they may only be used for community uses. More recently, the Christenson Village was developed on this site by the Good Samaritan Society. The society offers Assisted Living options for seniors. There is an identified need for additional senior supportive housing and the Good Samaritan Society has indicated an interest in expanding the facilities on this site at some point in the future, subject to the support of the Town.
3. Holland Lands (Gower Point Road)
The Holland Lands are home to several government administration buildings, two water wells, a Library and the Sunshine Coast Museum. A large portion of the site remains as open space and serves as a recreational area adjacent to Winegarden Park. The site is centrally located in Lower Gibsons and offers spectacular views. The Official Community Plan designates most of these lands for Mixed-Use Commercial development. This suggests that sometime in the future real estate development may be explored with potential revenues for the Town while possibly re-locating some of the administration buildings.
4. White Tower Lands (Mahan Road)
These lands are currently used for recreation (trails) and stormwater management (retention and settlement ponds). The area also forms the headwater of Charman Creek. As part of the Town's stormwater management planning for Upper Gibsons this area is earmarked for additional stormwater retention ponds. Specifically, this would involve a new pond and naturalising of the area between the current forest edge and the Gibsons Pool.

The proposed Cluster Housing project includes ground oriented single level units. Therefore a level site is preferable over a steeper site such as Holland Lands. The Christenson Lands are already in use by the Good Samaritan Society and the White Tower Lands are earmarked for storm water management purposes. Based on these considerations, the discussion with Sunshine Coast Affordable Housing Society focused on possible use of the Charman Creek Lands.

Charman Creek lands

The Charman Creek lands consists of 2 large parcels. The lower parcel (389 Stewart Road) contains the Town's Sewage Treatment Plant and forested areas covering a portion of the Charman Creek ravine. The upper parcel (folio 449.005) is forested as well and contains the Inglis Trail connecting Lower Gibsons to Upper Gibsons (Shaw Road and Eaglecrest Drive).



Figure 2: upper parcel of the Charman Creek lands showing contours and trails

The total area of the site is approximately 8 ha (20 acres) but half of the site is very steep. The more level area is located at the northwest corner, roughly between the two trails that enter the area from Shaw Road and Eaglecrest Drive. The level area measures approximately 4 ha (10 acres) as shown on Figure 3.

Servicing of these lands would benefit from easy access to existing sanitary, stormwater and drinking water infrastructure on Shaw Road and Eaglecrest Drive.

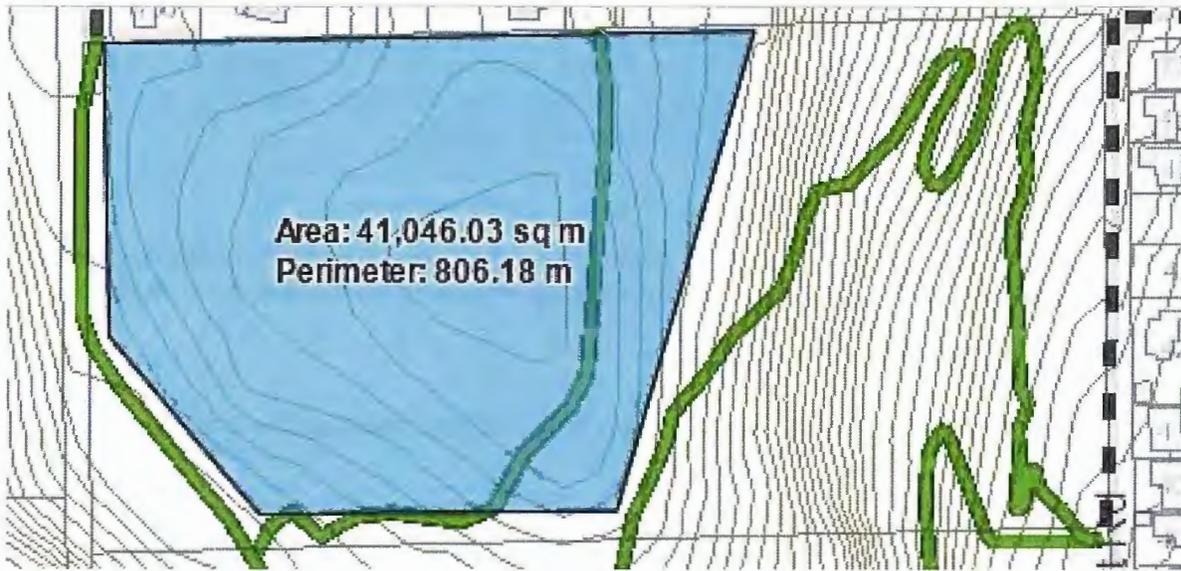


Figure 3: Level area of the upper parcel of Charman Creek Lands

Staff explored options for delineating a tentative area for the Cluster Housing proposal. The request for approximately 0.6 ha (1.5 acre) would cover around 15% of the level area and 7.5 % of the total site. Figure 4 gives an indication of the area needed relative to the overall size of the parcel. Depending on Council’s direction, a more definite location could be identified depending on site plan needs and community input.

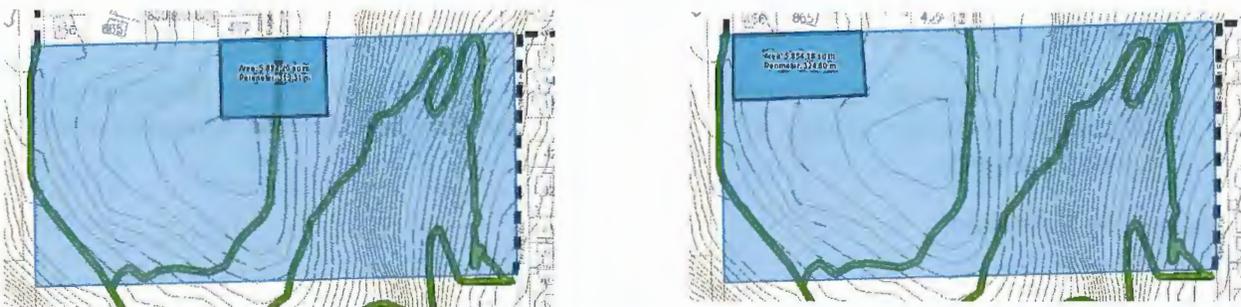


Figure 4: Indication of possible land dedications for the Cluster Housing project

PLAN/POLICY IMPLICATIONS

Strategic Plan Implications

The 2015 Strategic Plan lists the objective of “maximizing property utilization and improving operational and financial sustainability of our assets”. Making Town land available for an affordable housing project would support this objective.

Another relevant objective is “taking leadership in regional and community cooperation”. Supporting this initiative from the Sunshine Coast Affordable Housing Society shows the Town’s willingness to be a partner in community projects.

Community input should be considered early in the process if Council decides to support the request for land. Providing an opportunity for the community at large as well as consulting with the adjacent neighbourhood would support the strategic objective of “fostering community participation in vision-setting and decision making”.

Financial Plan Implications

Financial details regarding the terms for providing land for the proposed Cluster Housing will need to be determined at a later date if Council supports exploring the proposed location.

RECOMMENDATIONS / ALTERNATIVES

Staff recommendations are listed on page 1. Additionally, Council could outline desired next steps for further review:

THAT it be recommended to Council that Council request staff and the Sunshine Coast Affordable Housing Society to further explore the financial details of making a portion of the Charman Creek Lands available for the proposed Cluster Housing project.

And / Or

THAT it be recommended to Council that Council request staff and the Sunshine Coast Affordable Housing Society to further explore options for a site plan and to seek community input regarding the preferred location on the Charman Creek Lands for the proposed Cluster Housing project.

Alternatively, Council can request staff to explore other locations:

THAT it be recommended to Council that Council request staff and the Sunshine Coast Affordable Housing Society to explore alternative locations for the proposed Cluster Housing project.

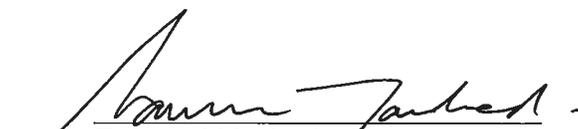
Respectfully Submitted,



André Boel, RPP
Director of Planning

CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER'S COMMENTS:

I have reviewed the report and support the recommendation(s).



Emanuel Machado
Chief Administrative Officer