CHARRETTE SUMMARY
Excellent Participation in Design Charrette
January 16-18, 2018

The three-day Design Charrette facilitated by ParioPlan Inc. and Brian Allsopp Architect Ltd. between January 16–18, 2018 saw excellent participation from over 160 people that attended and contributed to the Design Charrettes and open houses.

What is a Design Charrette?

Design Charrettes are an innovative way of engaging citizens, stakeholders, decision makers and design professionals to build a vision and design concepts for staff and seniors’ housing on the Connaught, Bear Hill, and current RCMP sites. It was a hands-on, collaborative process where in a single day ideas generated by the group developed into community supported design concepts. The Charrette was chosen as a tool for planning and public engagement for this project because it enabled a process that built social connections; established shared knowledge; and leveraged existing community assets that formed the foundations for clear decisions and strategic and meaningful action.

Day 1 – Tuesday, January 16, 2018 - Seasonal staff housing on the Connaught Drive Site

The Charrette focused upon a design concept for the 0.97 hectare (2.4 acres) Connaught Drive site. Given its location next to the CN mainline there will be a requirement for a 2.5 metre berm and 15 metre setback from the railroad right-of-way. One group looked at the site planning and building massing while the other group looked at the design of and the configuration of the housing units for seasonal staff. It was determined that a 3-storey apartment building would be the highest and best use of the site. A loop road would be needed to provide vehicular access from Connaught Drive. The existing walking trail would have to be realigned and reconstructed. The massing of the building with the low density housing on the north side was a concern. This was mitigated by breaking up the mass to form 2-3 buildings with view corridors in between.
It was also recommended that the north façade be two storeys in height with apartment units having individual entrances from Connaught Drive as shown in the artist’s rendering.

It was agreed that in the interest of making seasonal staff housing affordable the units need to be compact micro suites (300 – 400 square feet) with sleeping areas and attached bathrooms clustered around a shared common area with kitchen facilities. Secure storage for bicycles and sporting equipment is a must and could be accommodated on the ground floor. It was agreed that provisions should also be made for conventional 1,2 and 3 bedroom apartments for more permanent staff, particularly couples that could afford larger units.

Given that car ownership is lower amongst seasonal staff a reduced parking standard should be applied. Covered and surface parking would be accommodated on the ground floor.

The south orientation of the site provides a great opportunity for a rooftop terrace as a shared amenity space for residents only.

It is estimated that the site might be able to accommodate between 120 - 250 beds depending on the unit mix and configuration.

**Day 2 – January 17, 2018 - Permanent Staff Accommodation for Families – Bear Hill Site**

Participants for the Charrette were arranged into two tables and each was asked to come up with a design concept that would accommodate primarily family-oriented units on the 1.4 hectare (3.46 acres) Bear Hill site. The preferred built form would be row or stacked row housing units with room for green spaces to accommodate kids’ play. The site presented a number of constrains including an overhead power line that runs through the site as well as limited space to build an access road from Bonhomme Street needed to allow for fire and emergency access.
The proposed development also must be designed to be a good neighbor to the existing Bear Hill Resort and the existing lower density housing along Aspen Crescent.

As was the case for staff housing on Connaught Drive, space needs to be allocated for secure on-site storage of bicycles, sporting equipment, canoes, etc. Also adequate space needs to be identified for resident and visitor parking.

The two design concepts that were developed proximately yield between 40 – 60 units. The design concepts also made provisions for a limited number of single storey seniors’ cottages.

This site has the potential to be developed as an intergenerational co-housing project accommodating both families and seniors with shared communal kitchen and amenity spaces.

See definition of co-housing.

**Day 3 – January 18, 2018 – Seniors’ Housing on the current RCMP Site**

Although not immediately available the 0.7 hectare (1.73 acres) current RCMP site is a great location for seniors’ housing overlooking Centennial Park and being close to Jasper Fitness & Aquatic Centre; shopping; places of worship; and other amenities. The elevated site provides a panoramic view of the surrounding mountains.

Our afternoon session with seniors indicated that as people age they do not want to deal with stairs. So at grade access or an apartment building with elevators is essential. Provisions also need to be made for universal access. The design details in the individual units need to be elder friendly. Seniors moving from a single-family house value open spaces so a balcony for potted plants is a must, along with the potential for room for a garden that may take the form of a community garden. Seniors still drive so covered parking is preferred. Also they may have recreational vehicles.
As in the case of the other two sites secure on site storage is also required. Some seniors indicated the thing that is preventing them from downsizing is finding alternative housing that is “pet friendly”.

For the purpose of the Charrette, participants were arranged into two tables with each working on a design concept for the site in the form of a combination of apartment blocks that may be terraced to respect the existing topography as well as opportunities to include ground oriented row house units arranged around some central open space. Subject to further geotechnical investigation the development of underground parking may be feasible. Also, the economics of developing this site could be improved if a variance could be obtained from Parks Canada to increase the height of the apartment block from 3 to 4 storeys.

Like the Bear Hill Site there is good potential for an intergenerational co-housing project to not only to accommodate seniors but also families in the row housing units.

It is estimated from the two design concepts the site could accommodate between 40 – 56 residential units.
Co-Housing

Project Examples

Co-housing is a concept that originated in Denmark and refers to when a number of individual dwelling units share common amenities. Individual units can contain personal bedrooms, bathrooms, and kitchens, with shared spaces like living rooms, dining rooms and recreational spaces.

Windsong

- 6-acre site with 4 acres of natural preserve
- 34 townhouses fronting a glass enclosed pedestrian street
- For rent or buy
- 5 000 sq. ft. Common House with an industrial kitchen, dining room, fireside lounge, playroom, outdoor play structure, arts and crafts room, exercise room, media room, parkade, laundry room, washrooms, and guest room.
Cranberry Commons

- 1/2 acre site
- 22 townhouse and apartment style homes suited for demographics
- 3 400 sq. ft. Common House complete with private balconies, vegetable and herb garden, common courtyard and children play area

Quayside Village

- 1/4 acre site
- 19 residential units including bachelor, 1 and 2 bedroom flats, and 2 and 3 bedroom townhouses
- For rent or buy
- 2500 sq. ft. Common House
- 650 sq. ft. commercial space
Additional Housing Opportunities: Co-Housing

- Co-housing is a concept that originated in Europe and refers to when a number of individual dwelling units share common amenities. Individual units can contain personal bedrooms, bathrooms, and kitchens, with shared spaces like living rooms, dining rooms and recreational spaces.

- Can be applied within apartment buildings with shared communal areas or have different housing types around shared open space and other amenities.

- Benefit:
  - inter-generational housing
  - ageing in place

Examples:
- Urban Green Cohousing, Edmonton
- Cranberry Commons, Burnaby
- Quayside Village, North Vancouver

Local example: Aspen Gardens is a similar model to co-housing