



HILLHURST UNITED CHURCH Update from the Journey - Affordable Housing Team

February 2012

Your Journey Team is continuing its efforts to advance the Journey's goal of providing affordable housing for those in need as an expression of HUC's core values of Spirituality, Social Justice and Radical Hospitality, as well as providing much needed upgrades to our church and community infrastructure.

In our last update, the team advised the congregation that we were turned down on two key aspects of the current housing/infrastructure renewal model - Provincial Funding and the City Planning Department Development Permit.

After our first unsuccessful application to Government of Alberta's call for affordable housing funding submissions, we re-applied with a revised project plan which reflected a reduced cost for the housing component. Despite this new costing model, it would appear that other better financed submissions were more in line with the Province's goal of maximizing the total number of units that can be built with grant funds available.

Our City of Calgary Development Permit was initially approved by City administration. However an appeal by two local residents was upheld by the Subdivision Development Appeal Board thereby rescinding the permit approval. The SDAB based its decision on insufficient parking for the combined uses of HUC since city bylaws preclude the grandfathering of existing parking relaxations when there is a significant increase in the size of an existing "non-conforming" building.

To pursue Provincial funding applications without further reducing costs or improving equity financing or to pursue alternate approaches to obtaining City of Calgary development approvals would require an increase in the congregation approved Journey budget and would still have a significant degree of uncertainty.

The Journey Team has recommended to the HUC Board and the Board has agreed that we should suspend work on the current model in order to investigate alternatives that could provide the potential for a better match between capital costs, prospective funding, community support and regulatory approval.

While funds expended to date are within the amount previously authorized, it may be necessary to authorize further funding to investigate such alternatives. If so, such approval will be sought at the June HUC Congregation Meeting based on a review of the options to be considered in a definitive work plan.

In the meantime, the remaining contributions pursuant to Journey pledges will be kept in reserve so they are available to move forward with our preferred and approved option.



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At the upcoming Congregation meeting on March 4th, we will have more details on the rationale for this recommendation and answer any questions. Your Journey Team has been working diligently on this project since 2008 and we hope to hear your ideas as to how else we might be able to realize our vision to be part of our community's quest to end homelessness in real, sustainable and meaningful ways and to further upgrade our infrastructure in ways that are within our means.

While you have heard from different Journey team members from time to time since its inception, here is a summary of the core team members that have pursued this on your behalf:

Dennis Cornelson, Brent Bazinet, John Pentland, Bryce Paton, Tim Presber, Heather MacDonald, Dan Wares, Cal Malhiot, Marsha Mah Poy, Hillary Higgins, Nancy Watts, Hugh Powell, James Robertson, Janet Russell, Diane Hutchison, Herman Barkema and Danielle Bryant.

In our parallel Heritage Restoration Project, also funded by congregation gifts to the Journey along with other special donations directed to the Heritage Restoration, were the following dedicated HUC congregants:

Herman Barkema, Gord Gunther, John Groen, Frank deRuiter, Sheila Wappel McLean, Sherry Philpott, Tim Presber, John Pentland, Bryce Paton, Nancy Watts, Shirley Dick, and Carmela DiFlumeri.