



Corporate *NO: L002*

Report *COUNCIL DATE: February 4, 2002*

REGULAR COUNCIL - LAND USE			
TO:	Mayor & Council	DATE:	January 31, 2002
FROM:	General Manager, Planning & Development	FILE:	0550-10
SUBJECT:	Proposed South Fraser Alzheimer Centre, 6518 - 168 Street, Cloverdale		

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Council:

1. Receive this report as information;
2. After considering the merits of the proposed Alzheimer Centre at 6518-168 Street, advise the proponents to submit applications in accordance with the application and process requirements outlined in this report; and
3. Instruct the Acting City Clerk to forward a copy of this report to the delegation.

INTENT

The intent of this report is to provide Council with contextual information, a preliminary evaluation of the merits of the proposal and process requirements that will be associated with an application to develop the subject land - located within the Agricultural Land Reserve - as a care facility for persons suffering with Alzheimer disease.

BACKGROUND

On January 7, 2002, Council received a delegation from the South Fraser Alzheimer Centre. The delegation, led by Mr. Ian Ross, presented a proposal for a care facility on a 3.42 hectare [8.46 acre] site at 6518-168 Street (see Appendix 1) . The Centre would be managed through a public, private, non-profit partnership between the Fraser Health Authority, the property owners, Marilyn and Chick Stewart and the Alzheimer

Society of B.C. In addition to providing a 36-bed residence, the Centre would include space for an adult day program, an Alzheimer Resource Centre and a dementia research facility.

The South Fraser Alzheimer Centre would be designed as four independent houses connected by a central area (see Appendix 2). Each house would contain 9 bedrooms with ensuite bathrooms as well as a common living room, dining room, den, kitchen and bathroom. The central area would contain the Alzheimer Resource Centre, activity space and administrative offices. This arrangement of residences into separate houses for small groups of residents was described as unique in the Fraser Valley and a possible model for similar projects in Canada. The proposal also includes a possible 36-bed expansion after an initial assessment period.

The design of the South Fraser Alzheimer Centre is intended to provide comfort and familiarity for residents in a home-like, yet controlled setting. Porches, yards and gardens are proposed, along with walking and sitting areas which would be designed to be secure yet freely accessible. The preliminary site plan submitted to Council shows the proposed buildings concentrated toward 66 Avenue with the 168 Street frontage and southern part of the lot used for informal nature walks and a detention pond. The eastern part of the lot is shown as being retained with existing vegetation as the potential site for a phase two expansion of the project. The entire property would be fenced.

DISCUSSION

Special Needs Housing

Surrey's Official Community Plan (OCP) recognizes the need to accommodate affordable, rental and special needs housing in all parts of the city. To facilitate such housing, the City acknowledges the need to work with various government and private non-profit agencies and the community. Given a higher percentage of older adults in the South Surrey/White Rock area, and the increasing incidence of dementia with age, a facility of this nature is considered by the proponents to be necessary in this general vicinity. The Health Region apparently considers the Surrey area "underbedded" in this regard. While further exploration into the need for an Alzheimer facility in this location has not been undertaken, based on the support which has been expressed by the Health Authority, the proposed Centre would appear to be a welcome addition to the stock of special needs housing in the City of Surrey.

Agricultural Land Preservation

The City of Surrey recognizes the importance of agriculture to the local economy and is committed to protecting and enhancing agriculture on farmlands within the agriculturally designated areas. The OCP expresses a commitment to strengthening the farm community and maintaining agricultural boundaries. The subject property does not appear to have been farmed in the recent past and is largely cleared. An active poultry farm is located to the north of the site, on the opposite side of 66 Avenue. The land to the east is owned by the Surrey School District and is actively farmed. The proponents have reported that the soil on the property is of relatively poor quality. They have also suggested that the project would provide an excellent transition from farm to non-farm uses.

Evaluation of the Proposed Alzheimer Centre on Agricultural Land at 6518 - 168 Street

The subject property is zoned One-Acre Residential Zone (RA) which permits agricultural and horticultural uses on lots 2 hectares [5 acres] or more in size. It is designated Agriculture in the OCP. The proponents have suggested that the Alzheimer Centre would be appropriately located in a rural area given patients' need for an

environment with limited stimuli. Presumably, however, facilities can be designed to replicate appropriate environmental conditions, regardless of location. For independent seniors' housing, it is generally desirable to be located close to shopping, recreation and other facilities. Such criteria, however, do not necessarily apply to a residence for people with dementia. Accessibility and secure environments are more important locational and design criteria.

From a locational perspective, there are several factors that tend to support an Alzheimer facility on the subject site. The land is located on the edge of, although within the ALR. While it is adjacent to two working farms, it is not surrounded on all sides by active agricultural operations. A multi-family townhouse complex has been built fairly recently on the abutting property to the south. Northview Golf Course is located to the west across 168 Street. The property's use for non-farm purposes would thus not create a particularly awkward land use anomaly. The proposed facility would be located fairly close to a bus route, thereby offering a degree of accessibility for staff and visitors to the site.

There are also some factors that tend to detract from the suggested location being a suitable site for the facility. A poultry farm operates across the street to the north of the site. The nature of the farm operation results in odours and dust being present in the area on a fairly regular basis when the barns are being cleaned. The farm operators have in the past been considerate regarding the timing of this activity so as to minimize the potential nuisance on surrounding land as during the staging of the Air Canada Championship golf tournament at the Northview Golf Course. However, the proposed Alzheimer Centre would operate on a continual basis and therefore would be exposed to odours and dust on a regular basis. Noise from farm operations may also be disruptive. Similarly, traffic from farm and care facility uses may not mix well depending on the access arrangement for the proposed facility. Furthermore, a non-farm use in this part of the ALR could lead to pressure for other exclusions from the ALR, or for inappropriate development on other agricultural lands or on lands that are intended to serve as an agricultural buffer. The Planning and Development Department has been consistent in its response to proposals in this area that have not adequately addressed buffer requirements.

Another manner in which to assess the merits of this proposal is to consider the community benefits from the proposal. As noted above, an addition to the City's stock of special needs housing is a positive feature of the proposal. Meeting the housing and care needs of an important and growing segment of the population is not only desirable, but also necessary given the City's goal to be a well-balanced, healthy community. The fact that the project is being funded through a public-private-non-profit partnership is another commendable aspect of the project, which should be recognized given the current constraints on government funding for health care.

These potential community benefits are considerable yet must be weighed against the loss of agricultural land. While the soil on the subject property is reportedly not among Surrey's best, it can be improved to support agriculture, including cropping activities. The Canada Land Inventory rating reportedly does not support the property coming out of the Agricultural Land Reserve.

From a planning point of view, allowing the project to proceed on the basis of a non-farm use in the ALR may be preferable to seeking ALR exclusion. If the project is excluded from the ALR and became unviable at some point in the future, there may be intense pressure to redevelop the land for other inappropriate non-agricultural land uses. A non-farm use on this site would not preclude a future farming operation from being re-established on the site and would also maintain the integrity of the OCP. The Land Reserve Commission has indicated that it may prefer an application for ALR exclusion since such applications are exposed to a more rigorous review process than applications for a non-farm use in the ALR. If an application for ALR exclusion rather than a non-farm use is received, staff will provide an appropriate recommendation to Council at that time.

Given the merits associated with the proposal, it is recommended Council suggest to the proponents that applications for the proposed Alzheimer Centre at 6518-168 Street be submitted in accordance with the application and process requirements outlined below.

APPLICATION AND PROCESS REQUIREMENTS

If an application were submitted for the proposed South Fraser Alzheimer Centre, the required review process would include several referrals and in-depth reviews. At the proponent's request and in consideration of the special nature of this proposal, the application process is proposed to be split into two phases to minimize the costs associated with the project until it is confirmed that the project is acceptable to both the City and the ALR. The application details and process are described generally below:

Application Submission

- The application process will be split into two stages as follows:
 - Stage 1: ALR application and a rezoning application (and possibly an OCP amendment application) will be submitted.
 - Stage 2: Development Permit/Development Variance Permit applications will be submitted.
- An application for ALR exclusion or a non-farm use within the ALR will be required concurrently with the rezoning application. (The application to the Land Reserve Commission is submitted first to the City.)
- Details about the precise nature of funding commitments and administrative arrangements will be required during the application review process.

Rezoning

- Care facilities are permitted uses within the Special Care Housing 1 and 2 Zones (RMS-1 or RMS-2).
- The subject property will need to be rezoned from One-Acre Residential Zone (RA) to allow the South Fraser Alzheimer Centre as described.
- The RMS-1 Zone permits a maximum floor area ratio (FAR) of 0.50, with a maximum lot coverage of 25%.
- The RMS-2 Zone permits a maximum FAR of 1.0 and a lot coverage of 45%.
- The combination of uses proposed for the site, may require rezoning to a Comprehensive Development Zone (CD).

OCP Amendment

- If the proposed use and density can be accommodated within the Special Care Housing 1 Zone (RMS-1), an OCP amendment would not be required as the zone is permitted in the agricultural designation.
- CD Zones are also permitted within this designation.
- If the density of the proposed facility requires rezoning to the RMS-2 Zone, an OCP amendment to an

Urban designation will be required.

Development Permit (DP)

- A development permit will be required to ensure a high quality of development and to ensure that building location, access arrangements and landscaping requirements, that are intended to protect farming, are met.

Development Variance Permit (DVP)

- A DVP may be required if specific aspects of the Zoning By-law are to be varied to meet certain siting needs.

City Referrals

- The Engineering Department will comment on servicing requirements for the proposed use.
- An application to the Fraser Health Region for septic approval may be required if connection to the City sanitary system is not possible.
- The application must be referred to the City's Agricultural Advisory Committee (AAC) for review. The AAC will provide a recommendation to staff or Council.
- Given the interface with adjacent residential uses, referral to the Advisory Design Panel (ADP) will be required.

Land Reserve Commission (LRC)

- The LRC views City Council input regarding Council's level of support and concerns for proposed developments within the ALR prior to the Commission making a decision.
- The Commission may prefer an application for exclusion rather than a non-farm use as formal notification and hearing requirements will then apply. Under such circumstances, the Commission maintains its ability to tailor its decision to allow exclusion, partial exclusion, a non-farm use, or attach other conditions as deemed necessary.
- The Commission's decisions are oriented toward maintaining a permanent farm land reserve.
- OCP amendment by-laws must be referred to the LRC after it has approved a non-farm use. While rezoning by-laws are not required to be referred, the Commission recommends they also be sent to ensure consistency with relevant Acts and regulations. The list of permitted uses should be narrowly defined in a rezoning by-law to frame the use approved by the Commission.

Generalized Process

Once the stage 1 applications have been submitted, staff will initiate the review and referral process. Area

residents and property owners will be notified of the proposed rezoning and, if applicable, the proposed OCP amendment. The application will be referred to the City's Agricultural Advisory Committee. A report will be forwarded to Council when preliminary comments have been received and a suitable plan of development is achieved. Council's decision regarding the proposed non-farm use will be referred to the Land Reserve Commission. The Commission's review, which includes a hearing with the applicant when ALR exclusions are proposed, is estimated to take approximately two months. Should Council grant third reading to the proposed by-law(s) after the required Public Hearing, the applicant will then be required to submit a Development Permit application for review and approval and complete all identified conditions of approval. Final approval by Council will be granted once the LRC's approval has been given and all other requirements have been met. Council will also give final approval to the Development Permit at that time.

CONCLUSION

The proposed South Fraser Alzheimer Centre represents a generous donation of private land for special needs housing. A substantial community benefit may be achieved through the operation of a public-private-non-profit partnership. The potential loss of agricultural land, however, is a drawback of the proposal. However, the subject property is not currently farmed nor is the soil reported to be of the highest agricultural quality. Further, there may be other potentially suitable locations for the facility within the City that do not present the same need to use agricultural land for this form of special needs housing. Despite this fact, the immediacy of the proposal at hand, the partnership that appears to have been formed to allow this project to proceed and the community benefits that accrue if this proposal proceeds are considered significant. On this basis it is recommended Council advise the proponents that in consideration of the merits of the proposed facility they should submit the necessary applications as described in this report for processing.

Murray D. Dinwoodie

General Manager

Planning & Development Department

TA/kms/saw

c.c. - General Manager, Engineering Department

Appendix 1 - Location Map

Appendix 2 - Site Plan

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