Town of Whitby Staff Report

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Report Title: Declare Surplus – Town-owned Lands, at Hickory and Colborne, and at Dunlop and Hickory Street South, for the Purpose of Conveyance to Habitat for Humanity Greater Toronto Area

Report to: Council	Submitted by: Fuwing Wong, Commissioner of Financial Services/Treasurer Francesco Santaguida, Commissioner of Legal and Enforcement Services/Town Solicitor Roger Saunders, Commissioner of Planning and Development
Date of meeting: June 24, 2024	
Report Number: FS 09-24	
Department(s) Responsible: Financial Services Department Planning and Development Department	
(Planning Services) Legal and Enforcement Services	Acknowledged by M. Gaskell, Chief Administrative Officer
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1. Recommendation:

 That a portion of the land legally described as Part of Lot 16 and Lot 32, 2nd Double Range Plan H-50031; Part Lot 26, Concession 1 Part 6, Plan 40R-5160, Town of Whitby, being a portion of PIN26503-0129 (LT), ("Hickory Property") located at Hickory Street and Colborne Street, as shown on Attachment #1 in Report FS 09-24 the precise area of which shall be identified on a new reference plan to the satisfaction of the Commissioners of Financial Services/Treasurer and Legal and

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Enforcement Services/Town Solicitor, be declared surplus for the purpose of conveyance to Habitat for Humanity Greater Toronto Area or its associated company ("Habitat");

- 2. That a portion of the land legally described as FIRSTLY: Lot 32, 3rd Double Range Plan H50031; SECONDLY: Part of Lots 15, 16, 31 and 33 ft reserve, 3rd Double Range Plan H50031, being Parts 1, 2, 3, and 4 on Plan 40R-29992; THIRDLY: Part of Lot 25, Concession 1, being Part 5, on Plan 40R-29992; Town of Whitby, being a portion of PIN: 26503-0273 (LT), ("Dunlop Property") located at Dunlop and Hickory Street South, as shown on Attachment #2 in report FS 09-24 the precise area of which shall be identified on a new reference plan to the satisfaction of the Commissioners of Financial Services/Treasurer and Legal and Enforcement Services/Town Solicitor, be declared surplus for the purpose of conveyance to Habitat;
- 3. That the requirement to give public notice in accordance with Town of Whitby Policy F-190 regarding the Acquisition, Sale or Other Disposition of Land Policy be waived for the disposition of the Hickory Property and the Dunlop Property reasons outlined in report FS 09-24;
- 4. That the Town provide Habitat a discount from the combined fair market value of the Hickory Property and Dunlop Property, as adjusted based on the new reference plans, to be treated as a forgivable loan as outlined in report FS 09-24;
- 5. That the Town's discount on the fair market value of the Hickory Property and Dunlop Property result in a final purchase price of \$3.0 million;
- 6. That, notwithstanding Town of Whitby Policy F-190, the Hickory Property and Dunlop Property shall be sold to Habitat at \$3.0 million, which is below fair market value;
- 7. That the Town provides a grant to Habitat, in the amount of \$3.0 million to be funded from the Federal Housing Accelerator Fund grant, for the purchase of the Hickory Property and Dunlop Property;
- 8. That, in lieu of a two-cheque exchange at the closing of the land transaction, the Town shall transfer the \$3.0 million from the Housing Accelerator Fund grant to the Town's Land Sale Reserve Fund to reflect the full proceeds from the sale of both the Hickory Property and the Dunlop Property;
- 9. That the Mayor and Clerk be authorized to sign an Agreement of Purchase and Sale and the Affordable Ownership Contribution Agreement between the Town and Habitat substantially based on the principles outlined in report FS 09-24 and subject to the satisfaction of

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the Commissioner of Legal and Enforcement Services/Town Solicitor, Commissioner of Planning and Development, and Commissioner of Financial Services/Treasurer;

- 10. That if the Agreement of Purchase and Sale and Affordable Ownership Contribution Agreement cannot be executed by August 15, 2024, staff be authorized to negotiate with other interested developers for affordable housing development on the properties;
- 11. That Staff be provided delegated authority to send Habitat clearance letters on a per unit basis as requested to release the Town's Section 118 Restrictions as registered on title to each of the Hickory Property and Dunlop Property subject to the proposed unit sale meeting the required Affordable Housing definition as outlined in report FS 09-24;
- 12. That a by-law be brought forward to authorize the conveyance of the Hickory Property and Dunlop Property to Habitat for Humanity Greater Toronto Area, or its associated company, subject to the concurrence of the Commissioner of Legal and Enforcement Services/Town Solicitor and Commissioner of Financial Services/Treasurer; and,
- 13. That Item GG-0030, related to Habitat's expression of interest to proceed with an affordable housing development at the Hickory Property and Dunlop Property, be removed from the New and Unfinished Business listing.

2. Highlights:

- Habitat is proposing an approximately 40-unit affordable housing development project on the Town-owned lands at Hickory Street (South of Colborne) and at Dunlop (southern limit of Hickory Street);
- A 2024 appraisal notes the fair market value for both properties to be \$5.9 million (subject to a reduction of land area for storm easements and future road widening);
- Based on the recommendations of this report, Habitat will essentially receive the Dunlop Property and Hickory Property at no cost to Habitat subject to construction of Affordable Housing and maintaining the units as Affordable over 25 years. As the Town's contribution towards Affordable (Ownership) Housing and Habitat's development in Whitby, the Town will provide Habitat:
 - A discount of approximately \$2.9 million from the appraisal value;
 - A \$3 million grant, funded from the Housing Accelerator Fund, to purchase the property from the Town; and,
 - The Town will pay for Habitat's Land Transfer Tax on the transaction (estimated to be \$134,000).

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3. Background:

At the December 11, 2023, Committee of the Whole Meeting, Town of Whitby Council received <u>a presentation and correspondence from Habitat</u> related to a proposed affordable housing project at the Hickory and Dunlop Properties owned by the Town. Council provided direction to staff report back (and include a land appraisal). This direction is summarized in the New and Unfinished Business list, Item GG-0030.

The Town-owned properties outlined in this report are:

- 1) The "Hickory Property" at Hickory and Colborne
 - a. legally described as Part of Lot 16 and Lot 32, 2nd Double Range Plan H-50031; Part Lot 26, Concession 1 Part 6, Plan 40R-5160, Town of Whitby, being a portion of PIN26503-0129 (LT);
 - b. 0.73 acres of vacant land see map in Attachment #1 to this report.
- 2) The "**Dunlop Property**" at Dunlop and Hickory Street South
 - a. legally described as FIRSTLY: Lot 32, 3rd Double Range Plan H50031; SECONDLY: Part of Lots 15, 16, 31 and 33 ft reserve, 3rd Double Range Plan H50031, being Parts 1, 2, 3, and 4 on Plan 40R-29992; THIRDLY: Part of Lot 25, Concession 1, being Part 5, on Plan 40R-29992; Town of Whitby, being a portion of PIN: 26503-0273 (LT));
 - b. 1.10 acres of vacant land see map in Attachment #2 to this report.

The total area of each of the Hickory Property and the Dunlop Property (and related fair market value/purchase price) may be reduced based on the precise area which shall be identified on a new reference plan to the satisfaction of the Commissioners of Financial Services/Treasurer and Legal and Enforcement Services/Town Solicitor. Specifically, the Town may have to retain a portion of each property for future road widenings to accommodate future pedestrian connections, therefore, the valuations may change based on a reduced area to be conveyed to Habitat. In addition, the value of the Dunlop Property may be reduced due to the location of existing storm water infrastructure and easements.

Based on a preliminary review of the concept plans, both subject properties will require successful planning applications in order to permit the proposed developments. A successful zoning application will be required to lift the H-Holding provision on both properties and a number of successful variances will be required to facilitate the developments as currently proposed. Site Plan applications and development agreements will also be required on both properties.

Habitat for Humanity's Interest in the Hickory and Dunlop Properties

At the December 11, 2023, Committee of the Whole Meeting, Town of Whitby Council received <u>a presentation and correspondence from Habitat</u> related to a proposed affordable housing project at the Hickory and Dunlop Properties owned by the Town.

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Based on recent discussions with Habitat, the development of the properties may occur in phases (based on funding for the project) with Dunlop Property proposed to be developed first followed by the Hickory Property. Habitat is proposing approximately 40 units with the number of units to be adjusted based on finalization of total area of the Hickory and Dunlop Properties to be conveyed after accounting for existing Town storm infrastructure on the Properties and land required for future road widenings.

Appraisal

Based on an appraisal by Schaufler Realty Advisors Ltd., dated January 22, 2024, the combined value of the Dunlop and Hickory Properties is \$5,900,000. The cost per square foot ranges from \$70 to \$80/square foot with the Dunlop Property having values in the lower end of the range due to the existing stormwater infrastructure and easements on the property.

The value of the Hickory and Dunlop Property will be adjusted based on area determined to be developable (i.e. excluding areas on the properties that contain Town infrastructure or may be required for future road widenings) and to be conveyed to Habitat. The fair market value will be adjusted based on total area to be sold to Habitat based on land surveys/reference plans. Reductions to the fair market value/purchase price will be reflected on the Town discount portion of the financial transaction with Habitat (see more information in the Financial Considerations section, below).

Federal Housing Accelerator Fund Grant

The Federal Housing Accelerator Fund ("HAF") is a grant that is part of Canada's National Housing Strategy. On January 26, 2024, the Government of Canada announced a \$24.9 million HAF grant in support of the Town of Whitby's HAF application. The Town has 9 initiatives supported by the grant funding that will improve processes, relationships, and systems related to the creation of housing. The increased issuance of permits, beyond our projections prior to these initiatives, serves as the metric to support the value gained from the grant funding. Each year the Town will report to the Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation, who is administering the funding on behalf of the Federal Government, including the amount of permits achieved. Failure to meet our projected targets may influence the Town's receipt of the full amount of allocated funding. As such, it is important that the Town continue to work earnestly to facilitate the issuance of permits particularly by, the December 31, 2026, completion of the 9 initiatives. The ambitious timelines and key milestones do not allow for project delays to achieve success, as such projects supported by HAF funding are required to be achieved by set deadlines with no exception. Any exception to this timeline puts grant funding at risk.

Affordable Housing Definition and Duration

The Affordable Homes and Good Jobs Act, 2023 ("**Bill 134**") was introduced by the Province of Ontario and received Royal Assent on December 4, 2023. Bill 134 provided

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for a definition of Affordable Housing (ownership and rental) that was to be used for future exemptions for Development Charges, Community Benefit Charges, and Parkland Dedication requirements but did not specify an implementation date. In April, 2024, Ontario municipalities were informed, through Bill 185, the Cutting Red Tape to Build More Homes Act, 2024 (which received Royal Assent on June 6, 2024), that exemptions for Affordable Housing would start June 1, 2024.

The Habitat project is Affordable (Ownership) Housing development project and Bill 134 defines Affordable Ownership as a unit sold at or below the lesser of an income-based threshold and a market-based threshold, as follows:

- (a) **Income Based Threshold**: An amount to be determined by the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing calculated as follows:
 - i. Determine the income of a household that, in the Minister's opinion, is at the 60th percentile of gross annual incomes for households in the applicable local municipality; and
 - ii. Identify the purchase price that, in the Minister's opinion, would result in annual accommodation costs equal to 30 per cent of the income of the household referred to in clause (i); OR
- (b) **Market Based Threshold**: 90 per cent of the average purchase price identified for the residential unit set out in the "Affordable Residential Units for the Purposes of the Development Charges Act, 1997 bulletin".

For exemptions to be provided, there is also a requirement that the units remain Affordable for a period of 25 years.

The Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing released a <u>bulletin in May 2024 that</u> <u>defines Affordable Housing (Ownership)</u> in Whitby at **\$517,400 (or lower)**. The Minister will update the Affordable Housing bulletins regularly and the Town & Habitat will use the amounts outlined in the bulletins as the definition (or upper threshold) for Affordable Housing.

Habitat is exempt from Development Charges as it is a non-profit organization. However, Town staff propose to still use the Bill 123 definition of Affordable Housing (Ownership) – i.e. currently \$517,400 and must remain Affordable for a duration of 25 years – to ensure that the project provides for an objective/third-party definition of Affordable Housing in Whitby for the long term.

4. Discussion:

The disposition of Town-owned land is guided by Town Policy F 190 - the "Acquisition, Sale or Other Disposition of Land Policy". Policy F 190 outlines the following process for the disposition of Town-owned land:

• Obtain the fair market value of the property via an appraisal report from a qualified appraiser;

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- Provide public notice which includes:
 - Posting a sign on the Property for not less than ten days;
 - An advertisement in a newspaper having general circulation within the Town; and
 - Posting notice on the Town's website;
- Provide the public an opportunity to submit written objections (including the person's name, address and reason(s) for objecting) to the Town within 20 days after notice is provided.

Fair Market Value and Proposed Discount of Value

As outlined in the Background Section of this report, the fair market value of both Townowned properties is \$5.9 million (subject to any reductions in land area related to future road widening/stormwater infrastructure).

It is recommended that both properties be sold to Habitat for \$3 million, below fair market value established through the appraisal report, for the following reasons:

- Habitat for Humanity is a non-profit organization with a track record of delivering affordable housing projects within the Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area;
- Habitat has noted that they have a plan and sample legal agreement templates in place to ensure that the units remain affordable in the long-term;
- Habitat appears to be in a position to advance and complete the project in a timely manner with drawings/plans, a financial plan, and professional team working on the project; and

The proposed sale at \$3 million represents a \$2.9 million (= \$5.9 - \$3.0) discount on the fair market value. The \$2.9 million discount will be treated like a forgivable loan where Habitat does not have to repay the \$2.9 million as long as the units remain Affordable for a minimum of 25 years.

Proposed Waiving of Notice Provision in Policy F 190

Given that all levels of government (Federal, Provincial, and Municipal) has expressed a need for more housing and, specifically, more affordable housing over recent years, it is recommended that the notice provisions of Policy F 190 related to the disposition of Town-owned property be waived so that the proposed Habitat for Humanity project may proceed (e.g. construction of approximately 40 Affordable Housing units be built and occupied) as soon as possible.

Agreement of Purchase and Sale

It is recommended that the Mayor and Clerk be authorized to execute an Agreement of Purchase and Sale ("**APS**") with Habitat subject to successful negotiations of APS terms and conditions based on the principles below:

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- The Town's contribution is recognized as conveying the Hickory Property and Dunlop Property at, essentially, no cost to Habitat:
 - Purchase price of \$5.9 million (to be adjusted based on final area to be conveyed after removing area for future road widenings and existing municipal infrastructure);
 - Town to provide discount that results in the final purchase price being \$3.0 million (i.e. below fair market value)
 - Discount is currently calculated to be \$2.9 million (=\$5.9 \$3.0) which will be adjusted based on final area, noted above.
 - The discount will be treated as a forgivable loan. No repayment is required if Habitat constructs and maintains the units as Affordable for a period of 25 years;
 - Town to provide a grant in the amount of \$3 million for Habitat to purchase the Hickory and Dunlop Properties;
 - Town to provide Habitat funding to pay for the Land Transfer Tax on the purchase of the properties (estimated at \$134,000);
- Town will place a Section 118 Restriction under the *Land Titles Act* (the "**Section 118 Restriction**") on title for both properties which will require the Town's authorization to sell or mortgage the property before Habitat sells the properties or any units, once built;
- The Town may repurchase the Hickory and Dunlop Properties if building permits have not been pulled at each Property by December 31, 2026. Since Habitat did not pay for the Properties, no funds will be exchanged if the Town repurchases the Hickory and/or Dunlop Properties save and except Habitat paying for the Town's Land Transfer Taxes if the properties are conveyed back to the Town.

Affordable Housing Contribution Agreement

It is further recommended that the Mayor and Clerk be authorized to execute an Affordable Housing Contribution Agreement ("**Contribution Agreement**") with Habitat subject to successful negotiations of Contribution Agreement terms and conditions based on the principles below:

- Definition of Affordable to be consistent with Provincial legislation (e.g. Bill 134 see "Affordable Housing Definition and Duration" in the Background section of this report) currently \$517,400 (or below);
- The units must remain Affordable for **at least 25 years**. Resales within the 25 years are compared to the Affordable Housing definition/thresholds set by the Minister of Municipal Affairs at the time of the future sale to determine if the sale meets the Affordable threshold;
- The Town's discount is treated as a forgivable loan that is allocated to each unit and repayable to the Town only if the unit is sold above Affordable Housing definition within the 25-year period;

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- As the Town is providing the Properties at essentially no cost to Habitat, the Town will be placing a Section 118 Restriction on title of the Properties (as noted in the APS section):
 - Habitat will require the Town's clearance before selling/re-selling any of the units:
 - When a unit sale/re-sale is proposed, Habitat will provide the Town details, including whether the sale meets the definition of Affordable Housing Definition;
 - To avoid delays in real estate closing of Affordable Unit sales/re-sales, it is recommended that staff be provided delegated authority to send Habitat clearance letters related to the Town's Section 118 Restrictions registered on title on the Hickory and Dunlop Properties only when proposed unit sales meet the Affordable Housing definition (at the time of the future sale);
- The Contribution Agreement also accounts for times when Habitat makes a decision to re-sell one of the units at market prices (i.e. above the Affordable Housing definition at that future date). Habitat noted that they are committed to make **commercially reasonable efforts** to keep all of the units Affordable. However, Habitat has indicated that there may be cases within the 25 year contract period where they may make a decision to sell units at market prices in order to either, fund the purchase of other units on the Properties in order to ensure they remain Affordable and/or to pay for extensive repairs to the unit. In the case of a market sale:
 - Habitat will determine whether it will re-acquire and resell the unit, and if not, offer it to other affordable housing providers before advising the Town that it seeks to sell the unit on the open market.
 - Habitat must provide the Town notice within 10 days of making its decision on whether to sell the unit on the open market;
 - Town Staff will prepare a report to Council to outline the proposal, Habitat's rationale for the market sale, and obtain Council's authorization to sell at market prices (or above the Affordable Housing definition at that time):
 - The Town must make this determination and respond to Habitat within 60 days otherwise permission from the Town to sell at market prices is deemed to be provided to Habitat;
 - Although Town staff have been clear that the contribution of land for the project is extend of the Town's contribution towards Habitat's Affordable Housing (ownership) project, Habitat has indicated that future Town financial contributions may be required should the Town decline a future request for a market sale. According to Habitat, market sales may be required to keep their Whitby project viable for the long term.

Next Steps:

Subject to Council approval of this report, staff will finalize negotiations of the APS and Contribution Agreement with Habitat based on the principles above to the satisfaction

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of Commissioner of Legal and Enforcement Services/Town Solicitor, Commissioner of Planning, and Commissioner of Financial Services/Treasurer.

The pace of project will be dependent on how quickly the Agreements can be finalized, both parties clearing conditions of the APS, Habitat's fundraising efforts, and timeliness/quality of Habitat's development and building permit applications.

Staff have been negotiating with Habitat for a number of months and the agreement principles included in this report reflect the current state of the negotiations. As there is an overall goal of having affordable housing units constructed on these properties in a timely manner, it is recommended that staff be authorized to negotiate with other interested developers should the APS and Contribution Agreement with Habitat (or its associated company) not be executed by August 15, 2024.

5. Financial Considerations:

As noted previously in this report, the Hickory and Dunlop Properties are appraised at \$5.9 million (to be adjusted based on actual area to be conveyed to Habitat). The properties will be sold at \$3 million, which is less than the fair market value, to Habitat a non-profit organization for the purposes of constructing Affordable Housing units.

Grant to Habitat for Humanity for the Purchase of Town-Owned Land

Since the Town has recently obtained Federal HAF funding and one of the Town's nine (9) HAF program initiatives is related for a surplus land inventory and disposition strategy, it is recommended that a grant, in the amount of \$3 million, be provided to Habitat for the purchase of the Properties. The grant will be funded from this initiative of the overall Whitby HAF program.

Two-Cheque Exchange Alternative and Town Property Reserve

In lieu of a two-cheque exchange (i.e. Town provides Habitat a cheque for the \$3 million grant and Habitat provides the Town a \$3 million cheque for the purchase of the Properties), the Town will transfer \$3 million internally from the HAF grant account to the Town Property Reserve Fund, which is a reserve fund that accumulates net proceeds from the sale of Town-owned lands for the future purchase of other lands required for Town infrastructure/facilities. The uncommitted balance of the Town Property Reserve Fund is approximately \$1.0 million (based on Town's unaudited 2023 ending balance of the \$4.5 million less \$2 million included in the 2024 budget for the purchase of land for a new fire station to service the West Whitby community and other property acquisitions approved in 2024).

As noted in the proposed APS section, above, Habitat will have no claim to the \$3 million in the future (e.g. should the project not proceed, the land is conveyed back to

CouncilPage 11 of 12the Town). In such a circumstance, the \$3 million would be transferred back to the HAF

the Town). In such a circumstance, the \$3 million would be transferred back to the HAF account and used for other eligible HAF program projects.

Discount of Fair Market Value/Forgivable Loan

It is recommended that the balance of the fair market value, approximately \$2.9 million (= \$5.9 - \$3.0 million) to be adjusted for area reductions noted above, be a discount provided to the non-profit organization, Habitat For Humanity Greater Toronto Area. In the Contribution Agreement, the discount will be treated like a forgivable loan where Habitat does not have to repay the \$2.9 million as long as the units remain Affordable for a minimum of 25 years. The \$2.9 million will be allocated to each unit so the prorata share is repayable to the Town should the unit be sold at market prices (or above the Affordable Housing definition at that future date).

Since the shared goal for this project is for Affordable Housing in Whitby for the long term, the Town is not planning on the receiving any repayment of the \$2.9 million forgivable loan. However, repayment of part of the forgivable loan will become part of Habitat's consideration, in the future, when developing a business case for an Affordable or market re-sale of any unit. Accordingly, establishment of a forgivable loan for the Town-owned lands conveyed to Habitat creates a financial incentive to keep the units Affordable for 25 years.

The discount of the fair market value of the properties will be adjusted based on the final area of each parcel to be sold and conveyed to Habitat. Habitat is currently completing surveys/reference plans to outline the area, for each parcel, that they are looking to acquire after removing areas where there is Town infrastructure and areas required by the Town for future road widenings. Once the reference plans have been completed, they will be circulated within the Town for comment. The final purchase price (currently at \$5.9 million for the entire area of both properties) will be adjusted downwards to reflect the reference plans (i.e. portion of each property to be conveyed). The downward adjustment to the fair market value/purchase price will be reflected in the Town discount only (i.e. \$3 million grant to Habitat will not change). For clarity, the following is an example of how a decrease to the fair market value from \$5.9 to \$5.0 million will be treated:

	\$5.9 million Fair Market Value (full parcels)	\$5.0 Adjusted Fair Market Value (adjusted by surveys)
Town Grant	\$3.0	\$3.0
Town Discount	<mark>\$2.9</mark>	<mark>\$2.0</mark>
Payable by Habitat	\$0 (=\$5.9 - 3.0 - 2.9)	\$0 (=\$5.0 - 3.0 - 2.0)

As shown in the table above, Habitat still receives the land at no cost but the Town Discount line is adjusted for adjustments to fair market value following the surveys/reference plans. A reduction to the discount also reduces the amount of the forgivable loan to Habitat.

Habitat's Request to Waive Fees

Being a non-profit organization, Habitat will not have to pay development charges. After accounting for the \$3.0 million grant, approximately \$2.9 million discount, and an estimated \$134,000 of Land Transfer Tax, Habitat will be receiving the Hickory Property and Dunlop Property for essentially no cost.

The conveyance of land to Habitat, at no cost to Habitat, marks the Town of Whitby's contribution towards Affordable Housing in Whitby to realize the goals of the National Housing Strategy/HAF program and in support of the Town's Provincial Housing Pledge, to facilitate the development of 18,000 homes in Whitby by 2031.

Accordingly, Town staff recommend that Habitat pays development application fees related to their proposed Affordable Housing development. Fees are estimated to be \$185,000 (including building permit fees, site plan application/agreement fees, and fees for minor variance applications and lifting of Holding provisions).

6. Communication and Public Engagement:

N/A

7. Input from Departments/Sources:

This report incorporates feedback from Planning, Legal Services, Financial Services, and Strategic Initiatives.

8. Strategic Priorities:

The recommendation in this report support the following Community Strategic Plan Priorities:

- Pillar 1: Action Item 1.3.1 Continue to collaborate with non-profit organizations to anticipate and deliver changing community program and service needs;
- Pillar 1: Action Item 1.3.4 In collaboration with partners, support the implementation of Durham Region's Housing Plan regarding affordability and diversity in housing.

9. Attachments:

Attachment #1 – Site Map of the Hickory Property

Attachment #2 – Site Map of the Dunlop Property