

To: The Parishioners of St. Andrews  
From: Chris Buri and Mike Ogborn, Co-Chairs of the Building Our Vision Committee  
Re: Report on Projects  
Date: October 12, 2022

### Executive Summary of the Challenges and Options Going Forward

Pursuant to the request of the vestry, the members of the Building Our Vision committee (BOV) prepared a report that addressed the course of the various projects undertaken by St. Andrew's regarding the use of the parking lot adjacent to the church and the challenges encountered with each one. The report addressed both the challenges and the proposed options available for next steps for the BOV and on September 12, the co-chairs presented it to the vestry.

After discussion by the vestry members, the consensus was to forward a report to the members of the parish for their review and comment. The vestry also determined that BOV should pause its search for a new developer for the parking lots for six months. During that period, the vestry and BOV will engage the parish in conversation as we seek to discern our vision for a mission-based use of the parking lot. When that discernment period is done and the mission and vision for the use of the parking lot is determined, BOV will then move forward to fulfill that mission and vision.

### Efforts Undertaken to Find a Use for the Parking Lot

The five major efforts to fulfill our vision and mission and find a productive use of the parking lots were, in chronological order, the proposals by Urban Land Conservancy (2014)<sup>1</sup>, the Amy Harmon project (2015)<sup>2</sup>, the Tiny House project (2016), the MHCD project (2019), the Women's Bean project (2019), and the Attention Homes project (2020).

The common challenges STA faces with the development of the parking lots are summarized below. These challenges are both external and internal in nature, and some are mixed.

- The church and the parking lots are located in the Clements Historic District, which imposes on the development of the lot certain restrictions and the need to obtain approval of a project by the Denver Landmark Historic Preservation Commission;
- Opposition of the surrounding neighborhood to any projects located on the lot other than a market rate type project such as for a mid-rise apartment building;
- Demands from STA including such items as the amount of parking to be made available post project, restraints on the use of the property, and the amount and use of shared spaces;
- Funding issues, including whether tax credits could be used to fund the shared use of portions of the project and if not, whether that created some of the financing challenges;
- Compliance with all applicable City codes, plans, development regulations; and

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<sup>1</sup> STA had a partnership with ULC from 2008 to 2017. Prior to acquiring ownership of entirety of the parking lot involved as described in this report, STA discussed various uses of the lots to the south and north of the church. The parties determined to end the partnership in 2017 and the partnership sold the south lot. STA was then able to use its share of the proceeds to buy out ULC and obtain full ownership of the north lot, enabling it to pursue projects.

<sup>2</sup> Harmon's proposal was one of many that proposed to purchase the lot and while her proposal captured the imagination of the parish, she would not obtain financing for her proposal.

- The diversity of internal parish opinions

Three of these projects faced all of these challenges to a greater or lesser degree but the Harmon Project and the Women's Bean Project did not proceed far enough to have any of the challenges.

#### The Women's Bean Project (2019)

This proposal was brought to St. Andrew's by the Women's Bean Project, which needed to find a larger building for its operation. It presented a proposal to build a multi-use building on the parking lot to house both its operations and to have retail space on the first floor. While BOV, the vestry, and the parish fully supported this proposal, Women's Bean ultimately determined to move its operation to another location so the proposal did not move ahead.

#### *The Three Projects Facing the Common Challenges*

#### The Tiny House Project (2016)

This was a joint project between STA and the Colorado Village Cooperative and its partners. The proposal involved the construction of eight tiny houses (8x12 feet), a lavatory area with private shower and toilets, a gatehouse, and a kitchen/community area. The purpose of the project was to provide temporary housing for a six-month period as allowed by Denver for eight women in transition from homelessness or shelters to low-income housing. The houses were to be located adjacent to the church primarily on the parking area used by staff.

This project did receive some funding and commitments for funding from a variety of sources and, therefore, did not face a funding challenge. Since it was to be located primarily on the staff parking lot, that was not a major issue. It also received the support of numerous outside entities. In addition to the continued opposition of the neighbors and some internal apprehensions by some members of the parish regarding concerns about safety and health issues, the project was ultimately supported by the BOV, the vestry, and the parish. It faced significant opposition from the residents of the neighborhood and other historic districts. Ultimately, the Denver Landmark Preservation Commission denied approval of the project, ending the process.

#### The MHCD Project (2019)

This project involved working with Mental Health Center of Denver (MHCD) to provide Denver residents who are homeless with safe, affordable housing and the ability to live independently by providing support services to address underlying issues. It was to be known as Glenarm Commons and consisted of an approximately 40,000 square-foot multifamily apartment building containing 48 rental units with onsite supportive services for residents and administrative offices for staff, as well as indoor and outdoor engagement space and surface parking to be utilized for the mutual benefit of STA and MHCD. It was the plan of the parties to finance the project using an allocation by the Colorado Housing and Finance Authority of a Low Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC).

After extended discussions within the STA, BOV, the vestry, and the parish supported the project as negotiated with MHCD. An application was filed with the Denver Landmark Commission and

but it initially required MHCD to alter the building design. MHCD amended the building design and resubmitted its application and the Commission approved the building design and materials. However, the challenges regarding parking, shared spaces, and uses of the property were still being negotiated among the parties when MHCD applied for the LIHTC. It ultimately did not receive an allocation of credits. The fact that the parties were still negotiating points was a factor in MHCD and St. Andrew's not wishing to try again for the next round of tax credits, thus ending this project.

#### The Attention Homes Project (2020)

This project involved a real estate development that would provide affordable housing for homeless transition age youth (18-24 years) and youth aging out of foster care. The design called for 40 apartments, shared space in the building, offices for Attention Homes and retail space on the first floor, parking under the building and along the alley, and a green space with additional shared space between the building and the church. The project would have utilized the entirety of the parking lot, a portion of the garden then identified as the Rose Garden, all of the staff parking area with the exception of the handicap parking spaces, and the purchase of the lot at 21<sup>st</sup> and Glenarm Place (the Corner Lot). The overall plan depended on the acquisition of the Corner Lot.

In addition to the common challenges noted above, there were a number of additional challenges linked directly with this project: namely, the refusal of the owners of the Corner Lot to sell it; an inability to reach agreement with the developers on parking during construction and after the completion of the project; certain terms in the lease and shared space agreement; and a concern by the developers that the so-called pavilion could not be funded with tax credits thereby creating a potential additional funding need. As these challenges were being addressed, Attention Homes development partners Rivet and Urban Design found another parcel that was being given to them that caused the developers to withdraw from this project and move to the new site.

#### Potential Next Steps

The challenges outlined above are not going to disappear and will continue to evolve, particularly the varying opinions by members of the parish about parking, shared space, and other interests of STA. Accordingly, there needs to be a discussion in the parish and thereafter, directions given to BOV about what it should do regarding the use of the lot.