



# Corporate Report

NO: R055

COUNCIL DATE: March 27, 2006

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## REGULAR COUNCIL

TO: Mayor & Council

DATE: March 10, 2006

FROM: General Manager, Engineering  
General Manager, Parks, Recreation & Culture

FILE: 0910-40/32

SUBJECT: Sale of City Lots - 11693 to 11729 - 98 Avenue

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## RECOMMENDATION

That Council endorse the previous Council approval that designated the City-owned lots located at 11693, 11699, 11707, 11715, 11723, and 11729 - 98 Avenue as surplus to the City's needs, and authorize staff to market them under the requirements of the Community Charter and bring purchase offers with recommendations to Council for consideration.

## BACKGROUND

Tom Hopkins Ravine Park consists of a large number of individual lots of record and sections of unopened road allowances adjacent to Delta Creek between 96 Avenue and River Road. The majority of these lands are City owned lands, and are not dedicated parkland or purchased for park purposes. A park planning exercise was undertaken to rationalize which of these City owned lands should be incorporated into the park and which are surplus to park needs.

An Environmental Assessment Study was completed which determined that a total of 10 out of the 59 lots were surplus to the environmental integrity of the ravine park. These 10 lots consist of six lots, 11693 to 11729 – 98 Avenue (see Appendix 1), and four lots, 11703 to 11725 – 98A Avenue. The Environmental Review Committee (ERC) subsequently confirmed that the retention of these lots was not necessary for the protection of fisheries habitat.

The City later received objections from the community to the sale of the four lots located at 11703 to 11725 - 98A Avenue. The community argued that these four developable lots were understood to be part of the Tom Hopkins Ravine Park. The City decided to retain the four lots as parkland as there are some established trails on this land, and it was contiguous on two sides with other parklands. The same conditions do not apply to the six lots as there is no

developed park use on this land, plus there are houses immediately adjacent to the north as well as existing across 98 Avenue to the south.

In the summer of 2004, City staff arranged for the transfer of ownership of these four lots (11703 to 11725 - 98A Avenue) and another 49 City-owned lots within Delta Creek to Parks, Recreation, and Culture, for inclusion in the Tom Hopkins Ravine Park. The total area of the park is now approximately 12 acres (5.0 ha).

On February 9, 2004 Closed Council (Corporate Report No. CC002) approved the sale of a comprehensive list of surplus City lands, including six vacant, residential lots located at 11693, 11699, 11707, 11715, 11723 & 11729 - 98 Avenue as surplus lands to be sold.

The subject lots are zoned Single Family Residential and designated Urban in the City's Official Community Plan. The City acquired these lots by tax sales in 1936. They are situated in the Royal Heights neighbourhood, which is an older, established residential neighbourhood with single family dwellings typically 25 to 50 years old. The immediate privately held lots located to the north, south, and west of the City lots have older dwellings.

## **DISCUSSION**

On the basis that there was some continuing community concern about the possible loss of city-owned natural area land, staff of the Urban Forestry & Environmental Programs Section of the Parks, Recreation and Culture Department specifically reviewed the six lots to determine their natural values relative to the park and the surrounding neighborhood. The findings of the review were that the natural value of these lots is relatively low, especially when compared to the large adjacent ravine, which contains far greater fauna values, connectivity and species diversity.

As the six subject lots are "lots of record," the residential development of them does not require subdivision/rezoning approval. Nevertheless, City staff proceeded to obtain a servicing agreement for the lots, requiring the buyer of the lots to service them in accordance with City servicing standards. The design details for the servicing of the lots have been completed, and City staff now wish to proceed with the marketing of the lots.

During the servicing agreement process, City staff received a number of enquiries from the public with questions that generally related to the City's intention for the lots and the future of the mature trees located on the lots. The lots are heavily treed and will require considerable tree removal, grading, and leveling in preparation for house construction. The City, as part of the servicing agreement, has prepared a tree retention and replacement plan. A copy of the tree retention and replacement plan is attached as Appendix III. City staff also consulted with the immediate adjacent owners and held an Information Session concerning servicing.

## **CONCLUSION**

The City completed a feasibility study on developing some of the City-owned lots located within the Delta Creek area. The City transferred 49 of the undevelopable lots as well as four marginally developable lots to Parks, for inclusion in the Tom Hopkins Ravine Park. Six City-owned developable lots remain and a servicing agreement for these six lots has been concluded. If the sale of the six lots is confirmed by Council, then the obligations, as contained within the servicing agreement, will be assigned to the buyer of the lots. Staff recommend that

Council endorse the previous Council approval designating the City lots located at 11693, 11699, 11707, 11715, 11723, and 11729 - 98 Avenue as surplus lands to be marketed. Following Council approval, these City lots will be advertised for sale immediately.

Revenues from the sale of these lots will provide much needed funding for the City's capital program of park, library, police and road capital works.



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Appendices

- I. Aerial Photograph of Subject Properties
- II. Aerial Photo of the 6 Lots
- III. Tree Retention and Replacement Plan

*General Rating of Environmental Sensitivity*

- Uniqueness**- low, no discernable rare features or processes.
- Relative size**- low in consideration of its contribution to the adjacent ravine.
- Location**- low, not needed to protect adjacent features and processes.
- Diversity of Species and Communities**- low, not species rich and not needed to preserve genetic diversity.
- Typical rating**- low, quite typical.
- Ecological significance**- low, contributes little to regional ecosystem
- Presence of rare or uncommon species**- low, none noted though not fully surveyed for; high human use likely precludes rare species.
- Geographic Significance**- low, does not contribute to preserving ecological features and process at a regional or international scale.
- Fragility**- low, not particularly vulnerable to disturbance.
- Naturalness**- low to moderate, but could be biologically productive with neighborhood cooperation.
- Public Health and Safety**- low to moderate, does contribute substantially to recreational needs or air quality.