TO: Mayor and Members of Council
FROM: Lanie Hurdle, Commissioner, Community Services
RESOURCE STAFF: Jim de Hoop, Director Community and Family Services
DATE OF MEETING: 2010-11-16
SUBJECT: Public Consultation Meeting to Declare Leroy Grant Park Surplus for Affordable Housing

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:
On July 20, 2010, Council directed staff to hold a public consultation meeting to declare Leroy Grant Park surplus for the purpose of affordable housing and to report back with a recommendation on disposal of Leroy Grant Park following the consultation meeting. During that same month, the Affordable Housing Development Committee also reviewed and supported the Leroy Grant Park site as an ideal property for future affordable housing.

A public consultation meeting was held on September 15, 2010 at the Calvin Park branch of the public library on Wright Crescent. Further input was encouraged through the City's web site and through written submissions. The purpose of the public meeting was to obtain feedback on the Leroy Grant property as parkland and its suitability for future affordable housing. Discussions about the details of the affordable housing model, number of units, etc. were not the purpose of the meeting and would be the subject of future public meetings should the parkland be declared surplus.

Comments collected by City staff were generally supportive of developing additional affordable housing in Kingston. Many comments were made about the suitability of the property as it is close to critical amenities such as transit, other parkland, commercial establishments and other community services such as the Kingston Family YMCA. There were no comments made about the need to retain Leroy Grant property for park purpose based on current or future use. Feedback received by staff included future consideration in the development of an affordable housing model on the Leroy Grant property which would impact the number of units to be established on that property. Those comments included:

1. Potential alternative vehicular access to all the properties west of Leroy Grant Drive including the subject property if possible;
2. Consideration for capital improvements to the surrounding parks including Third Avenue Park, Oakwood Park, Kiwanis Park and Max Jackson Park;
3. Enabling better pedestrian access from Leroy Grant Drive to the Kingscourt neighbourhood and integration with neighbouring land uses including commercial areas and parks;
4. Ensuring that increases in vehicular traffic are manageable;
5. Ensuring adequate municipal and stormwater management services for the site;
6. Accommodating the eventual Leroy Grant extension and other related traffic issues.

Council Meeting 24   November 16, 2010
The public consultation feedback will be taken into account during the next stage of feasibility analysis. Selection of preferred site(s) for affordable housing is essentially a precondition for getting access to affordable housing grant funding. It is therefore important for the City to be identifying and securing, where possible and reasonable, selected sites for possible development.

RECOMMENDATION:

THAT Council give two readings to the by-law attached as Exhibit B, to declare surplus to municipal need the property described as Leroy Grant Park, located at 58 Leroy Grant Drive, as depicted in Exhibit A; and,

THAT Council authorize and direct the City Clerk, in accordance with the City of Kingston Notice By-Law No. 2003-15 as amended, to give notice of Council's intention to declare surplus to municipal need the property described as Leroy Grant Park located at 58 Leroy Grant Drive, as depicted in Exhibit A; and,

THAT Council give third reading and approve the attached by-law to declare surplus to municipal need the property described as Leroy Grant Park located at 58 Leroy Grant Drive, as depicted in Exhibit A, upon providing the prescribed public notice of Council's intent; and,

THAT Council direct staff to include the Leroy Grant Park in the short list of properties in the Affordable Housing Land Bank that will be reviewed in 2011 for due diligence feasibility analysis as part of moving selected municipal properties to the construction ready stage.

AUTHORIZING SIGNATURES:

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<th>ORIGINAL SIGNED BY COMMISSIONER</th>
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<td>Lanie Hurdle, Commissioner, Community Services</td>
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<th>ORIGINAL SIGNED BY CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER</th>
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<td>Gerard Hunt, Chief Administrative Officer</td>
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CONSULTATION WITH THE FOLLOWING COMMISSIONERS:

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<tr>
<th>Commissioner Name</th>
<th>Position</th>
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<tr>
<td>Cynthia Beach</td>
<td>Sustainability &amp; Growth</td>
<td>n/r</td>
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<tr>
<td>Denis Leger</td>
<td>Transportation, Properties &amp; Emergency Services</td>
<td>n/r</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jim Keech</td>
<td>President and CEO, Utilities Kingston</td>
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(N/R indicates consultation not required)
OPTIONS/DISCUSSION:

1. Parkland

The draft Parks and Recreation Master Plan recommends that the City provides access to active parkland (i.e. urban, neighbourhood or district) within 800 metre radius of major or intensive residential areas. Staff reviewed the location of existing Leroy Grant Park (1.3 acres) and has identified the following parks within an 800 metre radius:

1. Third Avenue Park (6.4 acres)
2. Oak Street Park (6.31 acres)
3. Kiwanis Park (3.51 acres)
4. Max Jackson Park (3 acres)
5. Kingston Memorial Centre site (23.6 acres)

Parks identified within the 800 metre radius have various amenities including but not limited to play structures, community garden, splash pad, trail and pathways, etc. Although there are a number of surrounding parks, some type of play amenities should be integrated on site should it be developed for affordable housing purposes. There should also be more formalized pedestrian connections to walk to surrounding parks and capital investments on existing parks. Lands surrounding Leroy Grant are not owned by the City.

There are no plans or requests to develop Leroy Grant Park. The Park is currently identified as open space in the City’s Official Plan.

2. Leroy Grant Park as an affordable housing site

Previous staff reports have cited the location considerations in situating new affordable or social housing projects. In those reports, the following general parameters were used when considering the potential location of affordable or social housing developments:

- Low income households, and the City as a whole, would benefit from the creation of more affordable housing opportunities in a wider variety of locations than is presently available. In principle, access to such housing should be made available for low income households in every residential community in the City. Social (rent geared to income (RGI)) housing in particular is best located near basic community amenities.

- Most low income households, particularly families, must rely on the automobile (although usually to a lesser degree than higher income households) in order to access high order goods and services in the community. Notwithstanding this reality, other elements should be considered in terms of location preferences:
  - Availability of transit and proximity of transit stops
  - Availability of lower order goods and services, such as groceries, convenience stores, parks, green space, and other recreational and community amenities.
  - Ease with which households could access higher order goods and services, typically available in a downtown or at regional shopping nodes that are connected by transit.

- Residents reliant on social assistance typically use public transit, walking, bicycling, taxi-cabs or hitching rides with friends or family to get around.
Information contained in the Kingston Community Profile produced by the Social Planning Council provided the following information for consideration: “Policies could be implemented to ensure a greater geographic distribution of affordable housing among the region, while still maintaining a high degree of accessibility of relevant services.” The proposed Leroy Grant site does provide mixed housing as well as a fairly significant commercial development and therefore meets the intent identified in the Social Planning Council's report.

There are currently over 1,000 people on the City’s affordable housing waiting list, of which 728 need a one bedroom unit and 216 need a two bedroom unit. The 2006 Census confirms that there are 7,500 households in the City of Kingston and County of Frontenac that are in 'core need' for more affordable or social RGI housing.

There is currently a great need for affordable housing in Kingston with many people struggling to find homes largely because of a lack of supply. Kingston currently has a residential vacancy rate of only 2.2%,¹ which is one of the lowest of any municipality in Ontario. The effect of this statistic is a competitive rental market and high living costs. A two bedroom apartment in Kingston costs, on average, $909. This ranks sixth among the 22 cities included in the Where's Home² rental housing study, and is higher than some much larger urban centres in Ontario including London, Kitchener, and Guelph. Kingston’s average rent is also rising faster than almost all other Ontario cities.

3. Comments at the public consultation meeting
A public consultation meeting was held on September 15, 2010 at the Calvin Park branch of the public library on Wright Crescent and 22 people were in attendance. The comments reflected general support for this location with some concerns related to the practicalities of developing on the lands and impacts on surrounding land uses. Attendees at the meeting also expressed the need to move expeditiously to create this and other new affordable housing developments.

The following concerns will be evaluated as part of the next step feasibility analysis:

1. Possible provision of alternative vehicular access to all the properties west of Leroy Grant Drive including the subject property;
2. Consideration for improvements to the surrounding parks within 800 metres of the subject property;
3. Enabling better pedestrian access from Leroy Grant Drive to the Kingscourt neighbourhood and integration with neighbouring land uses including commercial areas and parks;
4. Ensuring that increases in vehicular traffic are manageable;
5. Ensuring adequate municipal and stormwater management systems for the site; and
6. Accommodating the eventual Leroy Grant extension and other related traffic impacts such as traffic signalization at Macdonnell and Concession Street.

Another concern expressed in two written submissions was the perception that there could be a high concentration of social RGI housing, similar to the 'north end'. Considering that the City does not yet have a benchmark for the concentration of social RGI, staff based the following analysis on the Social Planning Council’s recommendation with respect to ensuring a greater geographic distribution of affordable housing by estimating a general guideline for social/RGI housing density in all of the City's neighbourhoods.

² Where’s Home: A Study of Affordable Rental Housing within 22 Communities in Ontario. Published by the Ontario Non-Profit Housing Association (ONPHA) & the Ontario Region of the Co-operative Housing Federation of Canada (CHFC), May, 2010.
A guideline or benchmark could be established that more than 25% social/RGI households in any of the City's 45 neighbourhoods (shown at: http://www.cityofkingston.ca/pdf/neighbourhoods/AllNeighbourhoods_Map.pdf) is considered high in terms of density leading potentially to a less than optimum neighbourhood mix. It is important to stress that this is only an arbitrary guideline figure and there is always a danger of being overly pedantic or formalistic in approaching this issue. According to the last census, 15.4% of households in Kingston are in low income range (i.e. incidence of low income) that would be served by affordable housing. It would stand to reason therefore that between 15% to 25% affordable housing in any neighbourhood is not unreasonable to expect. Using the above guidelines, the Leroy Grant location within the Kingscourt neighbourhood would still be below that which is considered high in terms of social/RGI housing density, estimated at 12% of households currently that are RGI or that are in the development approval stages.

EXISTING POLICY/BY LAW:
Section 9.9 of the Adopted Official Plan contains the following policies respecting land acquisition or disposal. “9.9.1. Land within the municipality may be acquired, held, sold or exchanged by the municipality for purposes of implementing this Official Plan. Land dispositions will be carried in accordance with the policies of Section 3.8 of this Plan.”

In addition to the section cited already; the following sections in the Official Plan were reviewed and will be examined as part of the next stage feasibility assessment:

- 3.3.10 Affordable Housing
- 3.3.8. Intensification
- 3.3.C. High Density Residential Policies
- 3.3.C.2. Locational Criteria for High Density Residential
- 2.1.2 (i) Sustainable Development Policies
  2.6.8. Areas in Transition
- 3.3.7. Infill

NOTICE PROVISIONS: n/a

ACCESSIBILITY CONSIDERATIONS: n/a

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS: n/a

CONTACTS:
Lanie Hurdle, Commissioner, Community Services 613-546-4291 ext. 1231
Jim de Hoop, Director, Community and Family Services 613-546-2695 ext. 4957

OTHER CITY OF KINGSTON STAFF CONSULTED:
George Wallace, Director, Planning and Development
Mark Van Buren, Director of Engineering
Neal Unsworth, Parks Manager, Recreation and Leisure Services
Mary McIntyre, Housing Programs Administrator

EXHIBITS ATTACHED:
Exhibit A – Parkland located within an 800 meter radius
Report 10-324 - Exhibit "A" – Parkland located within an 800 meter radius
BY-LAW NO. 2010-

A BY-LAW TO DECLARE SURPLUS TO MUNICIPAL NEED THE PROPERTY KNOWN AS LEROY GRANT PARK LOCATED AT 58 LEROY GRANT DRIVE.

PASSED:

WHEREAS Section 27.(1) of the Municipal Act, 2001, S.O. 2001, c. 25, as amended, permits municipalities to pass by-laws for the declaring surplus of properties under the jurisdiction of the Council;

AND WHEREAS the Council of the Corporation of the City of Kingston deems it necessary to pass a by-law to declare surplus the property known as Leroy Grant Park located at 58 Leroy Grant Drive;

AND WHEREAS public notice of Council’s intention to declare surplus the land shall be published in accordance with City of Kingston Policy for the Sale and Acquisition of Property and Notice By-Law No. 2003-15, as amended;

NOW THEREFORE the Council of the Corporation of the City of Kingston hereby enacts as follows:

1. That the property known as Leroy Grant Park located at 58 Leroy Grant Drive is deemed to be surplus to the needs of the Municipality in accordance with City of Kingston Policy for the Sale and Acquisition of Property.

2. This By-Law shall come into force and take effect on the date of its passing.

GIVEN FIRST AND SECOND READINGS

GIVEN THIRD READING AND FINALLY PASSED

CITY CLERK

MAYOR