

**Sacajawea Non-Profit Housing Inc.
Presentation to the Planning Committee
May 31, 2016**

Sacajawea Non-Profit Housing Inc. is here today to speak to the Heritage Committee's recommendation to designate 18 West Avenue South as a heritage property.

Sacajawea is a longstanding social housing provider in Hamilton. The organization has a conditional offer to purchase 18 West Avenue South from the Good Shepherd and over the past six months has completed a number of studies identified in the Formal Consultation meeting with Planning staff held on February 3. Sacajawea's goal is to build new affordable rental housing, specifically 16 one and two-bedroom apartments. The proposed development will help address a significant gap in affordable housing units for individuals and small family First Nation households.

Tim Welch Consulting Inc. (TWC) has been retained as Development Consultant for this project. Sacajawea and TWC recently completed another development, a six-plex, at the corner of Main and Ray Street, that involved an extensive renovation of a vacant property. Residents moved in on March 1, 2016. The City of Hamilton was a partner in this development and provided a Corridor loan to enhance the exterior and some interior features of the building. Through this partnership a vacant property was revitalized and six Aboriginal households were able to move into new, energy efficient apartments.

Sacajawea is able to create a further 16 apartments at 18 West Avenue South. The property is south of Main Street between Wellington and Victoria and is located just east of downtown Hamilton within the Stinson neighbourhood in Ward 2.

Given the rising cost of land in Hamilton, it took TWC and Sacajawea many months to find a suitable property. 18 West Avenue is an ideal size for the scale of development Sacajawea wants to build and is located close to a variety of amenities: grocery shopping, parks, the De Dwa Da Dehs Nye Aboriginal Health Access Centre, schools, government services and retail shopping. Importantly, the land is zoned for multi-residential use.

The location of this property is well served by public transit on the current Main and King street buses and the now fully funded Light Rail line for Hamilton is set to begin construction in 2019. Another positive of this property is the seller is also a non-profit housing provider so understands the challenges of finding and securing an appropriate site for new affordable housing. The property is expected to transfer ownership in June of this year.

Since the organization's Formal Consultation with Planning Staff, Sacajawea has completed the Cultural Heritage Impact Assessment and Phase 1 and II Archeological study as well as an environmental assessment. Based on the findings of the Cultural Heritage Impact Assessment, the Heritage Committee is recommending Council designate the property as a Cultural heritage resource. Sacajawea is opposed to the recommendation to designate the site.

Sacajawea's plan is to carry out the purchase of the property, demolish the building and build affordable housing. These objectives support the Official Plan goals of the City of Hamilton in creating new affordable housing as well as the City's 10-year housing and homelessness plan. Sacajawea's proposed development also supports the general planning goals of intensification adjacent to the LRT route. We do recognize that this proposal is at odds with the general heritage goals being discussed today.

The option to conserve all or part of the former Anglican Church of St. Thomas Parsonage within the new development proposed by Sacajawea is not possible for a number of reasons. These reasons are:

- The existing building is set back on the site and is therefore not conducive to being integrated into a new design.
- The proponent needs to achieve the development of at least 16 apartments in order to create a financially viable economies of scale for the new development. Retaining the existing building prevents this.
- The existing building does not meet present day Fire code or accessibility standards and the cost to meet these standards in an adaptive reuse scenario would exceed the organization's budget for this project.
- The proponent is not committed to conserving all or part of the existing Parsonage given the Churches' history of colonialism with regard to First Nations.

Once the property transfers ownership from Good Shepherd, with Council approval, Sacajawea plans to demolish the building and proceed with constructing new affordable rental housing.

Sacajawea has paid to complete the studies documenting the cultural heritage and archeological attributes of the site. With financial assistance from the City, Sacajawea is willing to complete Preservation by Record of the former parsonage. We urge members of the committee to reject designating this property and support moving forward with the creation of needed affordable housing for First Nations residents of Hamilton.

