

City securing redevelopment rights over the southern portion of 70 Front St. N.

Process allows for Coldwater Street viewscape and future redevelopment

For immediate release (Feb. 22, 2019) – To enable the transformative redevelopment of 70 Front St. N., the City of Orillia is pursuing steps to secure the right to redevelop the City-owned land on the southern portion of the site.

“We want to be very clear that securing the redevelopment rights over the southern portion of the 70 Front St. N. plaza has no adverse impact on the future of the Metro store in Orillia or its valuable employees. Metro has a long-term lease at its current location for at least a decade. This is one step in the overall downtown waterfront redevelopment process that allows the City to deliver on its commitment to complete the Coldwater Street viewscape and bring a catalytic development to the core of our city,” said Mayor Steve Clarke.

While the City currently owns the entire site, Metro and Subway tenants have lease rights over the southern portion of the plaza which could prevent the site from being redeveloped. A legal process has been initiated to secure the City’s right to redevelop the site by expropriating certain lease rights which could affect redevelopment. The City has attempted to gain Metro’s consent to extend Coldwater Street and redevelop the southern portion of the site; the City will continue to work with Metro on this matter.

In 2016, the City acquired land at 70 Front St. N. in order to extend Coldwater Street to Centennial Drive and to facilitate redevelopment of the underutilized plaza. In 2017, the City introduced a potential development concept to better understand how the site could potentially be developed, and in 2018 Council gave staff the green light to sell the lands through a Request for Proposal (RFP) process.

When demolition of the southern portion of the site occurs, which will be coordinated with the Centennial Drive reconstruction, the Metro store can still be fully operational as the removal of the southern portion of the plaza does not impact the Metro store and Metro parking lot on the northern portion of the site. The redevelopment of the site has the potential to positively impact Metro as new residents, and therefore potential new customers, would be added to the area.

Concurrently, the City is expropriating the lease rights for Subway located in the southern portion of the plaza and working with Subway to maintain a presence in Downtown Orillia. Two other existing tenants have leases that are expiring in the near-term or have a month-to-month lease and expropriation of their lease rights is therefore not required.

“Securing redevelopment rights is part of the overall process of preparing the downtown waterfront site for sale and redevelopment consistent with the Downtown Tomorrow Plan,” said Laura Thompson, Manager of Real Estate and Commercial Development. “Enabling the Coldwater Street extension and redevelopment of the southern portion of the site will increase the quality and quantity of bidders and positively impact the overall purchase price.”

This latest step is one of many Council has been working through to prepare the underutilized downtown waterfront site for redevelopment. Council recently enshrined through the Zoning By-Law and Official Plan updates specific rules for the Waterfront Redevelopment Lands such as building heights, landscaping requirements, construction of a public square, design policies that are in keeping with the historic nature of the

downtown, and parking provisions that take into account the community feedback received through numerous public consultations regarding the future of the area.

“The redevelopment of this site will provide a strategic link between Orillia’s beautiful waterfront and heritage downtown that is in keeping with, or even enhancing, Orillia’s wonderful character. Council wants to add residents and new jobs to the downtown that will contribute to the overall tax base and bolster the local economy. This will take tax pressure off Orillia residents, stimulate further development in the area, and contribute to the lifestyle and wellbeing of the community by providing a vibrant downtown core,” said Mayor Clarke.

The RFP for the redevelopment of the site is anticipated for release this summer and will outline the vision for the site and evaluation criteria for incoming proposals.

For more information, and to sign up for the Waterfront Redevelopment Project mailing list, visit orillia.ca/waterfront.

The City of Orillia is a city of 31,000 people in the heart of Ontario’s Lake Country on the shores of Lake Couchiching and Lake Simcoe. Visit our website at orillia.ca.

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Attached: Downtown Orillia Waterfront Redevelopment frequently asked questions.