

Halton Hills makes first step toward building affordable housing

ALEXANDRA HECK

aheck@metroland.com

The Town of Halton Hills is looking to sell some surplus land - but not just to anyone.

The sale of the lands comes with a request for proposal that stipulates affordable housing must be built on the site, in an effort to create more possibilities for low to moderate income residents in a red-hot housing market.

"We would like to see a mixed-use development here," said Coun. Jane Fogal, during a planning and public works committee session where the report for an estimated 181 units would be built on the 4.8-acre parcel.

The lands are located near the municipal building, and it is expected a road would be built, called Halton Hills Drive.

The lands, valued at \$7.5 million, would be set to accommodate 25 medium density homes, 84 medium to

high-density homes, and 72 in the high-density category.

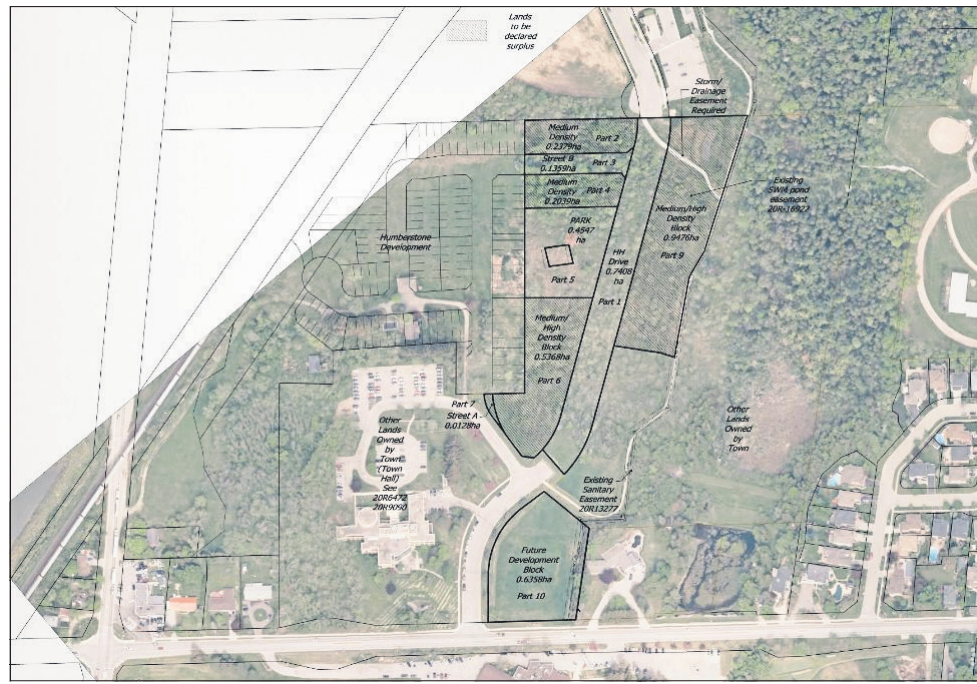
"We will be seeking bids from the private sector," said John Lindhardt, the commissioner of planning and sustainability with the town. "What it will actually be sold for remains to be seen."

The town is using the province's definition for affordable housing, as set out in Ontario's growth plan.

This means that the homes must cost around or under one third of a family's income or be at least 10 per cent lower than the average house value in the region.

"This is a very rare opportunity that we have to build some affordable housing," said Mayor Rick Bonette, noting that because the town owns the lands, they have the ability to influence the development. In the past years, other municipalities in Halton have far exceeded Halton Hills in building affordable housing.

"The kind of housing



Halton Hills photo

A map of the proposed affordable housing developments to be built near the municipal buildings.

that's available is well out of reach, to even moderate-income residents," said Coun. Ann Lawlor. "Affordability

in Halton Hills is a significant problem."

The committee heard from Pastor Ray Vander

Kooij, of the Bethel Church in Acton. He is the chair of the Halton Hills Housing Taskforce, who are support-

ing the move.

"It's an opportunity to make a statement," he said, adding that this is a rare opportunity for the town. "It hasn't been really economically profitable to build purpose-built rentals."

Fogal, who councillors commended for championing the idea of turning the lands into affordable housing, said it's the best way of keeping a healthy balance of people in the community.

She said the housing will allow for not only younger and older residents to stay in the community, but those with lower incomes - as the cost and type of housing built in town continues to price families out of the market.

"It's not subsidized housing," she said, explaining that the developer will be selling the homes, which will be built to be geared for a lower cost.

The request for proposal is set to go out this month and award the job by June.

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