

WORLD CAFÉ

What We Heard

Charman Creek Mixed-Market Rental Housing
Proposal

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | |
|--|-------------------------------------|
| 1. Introduction | Error! Bookmark not defined. |
| 1.1. Background..... | 3 |
| 2. What We Heard | Error! Bookmark not defined. |
| 2.1. Challenges and Ways to Address Them | 4 |
| 2.1.1. Environment..... | 4 |
| 2.1.2. Traffic..... | 4 |
| 2.1.3. Form and Character | 5 |
| 2.2. Opportunities..... | 6 |
| 2.2.1. Housing Needs | 6 |
| 2.2.2. Assets and Amenities..... | 6 |
| 3. Conclusion and Next Steps..... | Error! Bookmark not defined. |

1. Introduction

1.1. Background

Housing on the Sunshine Coast has changed rapidly in the last 10-15 years. The Town of Gibsons has been working in partnership with other local governments and the non-profit sector to address housing issues through the development of the Sunshine Coast Housing Committee, which was funded by the Town of Gibsons, District of Sechelt and Sunshine Coast Regional District, with a mandate of three years.

From the Committee's work, a new non-profit housing society was developed: the Sunshine Coast Affordable Housing Society (SCAHS). The Town has been working with SCAHS and other non-profits (e.g. Habitat for Humanity) to identify municipally-owned or otherwise available parcels of land to support the development of affordable housing.

In spring of 2017, Town Council agreed to look more closely at two parcels of municipally-owned land: a parcel at the corner of Shaw Road and O'Shea (referred to in this report as the Shaw Rd. site), and a parcel of land at the end of Shaw Road, and bordered by Stewart Road in Lower Gibsons (referred to in this report as the Charman Creek site). The purpose of this study was to:

- ✦ Identify whether one was more suitable for development of approximately 40 units of rental housing
- ✦ Solicit community input on the overall need for affordable housing, and start to identify neighbourhood or community concerns about this type of development
- ✦ Develop a financial feasibility study determining what level of local and senior government support would be required for the development of this housing

The findings of this study were presented to Council in October 2017 identifying the Charman Creek site as a suitable location, due to other potential obligations and limitations on the Shaw Road and O'Shea site. Council directed staff to conduct further community consultation with the Shaw Road and Eaglecrest neighbours around potential impacts of a housing development on Charman Creek lands. On February 1, 2018 a World Café was held at Christensen Village in Gibsons to hear from neighbours and community members about this proposed development. The World Café was facilitated by Urban Matters, and Town staff and Board members of the Sunshine Coast Affordable Housing Society took notes and facilitated conversation at each of the tables. Twenty-nine residents of the Town attended. This report represents the outcomes of the meeting and What We Heard.

2. What We Heard

2.1. Challenges and Ways to Address Them

Participating community members were asked to describe challenges and concerns they had with the development. Additionally, participants were asked to consider ways by which these challenges and concerns might be addressed or mitigated.

2.1.1. Environment

The greatest environmental concerns were related to the loss of forest, and relatedly, risk to wildlife. These were each common themes, with the loss of forest contributing to the concerns of risk to wildlife. An increase in noise (from traffic for example) and an increase in light (from traffic or streetlights and the like) were also identified as contributing to concerns for wildlife. A number of opportunities were identified by community members to address some of these concerns, including limiting the footprint by altering parking or limiting other infrastructure elements (access roads in particular).

Challenges and Concerns

- Want to protect trees
- Want to maintain a dark-sky friendly environment
- Make use of existing natural elements and minimize clearing of trees
- Protect wildlife (owls and birds)
- Community garden would be a challenge due to wildlife
- Sound pollution with increased traffic
- Impacts to aquifer
- Impact to Charman creek watershed

Opportunities to Address Challenges and Concerns

- Consider underground or less parking to limit footprint and protect forest
- Alter position slightly to leave more of existing trees
- Possibility of environmental impact assessment
- Look at alternative lots
- Reduce access roads
- Look to increase density in town instead of building outward
- Identify species at risk and engage in protective measures
- Sustainable / zero waste, low energy model (including solar, etc. where possible)
- “Smart Lighting” to reduce light pollution
- Increase density to reduce future cutting (“make it worth cutting the trees”)
- Landscaping to address water issues

2.1.2. Traffic

Concerns were raised about the potential increase in traffic with the development. With increased traffic concerns related to congestion and noise were common. Of particular concern was the potential volume of traffic on Eaglecrest. Also noted were concerns related to the recently added bike lanes, and the lack of sidewalks. A few actions that may limit these impacts were proposed, including the removal of bike lanes, a reduction in density, or greater utilization of car-shares.

Challenges and Concerns

- Lack of parking could contribute to traffic congestion
- Traffic around Eaglecrest
- Already confusing around Shaw road
- Concerns about scooters using bike lane
- Lack of sidewalks on Eaglecrest and Oceanmount
- Concern about increased volume
- Concern regarding safety (especially with children)
- Some residents have moved nearby precisely to get away from the traffic etc.
- Concern about noise due to traffic
- Environmental impacts of traffic
- Ferry traffic

Opportunities to Address Challenges and Concerns

- Remove bike lanes
- Add road along Mahan trail to reduce traffic on Shaw
- Less density
- Support opportunities for car shares

2.1.3. Form and Character

Privacy, density, and shade were raised as concerns related to form and character with the new development. World Café participants raised a number of potential solutions or actions to increase the acceptability of the development. In particular, suggestions related to height for the buildings were raised. These suggestions included suggestions to limit the height to a single story, or to place buildings with greater height away from existing homes.

Challenges and Concerns

- Privacy
- Shade on Inglis homes
- Maintenance program
- Common house uses up space
- Too dense
- Lack of parking

Opportunities to Address Challenges and Concerns

- Subtle transition where possible, duplexes along rear to mirror Inglis
- Convert common house to additional units
- Various heights may be more acceptable – shorter buildings near existing houses, height on south side

Stylistic Suggestions

- Lower height (more spread out)
- Less modern character (sloped, pitched, or shed roof)
- Storage on decks
- Small units

2.2. Opportunities

World Café participants were asked to consider possible opportunities brought by the development. In particular, participants were asked how the development may contribute to addressing housing needs, neighbourhood density, and community assets and amenities.

2.2.1. Housing Needs

Participants identified opportunities to begin to address some of the pressing housing needs in Gibsons through this development. In particular, participants communicated that the development could begin to address the lack of affordable housing in the community, especially for seniors, people who may be interested in coming to work in Gibsons, and other groups that may add to the diversity of the community.

Opportunities Raised

- Address lack of rental housing
- Address some affordability issues in the community
- Meet needs of single seniors living with housing uncertainty
- Begin to address how lack of housing puts pressure on businesses looking to hire
- Increase diversity in the community, and ensure that everyone is welcome and has housing
- Mixed market housing (for example mixed income rentals in Victoria and Kelowna)

2.2.2. Assets and Amenities

World Café participants identified a broad range of assets or amenities that could be provided through the development that may be of value to the community.

Opportunities Raised

- Community garden
- Playground, possibly incorporating trees
- Community rooms
- Possibility to benefit from mix of demographics (seniors, younger families, etc.)
- Tennis court
- Community library
- Planned events
- Exercise classes

3. Conclusion and Next Steps

The World Café meeting brought out a range of interested individuals from the neighbourhood and community. Despite significant concerns from residents in the nearby neighbourhood, there was nonetheless a productive conversation about how concerns could be addressed through planning and design. There was also support from some participants who feel that affordable housing is strongly needed in Gibsons at this time.

The next step of the consultation process will be to work with local neighbours and residents through a design process to address concerns and opportunities identified through this report into a final design. The next steps for this project will follow the path laid out by Town of Gibsons Council, including an application to CMHC for seed funding. The CMHC application will focus on funding for:

- Next steps in the consultation process (design charrette and public open house)
- Site design, including site massing, layout and service planning
- Detailed business case planning based on designs and site plans