**Potential Redevelopment of Lands North of the High-Line, North St. Boniface**

**File EP-1.2 (Vol. 6)**

9. The Executive Policy Committee has been advised that in February of 2001, the Land Enhancement Program, within the Real Estate Division of the Planning, Property and Development Department, was asked to re-examine the redevelopment potential for the lands bounded by rue Darveau on the south, the Red River to the west and north, and Whittier Park to the east and specifically those lands north of the C.N.R. highline located in North St. Boniface. Guided by both the objectives of the North St. Boniface Action Area Plan and Plan Winnipeg policy, which have identified the subject area to be both an appropriate and suitable area for residential redevelopment, that evaluation is now complete.

Since the mid-1970's the lands north of the C.N.R Mainline surrounded by the Red River and Whittier Park have been included alternately in plans for park purposes and in plans as a residential neighbourhood. On September 17, 1975, Council instructed that the Administration take the necessary steps to acquire all the property in the area north of the C.N.R Mainline between Tache Avenue and St. Joseph Street North, proposed as a park under the North St. Boniface District Plan.

In January, 1976, Council adopted a plan prepared by the City entitled the North Saint Boniface District Plan. The residents of North Saint Boniface were upset by certain policies inherent in the Plan, one of which was the designation of all lands north of the High Line to a park category. That designation, in effect, meant that because the City was instructed to acquire the subject properties for public park purposes, no building or upgrading permits for homes could be obtained. A building freeze was authorized and the area was also excluded from the then new Neighbourhood Improvement Program.

The City subsequently acquired a number of properties in the entire North St. Boniface area (i.e. north of Provencher Boulevard) at a sum of $3.88 Million, comprised of 82.51 acres (purchase prices only, not including statutory interest, legal fees, demolition costs or finance/administration charges, etc.). In the subject area, a total of $929,900.00 plus land exchanges was spent in property acquisitions.

In 1980, the North St. Boniface Residents Association and La Societe-Franco-Manitobaine drafted a list of recommended changes to the District Plan, the most significant of which was as follows:

> "That the North St. Boniface Action Area Plan be amended to redesignate lands located north of rue Darveau, East of Tache Avenue, south of rue Messager and west of rue St. Joseph from a proposed Park and Riverbank land use designation to a 'Residential' land use designation."

Those recommendations were submitted to the former St. Boniface-St. Vital Community Committee and the amendment process was initiated.

On October 6, 1982, Council approved a recommendation to amend the Action Area Plan from a proposed park and riverbank land use designation to a residential land use designation (with the exception of a northerly 100 foot strip from the centre of rue Darveau, rue St. Joseph to Tache Avenue for the protection of a possible transit corridor). On March 16, 1983, Council adopted By-law 3336/82 amending the designation of the subject area to a future residential land use designation, and to make available for sale the City-owned lots in this area.

On October 20, 1993, Council adopted a recommendation contained within a report dated October 4, 1993, from the former Committee on Protection, Parks and Culture that thirteen City-owned properties in the subject area be declared surplus to Parks and Recreation needs and disposed of accordingly. Between 1983 and 1992 there were various Council approved amendments to the Action Area Plan which "fine-tuned" the City's policy concerning future development in this area.

On January 26, 1995, Council rescinded its previous decision authorizing disposal of the thirteen properties, and authorized the Planning Department to amend the Action Area Plan to a future park use, and that the City acquire privately-owned properties in the area as they become available for sale. This decision was based on a report from the former Committee on Protection, Parks and Culture dated January 9, 1995, which report outlined:

- that the Committee on Finance on January 31, 1994, had recommended that the sale of all houses owned by the City in the area be put on hold until the Action Plan was reviewed and that in the interim the City acquire property in the area at fair market value, as property may become available.

- that at the time there were three properties available for sale.

- that at the time the City owned approximately 66 per cent of the lands (exclusive of streets and lanes) and that there were 26 residential and four non-residential privately owned holdings left in the area.

On February 5, 1996, the former Committee on Protection, Parks and Culture established a Sub-Committee, chaired by Councillor Vandal, to examine the feasibility and ramifications of implementing the current Area Action Plan including an outline of the full costs to the City relative to the subject property. On March 20, 1996 Council rescinded its decision of January 26, 1995.

In March, 1996, in response to the Sub-Committee's mandate, the administration and citizen members representing the local community, met to begin the process of identifying issues and development options for the area in question.

The Sub-Committee was also asked to assess the state of the existing infrastructure (roads and underground servicing) and establish what, if any, servicing costs would be assessed as a result of significant residential redevelopment of the area as defined. A follow-up questionnaire distributed to the property owners of the subject area generally confirmed that the preferred development option for the area in question would be either single-family housing, or a combination of single-family and low-density multiple-family housing whichever would prove to be the most economically viable.

On February 23, 1998, the Sub-Committee on High Line North Redevelopment Options completed its report containing the following recommendations:

"1. That combined sewer relief works proposed for the subject area be completed as expeditiously as possible, subject to funding approval by Council and subject to the priority rating with other combined sewer relief projects.

2a) That, in advance of the above-mentioned land drainage improvements, the Director of the Property and Development Services Department be instructed to immediately sub-divide, rezone, market, and offer for sale, the City-owned lands on the south side of Rue Messager generally in accordance with Development Option V, and,

2b) That the net revenue form the sales of the resulting lots be retained in an investment fund for infrastructure improvements, i.e.: street pavement, to coincide with the combined sewer relief works.

3. That the City begin the process of initiating the necessary amendments to Plan Winnipeg in order to facilitate future residential development of the frontage lands along portions of the west side of Tache Avenue."

On March 2, 1998, the Standing Policy Committee on Property and Development referred the Report from the Sub-Committee on Lands North of the C.N.R. High Line to the Administration for review and comment back. On May 4, 1998, the Standing Policy Committee on Property and Development requested that the Administration conduct a servicing analysis study and report back to the meeting scheduled for June 1, 1998.

On June 22, 1998, the Property and Development Services Department prepared a new report, which involved a detailed servicing cost estimate. The report concluded the subject area could not produce enough revenue from the sale of the City land within the internal area to offset the servicing cost to upgrade the internal area to an urban standard.

In 2001, a revised redevelopment study concluded that a mix of new, single-family (predominantly) and low-density, multiple-family housing could be achieved in the subject area if the existing infrastructure could be economically upgraded to acceptable modern standards.

This area would then be able to undergo a self-sufficient cycle of transformation and regrowth This area would then be able to undergo a self-sufficient cycle of transformation and regrowth with new housing and the reconstruction of older residences driven by the normal forces of the private marketplace.

The subject area, while seemingly on the periphery of North St. Boniface and physically separated by an elevated railway crossing, has for twenty-five years been the object of intense focus by the residents of North St. Boniface. At the urging of local resident committees in 1982, the Action Area Plan (By-law 965/75) was amended to reclassify the area north of the High Line (between rue Tache and rue St. Joseph, and rue Messager and rue Darveau) from a proposed "future park" area to a "future residential" area.

The Plan Winnipeg 2020 Vision further reinforced the neighbourhood position by identifying the subject enclave as a "neighbourhood" policy area". In accordance with Plan Winnipeg policy and its expressed objectives of maintaining a compact urban form, the area qualifies as a classic example of potential new/future infill housing. However, twenty years after the 1982 initiative by the residents of St. Boniface, little in the way of tangible new development has occurred north of the High Line in the designated residential area.

Progress has been significant with respect to riverbank property acquisition and subsequent rezoning to a "PR-1" Public Reserve category, but little has transpired in the area of new housing. A major impediment to new development has been the fact that in spite of studies having been completed which outline viable redevelopment options, the area is still serviced by a combined sewer system and waterlines of 1958 vintage. The upgrading of the underground infrastructure has to be deemed a priority prior to any actual redevelopment or marketing of land taking place.

It should be noted that the City's Water and Waste Department has confirmed that it is in the process of evaluating the cost/ benefit priority of separating the combined sewers of the entire North St. Boniface community, that is, north of Provencher Boulevard as a result of the construction of the Provencher Bridge. Wardrop Engineering has been hired to prepare the aforementioned cost/ benefit study by October 1, 2002. Their findings could influence the potential separation of combined sewer services in the North St. Boniface area, including the enclave north of the High Line, as early as the spring of 2003. Funding for this separation would come from Water and Waste's reconstruction fund.

Similarly given the advantages of either marketing or developing larger (non-fragmented) parcels of land in the future, consideration has to be given to providing the Planning, Property ad Development Department with the authority to proceed with an ongoing land assembly program, if not for all of the properties in the mandated area, then at least in response to those properties which periodically become available on the open market.

Report of the Executive Policy Committee dated July 10, 2002

The Executive Policy Committee recommends:

I. That the City of Winnipeg , in accordance with Plan Winnipeg Policy and the stated objectives of the North St. Boniface Action Area Plan, issue a proposal call for the redevelopment of the City-owned lands north of the highline in North St. Boniface for mixed use residential development, subject to the following principles:

A. That the densities be limited to principally single-family with the possibility of some low to medium density multiple-family along the north side of rue Darveau and on the west side of Tache Avenue, if necessary, subject to obtaining the required Plan Winnipeg amendments.

B. That the riverbank areas, by-and-large, be preserved for public, open park space in accordance with Plan Winnipeg Policy guidelines.

C. That the City of Winnipeg establish and maintain urban design controls over development as it occurs.

II. That the City of Winnipeg commit to do the following:

A. complete the combined sewer relief works to coincide with redevelopment.

B. relocate the Public Works Yard on the west side of Tache Avenue making it available for potential future housing, subject to obtaining the required Plan Winnipeg amendments. The relocation of this operations facility to the proposed new twenty acre Public Works Yard on Dawson Road has been contemplated for several years.

C. agree in principle to invest the revenue from the sales of City-owned land in the subject area back into infrastructure improvements to coincide with sewer relief works.

D. agree to allocate up to $500,000.00 from the Building Communities program for seed money to facilitate the aforementioned development subject to the Advisory Committee concurrence.

E. prepare a detailed conceptual plan which:

i) clearly identifies the location and dimensions of the proposed future Transit Corridor which is destined to parallel the north side of the Highline eventually linking The Downtown with Transcona, and

ii) which also demonstrates how the aforementioned new regional service can be effectively integrated into the existing/ future residential community with minimal adverse effect.

III. That the Chief Administrative Officer be authorized to acquire properties within this enclave as these properties become available subject to an appropriate funding source being identified for this purpose.

IV. That the Proper Officers of the City be authorized to do all things necessary to implement the intent of the foregoing, including the execution of any documents related thereto.