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# REYFIELD REDEVELOPMENT

## CASE STUDIES

### Built Project Initiatives

#### 1600 BATH ROAD PROJECT

Kingston

### PROJECT SUMMARY

The 1600 Bath Road project will intensify a site that formerly housed two large retail stores. The existing buildings have been re-purposed as a storage facility and a bingo hall and the 6.9-hectare site will be intensified by the addition of three 120-unit apartment buildings in the former parking areas. The project will enhance Kingston's affordable housing supply. Green space may also be developed, thereby providing a public amenity.

### AREA CONTEXT

The City of Kingston (with a 2001 population of approximately 114,000) is located halfway between Toronto and Montréal on highway 401. It is a relatively slow-growing municipality, experiencing only a 1.4 per cent increase in population between 1996 and 2001. The City is known for its built heritage and institutional facilities, including a major university, regional hospitals and several correctional centres.

The 1600 Bath Road Project is located in a mature commercial district in the city's west end. A CN line is located immediately north of the site, and a lower-density (about 13 dwelling units per hectare) residential area, comprised of detached dwellings and townhouses is situated on the other side of the CN line. The Collins Bay Penitentiary is located to the south of the property.

Commercial land uses including car dealerships, restaurants, banks, retail, and services are located to the east and west of the site along Bath Road. Two existing bus routes provide direct service to the site. The project is 400 metres away from a major bus terminal on Bath Road. An 81-hectare large-format store and entertainment complex are within a 10-minute walk of the site. Major shopping centres are within a 20-minute walk.

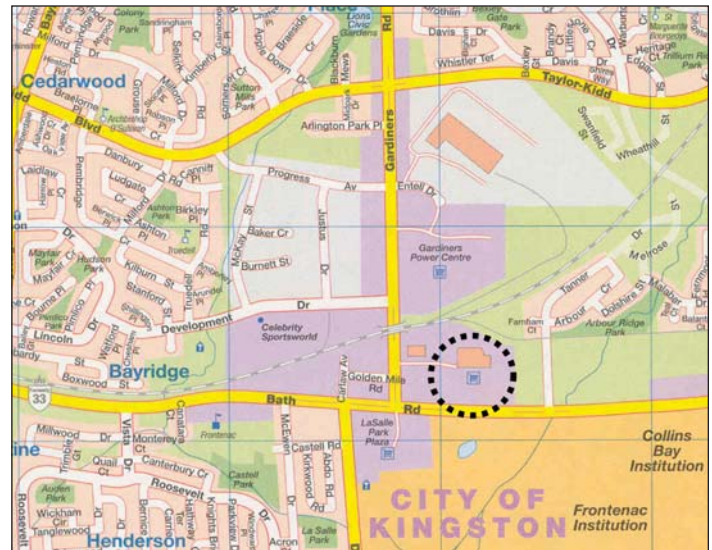


Figure 1: The 1600 Bath Road project vicinity

Two of Kingston's major malls are also in proximity: Located to the east of the site, Frontenac Mall is accessible by car in a few minutes, and Cataragui Mall is located a few minutes to the north. There are several parks and nature reserves in the area.

A Catholic high school is situated a few large city blocks to the west of the project (not within walking distance). Downtown hospitals are accessible in 10 minutes by car. Medical clinics and dentists are located in the shopping centres, mentioned above, near the site.

## SITE HISTORY

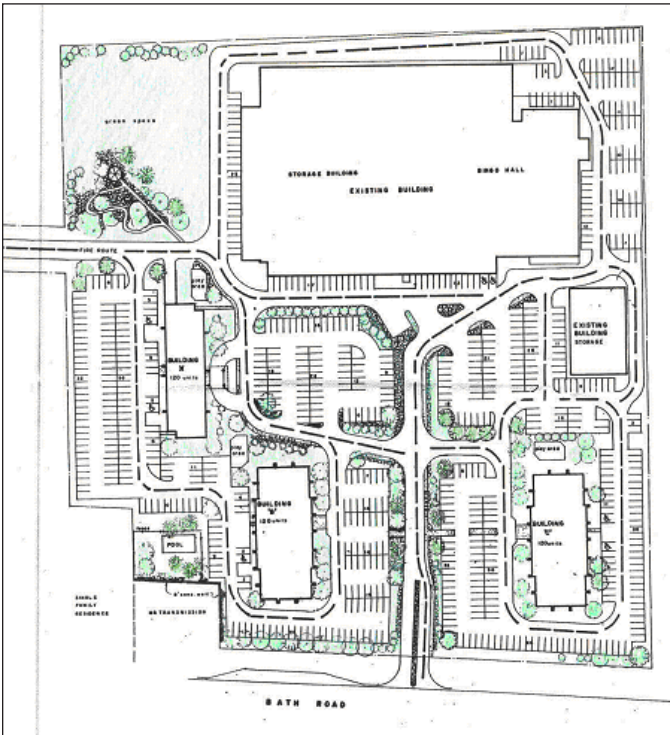


Figure 2: Site plan of the 1600 Bath Road project

The site originally had two main uses: a Kmart with an attached Loeb's grocery store. A drycleaner is also on the site in a third separate building.<sup>1</sup> In the mid-1990s, the Loeb's store began to experience difficulties, as it was not large enough to compete with the big box grocery stores located in more peripheral locations.

Beginning in the late 1990s, Kmart stores across Canada started to become uneconomic. Many Kmart stores were consolidated with Zellers, while other stores were closed and sold. The Kmart building on this site was advertised across Canada and in major American cities to the big box retailing market. The size of the building however posed problems: On the one hand, it was not large enough for current super-size retail standards, but on the other hand, the building size and interior height limited opportunities for the reuse of the building for any function other than retail.

The developer purchased the buildings on the site in the late 1999 and found new uses for both buildings: The Zellers building was redeveloped as a climate-controlled storage facility as it already had the air circulation system in place for this use. The developer also purchased two bingo halls in Kingston, merged them and relocated the consolidated bingo operation to the refurbished Loeb's building. The dry cleaner has been retained as such on the site.

The new uses of the existing buildings on the site do not require large amounts of parking. The developer therefore proposed the site be intensified through the addition of housing units in the former parking areas. The vacancy rate in Kingston has been at about 2 per cent during the past four years. While there has been an increase in the number of residential building permits, most of the dwellings built have been detached homes.

## PROJECT CHRONOLOGY

The developer purchased the three buildings on the site in 1999 and submitted a redevelopment application to the City in February 2000. Rezoning and site plan applications are currently being reviewed by the City. Construction is expected to begin as soon as all approvals are obtained and the project will be built by 2006.

## PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION



Figure 3: Before: The site will be intensified with the addition of three 120-unit apartment buildings. The storage facility is seen in the background.

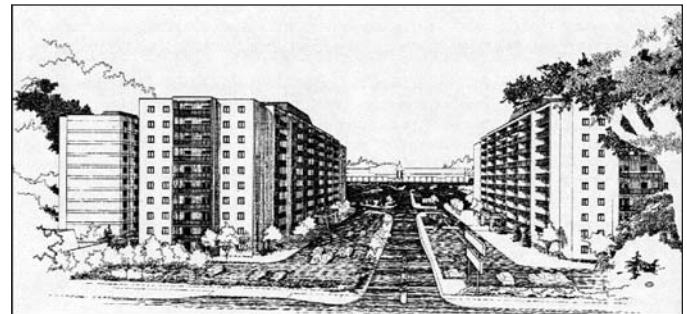


Figure 4: After: Perspective drawing of the 1600 Bath Road project

All original buildings will be retained on the 6.9-hectare site. The existing self-storage building (the former Kmart), bingo hall (the former Loeb's), and dry cleaning facility occupy 3.1 hectares of the site.

<sup>1</sup> A Phase One Environmental Impact Assessment carried out in 1998 determined that the drycleaner had not caused any on-site contamination.

Three 120-unit apartment buildings will be added to the site on the former parking lots. These new residential buildings will cover 3.8 hectares, including the footprints of the buildings, footpaths, pavement, and landscaping.

The density of the new apartments will be approximately 51.4 dwelling units per hectare, considerably higher than the neighbourhood to the north of the site (13 dwelling units per hectare).

The site will be accessed by one main entrance off Bath Road. Internal roads, on to which most of the apartments will face, will be built. The apartment buildings will feature private balconies and a shared gym.

The existing infrastructure, including the stormwater system and sewers, will be reused. The underground infrastructure will need to be upgraded in order to accommodate the new uses on the site. The planned green space will cover much of the former parking lot, allowing for on-site infiltration of stormwater, thereby reducing reliance on the existing stormwater infrastructure.

Two existing bus routes provide service to the site, and two lay bys on Bath Road adjacent to the site have been created. This will help minimize traffic disruption as a result of the increase transit use expected to result from the project. A bus turn-off will be built off Bath Road, providing bus service directly outside the apartment buildings. While the project is within a 10-minute walk of amenities including retail, entertainment, and medical facilities, no special features have been planned to encourage walking or biking.

The parking requirement for the apartment buildings is 1.25 spaces per dwelling unit, which is the standard in Kingston. The storage facility requires 2.5 parking spaces per 100 square metres of gross floor area.

## PROJECT PARTNERS

The developer owns the entire site, including existing and future buildings. The developer purchased the existing buildings (that is, the former Kmart, Loeb's, and the drycleaners) "on spec"; the developer did not have a specific use in mind for the building and the site at the time they were purchased. The willingness of the City to amend the site's OP designation to include residential uses significantly enhanced the development potential of the site.

## PLANNING PROCESS

Although Kingston is considering policies and programs that would address issues related to greyfield redevelopment, it does not currently have any planning policies or incentive programs specifically designed to guide or encourage such redevelopment. The OP does however contain policies that promote a range of housing types, including higher-density residential development and building on existing transit routes.

The project requires an OP amendment, rezoning and site plan approval. The redevelopment application was received by the City in February 2000 and the OP was amended later that year in order to accommodate the proposal: The developer is currently proceeding with an application for rezoning because the current zoning (C5-4 – "general commercial centre and shopping zone") does not permit the proposed residential use. The City is reviewing the site plan concurrent to the rezoning.

Initially, the development proposal suggested 420 apartment units. However, the City considered the density of the original proposal to be too high, and the site plan was subsequently revised to 360 units. At the time of writing, the developer is contending with concerns related to the noise that will be generated by the railway line to the north of the site. The City is requiring that the new residential buildings be soundproofed during construction.

Parkland dedication is required at a rate of five per cent of the residential development and two per cent of the commercial development. A total of 2,519 square metres in parkland or its equivalent in cash-in-lieu is therefore required. At the time of writing it is undecided whether the site will include a public park or the City will accept cash-in-lieu.

Because of the proximity of the site to the Kingston Airport, the redevelopment application must be reviewed by airport officials and NAV Canada to ensure that it does not interfere with flight paths.

Once these outstanding issues are addressed, both the City and the developer anticipate that the approvals process will proceed smoothly. Construction on the site will begin immediately after the developer receives all approvals.

The approvals process for the project has been drawn out due to the major rezoning required. The time period of over four years for approvals is long relative to simpler redevelopment projects but is not unusual for a project of this size and complexity.



The project has not generated very much community interest because there are no existing residents in the vicinity of the site. The project is separated from the lower-density residential area to the north by the CN railway, and therefore does not impact that neighbourhood. Buffers to reduce the impacts of existing commercial uses near the site (for example, an automobile repair establishment) on future residents are being addressed in the site plan.

City Council and the planning department support the project in principle. The planning department is currently working on the details and finalizing the rezoning requirements and the site plan.

## MARKETING

The project targets a diverse market, ranging from seniors to young couples. The project may attract Kingston's large student population attending Queen's University and employees of nearby retail land uses.

As discussed below, some units will be geared towards lower income households eligible for rent subsidies, while others will be rented at market rates. Rents (including utilities) will be \$590 for a 64-square metre one-bedroom apartment, and \$660 for an 80-square metre two-bedroom apartment. These rents are below average for Kingston (\$627 for a one-bedroom apartment and \$768 for a two-bedroom apartment).

## FINANCIAL ASPECTS

The municipality will not be responsible for any infrastructure costs associated with this project. The City has required that any on- or off-site costs related to the project be paid for by the developer. The developer will therefore be responsible for making any necessary upgrades to roads, intersections, etc. The municipality has collected approximately \$530,000 in development charges and expects an increase in tax revenue of about \$928,440 per year once the development is completed.

The developer would not reveal the total development costs of this project. He is pursuing federal funding for the affordable housing component. In February 2004, the Ontario Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation announced funding under the Canada-Ontario Affordable Housing Program for one of the three apartment buildings. The announcement indicated that the program will provide \$1.4 million to fund 85 units of a 110-unit project at 1600 Bath Road sponsored by P. Martin Construction. All of the units will be occupied by lower income families. Tenants in five of the units will pay rent geared to their income.

## EVALUATION

Due to its convenient location, the 1600 Bath Road project is expected to be successful. The project is on an existing transit route and therefore encourages the use of public transit. In addition to the location, the affordable rents, and the amenities (for example, the gym) will add to the attractiveness of the project.

From the City's perspective, the redevelopment of the site adds an important use, housing, to a major underutilized site in the area. As previously mentioned, Kingston's vacancy rate is approximately 2 per cent, and smaller, rental units are lacking in the city as a whole and in the project neighbourhood.

The project meets several other planning objectives: The apartments will enhance Kingston's affordable housing stock and shelter households that are receiving provincial rent supplements in a mixed-income project. The development also helps fulfil OP policies such as those favouring higher density housing in appropriate locations (for example, near transit and commercial areas).

The project makes use of existing infrastructure, including the collector road system and sewer and water systems.

## FURTHER INFORMATION

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