

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### Blockhouse Hill RFP and Land Divestiture Process Clarifications



#### **Why are we doing this? Why can't we just leave it for the animals and have a nice piece of nature?**

The Town has three tools to generate revenue to help offset capital costs; raise taxes, cut services or generate a revenue stream, such as selling land. As we've all seen in our own lives, expenses are on the rise and the Town is working to find solutions that won't put more pressure on residents.

Our best available land to sell is Blockhouse Hill. By readying these lands for development using a Request for Proposals (RFP) we have a say into what is eventually constructed on that site.

#### **Why sell land?**

Selling surplus assets (land) ensures revenue for the Town. Land must be sold at fair market value and proceeds are deposited in the Town's Capital Reserve. Once land is sold, it generates new taxes, helping support the ongoing sustainability of the Town by paying for buildings, infrastructure, maintenance, water and sewer, etc.

A Building Condition Assessment report for Town Hall was recently completed which suggested without spending \$3.8M to extend the lifecycle of Town Hall it will fall further into disrepair. The same results are expected for all Town-owned buildings. The report is available here (Item 9.1): <https://townoflunenburg.ca/council-meetings-2022/council-agendas-and-agenda-packages-2022/1235-12-13-22-dec-13-22-coun-ap/file.html>

#### **Affordable housing?**

While housing is a Provincial jurisdiction, the Town of Lunenburg wants to provide the opportunity for "missing middle" housing (duplex, townhouse etc.). The Blockhouse Hill area has been zoned for medium density housing to allow a variety of homes that may be more affordable than the traditional single-family dwelling (low density).

Blockhouse Hill RFP specifically states that 10% of the design will contain affordable housing – defined as 30% (or less) of the median household income. According to Statistics Canada the median total household is \$65,000 (pre-tax). 30% of that is \$19,650 which translates roughly into \$1,637/month.

### **Where are we in the development process?**

This is not a call for development. This is a Request for Proposals (RFP) for an architect/urban designer/developer to come up with some potential ideas of what a mixed residential development could look like on Blockhouse Hill that fits within our planning framework. It is just pictures.

Once we have some concept designs – we will present them to the public for feedback. There will be opportunity for public engagement.

### **Are we losing the park?**

Sylvia Park? No. In fact, through the development of the lands we will add park space. Anyone developing Blockhouse Hill will be required to return 10% of that developable land back to the Town for park space.

### **Can't we leave it a campground?**

No. The lease of the land for the campground with the Lunenburg Board of Trade (LBOT) expires in 2024. The Town is fully willing to cooperate with LBOT to find a new site to establish the campground.

### **Will it affect our heritage designation?**

The sale of lands on Blockhouse Hill and subsequent development does not alter the original grid pattern and is outside the designated UNESCO Heritage Site.

Delisting a World Heritage site is not a “one false move and you’re out” scenario, as some have suggested. Council is always aware of maintaining our UNESCO designation. Any potential disposal within the district will be researched carefully and include consultation with the administrator of UNESCO World Heritage Sites in Canada, Parks Canada. Blockhouse Hill abuts the UNESCO site and discussions with Parks Canada are already underway.

### **Why has there been no public consultation?**

The Comprehensive Community Plan was created and adopted in 2020 with a great deal of public consultation. The divestment of lands such as Blockhouse Hill is a key recommendation in the CCP – which came from public consultation. You can find that information by following the link provided: <https://townoflunenburg.ca/town-services/planning-and-development/628-ccp-final-2020-with-appendix-a/file.html>

Once we have conceptual land use designs – just drawings of what could be there – they will be available to the public for feedback. This process alone, could require months of work and due diligence.

Later in the process, should the land be sold – it is not currently listed for sale – we will require the developer to engage in a public consultation process with regards to whatever they intend to create.

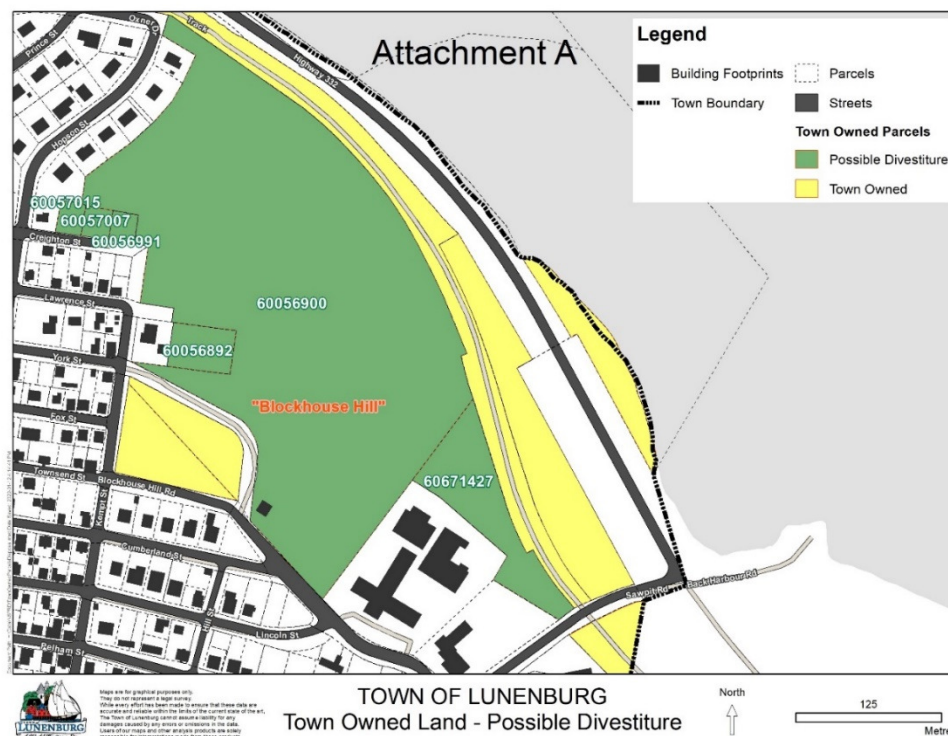
### **What about the film industry? They will never come here again without Blockhouse Hill.**

We welcome the film industry in Lunenburg and recognize its occasional positive economic impact on the town. The film industry is fully capable of finding another suitable location for base camps and the like. Our priority is to provide the best level of services to residents.

### **What's next?**

The deadline for the RFP has just been extended to March 31, 2023. At that time, the submitted proposals will be reviewed, shortlisted and there will be an interview process to determine the successful proponent.

Staff will outline operational costs through the proposed 2023/24 Operating Budget scheduled for the early spring. This process will show the current financial state of the Town costs such as staffing, building portfolio costs, and town operational infrastructure costs.



## Resources

- The RFP for Blockhouse Hill Development can be downloaded from the Town website here: <https://townoflunenburg.ca/purchasing.html>
- The Comprehensive Community Plan is available here: <https://townoflunenburg.ca/comprehensive-community-plan-ccp.html>
- Previous explanatory documents are available here: [Fact Sheet 1: Blockhouse Hill](#) and [FAQ: Potential Sale of Municipal Properties](#).