

Memo



To: Committee of the Whole

From: **Development and Engineering Services / Manager of Strategic Initiatives**

Date: 2020-01-27

Subject: Early Budget Approval funding of in kind and reinvestment program analysis – Real Estate Strategy

Background

Council is considering the early budget approval of \$100,000 for the Real Estate Strategy and \$150,000 for the Official Community Plan update, based on priorities in the 2019-2023 Council Strategic Plan. Under the Disaster Mitigation and Adaptation Fund – Land Acquisition Program (LAP), the City's Land Acquisition Team is well underway in design and preparing for delivery of the property purchase program.

To support success of the LAP, the City and Team have initiated the development of an In-Kind / Reinvestment Program (IKRP) with the intention of enabling attainable options on City land (including relocated homes) for affected property owners and to maintain affordable and attainable housing stock within the City.

The fundamental question that the City will be confronted with is after acquiring around \$12.0 million in real estate assets, what comes next? Does the City take 80 homes to landfill at considerable environmental and social cost, or could a reinvestment program present an economic opportunity to offset risks to the Grand Forks economy by removing an essential housing segment? While the question of how this might help the impacted community is highly important for the property owners, it is also critical to understand the economic opportunity of reinvesting these assets in the community.

Based on initial IKRP scoping and program requirements established for the LAP, the City will require delivery of a feasibility assessment and business plan with engineering, costing, preliminary subdivision and servicing conceptual design, community outreach, and planning document preparation over the next four to five months. Success of the feasibility study will enable full understanding by Council of the opportunity, costs, risks and implementation pathway that identifies project constraints and schedule and support their decision on approval of the program.

This work will complement the land use planning and servicing capacity analysis currently underway in the West End Comprehensive Development Plan. The department will align the two programs to ensure capacity is available to meet the high level of analysis and information needed over a tight timeline.

Estimated budget for the additional work to enable the IKRP is \$75,000; the remainder of the budget would be reserved for additional related or separate analysis on other City lands.

Work undertaken within the West End Comprehensive Development Plan and the IKRP would be brought into and aligned with longer-term land use planning opportunities identified for inclusion in the Official Community Plan (OCP) update. Council Strategic Plan priorities and staff recommendations have identified several specific topics to consider including:

- Disaster risk reduction and land use changes under DMAF
- Sustainable Asset Management
- Active Transportation
- Conservation and protection of natural assets and sensitive ecosystems
- Attainable housing development
- Employment lands
- Downtown Revitalization

The department intends to prepare an OCP update strategy for Council input prior to sending out a request for proposals to initiate this program.
