

PARKDALE UNITED CHURCH PROPERTY DEVELOPMENT - CHURCH FOCUS



INTRODUCTION:

As our work as a church for 2025 begins, your Property Development Working Group (PDWG) welcomes the opportunity to share this report as a companion piece to the Housing Sub-group report. This report focuses on the **Church** and provides a brief summary of our activities over the past seven and one-half years as well as some insight into where our thinking is leading us. It is also a reminder that your PDWG has always believed that Parkdale United is called to be first and foremost a church.

HOW DID WE GET INTO THIS REDEVELOPMENT IN THE FIRST PLACE?

In September 2017, in light of their concern that maintenance of the Parkdale property in the future could require significant expenditure, Property Trustees requested that a motion be brought to Council, as follows: **That Council give its approval to the creation of a working group, mandated to undertake discussions with knowledgeable people and the congregation, in accordance with Presbytery (now Eastern Ontario Outaouais Regional Council - EOORC) guidelines, on any and all options for significant renovations and/or redevelopment of the current building and property, in order to render the infrastructure responsive to emerging congregational and community needs and able to sustain our mission, allowing us to better discern and respond to God's will for our future.** The motion passed unanimously.

The issues confronting Parkdale at that time are the same as those that face us today and have become only more pressing over time.

Accessibility is a major concern. We have only one accessible washroom, which is not readily reachable from the sanctuary or from Tape Hall. The **security** of our staff, our children and all congregants is paramount. There are 11 doors into the building and many places to hide once you are in. Further, as we all know, Sunday morning **parking** is a challenge, especially in the winter.

Another significant challenge is our **aging building and delayed infrastructure costs**. A Building Condition Assessment (BCA) report from IRC Building Sciences Group, received in September 2019, estimated the costs to be in the neighbourhood of \$2.3 million over the next five years. Although we have managed to avoid significant expenditures on building repair for a couple of years, we have begun to incur significant expenses as anticipated in the BCA. In 2023, we replaced our deteriorating ramp at a cost of just over \$70,000. In 2024, we replaced one of our two boilers at a cost of just over \$59,000. In 2025, we are facing significant costs for roof repairs (\$50,000) and a new chairlift (possibly \$95,000).

In addition, our aging building does not offer an obvious, accessible reception/welcoming space, nor does it have a portico for easy drop-off and pick-up. Access to and egress from our parking lots is difficult, especially with the one-way laneway off Parkdale, shared with Abbeyfield House. Our historical image may appeal to some but it is not open and inviting.

Very importantly, we recently heard the following from Camille Beaufort, a long-time member Parkdale, mother of two, an active member of Parkdale's 'Companions', and a member of your PDWG from its inception.

Throughout this process the children and youth have been my main focus. The needs of our children, youth and young families are not being met to the fullest with our current space.

All but a couple of youth who participated in the initial meeting at Gracefield camp (where we talked about the doors), have left the church. Many of the Unbinding young family group have left. It was very difficult for me to watch week after week youth and families slowly drop out.

Of course there are the global changes in attendance in church. And we are post COVID; I know it is not just the space that is at play.

I recently arrived early to prepare for my youth Sunday school, and I walked through the Sunday school classes I used to use, stopped in the coffee shop, and went up to the parlour where I teach grade 5-6. I thought back to our initial discussions and the needs and challenges of this cohort. I'm saddened to think folks think the basement Sunday school rooms are the best place to gather and inspire our kids. Our nursery has a port-a-potty and a nursing station in the same space. We are constantly adjusting and adapting our youth programs to fit the "Ladies Parlour" space. This is the age where we lose our kids and they are our future leaders. As I sat with them yesterday, I saw what I push aside. This is not their space. The coffee shop is not a dedicated space. All these spaces are not inviting or exciting.

I remember the different coloured hats exercise we went through as part of our process. I am one who would like things to move quickly. But I've come to appreciate where God has led these discussions.

Why do I come to Parkdale? I pass many churches on my way in to Parkdale and our

rural United church has children and youth from our neighbourhood and parents who run the youth programs. My kids would prefer the shorter drive.

Parkdale is my home for my worship and spiritual development. My kids have their Sunday school friends they have known their whole lives. But the core group is now at the stage where they are being pulled away.

Our lesson yesterday was about being God's light in their day to day lives. Before starting my lesson with the youth yesterday, I asked if they had any goals for 2025. Without prompting, three of the five said they wanted to have a closer relationship with God. I feel blessed to work with these youth.

Parkdale is currently blessed with a thriving Sunday School and active youth and young adult programs. In this, we are rare among mainline churches. Your PDWG believes that the future of Parkdale rests in the continued flourishing of our children and youth and young families. Our current space is not adequately meeting their needs.

Our mandate has been renewed several times over the years, most recently at the AGM in 2023, where several motions were passed, including the one that created the Housing Sub-group. The relevant motions are repeated below for ease of reference.

Motion 1.

That the congregation approve the PDWG plan to proceed with more focused consideration of exploratory options that involve partial retention of the sanctuary, or a total rebuild of the church. As part of these options, the PDWG will continue to look at opportunities to support the community and enhance our missional programming, including housing. The PDWG will not further explore options that maintain the status quo or only add an elevator, as these options have been found to inadequately support or enhance Parkdale's ability to carry out its vision and mission.

Motion 2:

That the congregation give its approval to proceed with consideration of affordable/supportive housing options as part of the redevelopment plans.

Motion 3:

That the congregation approve of the creation of a separate group to further the discussion on housing.

We have taken our mandate very seriously. Over the past seven- and one-half years, we have prayed for discernment, talked to the congregation and our neighbours, consulted with experts and with others in our community who have been on this journey.

FINANCING

Your PDWG has been in operation for seven and one-half years, since September 2017, and has had a Budget approved by the congregation for each year since 2018. We have spent a total of \$71,325 over those eight years, an average of about \$9,000 per year.

Over the years, we have consulted openly with the congregation and the community, other churches, and the City.

We have received numerous reports, including the Building Condition Assessment as well as a Phase 1 Environmental Assessment, a Designated Substances report, a Space Utilization Report, a Preliminary Feasibility Study from CAHDCO, a Feasibility Study from Kindred Works (no cost), and a topographical survey.

We have also benefited from the *pro bono* contribution of Hobin Architects, who have provided numerous versions of professional architectural drawings for our various options and our evolving thinking over the years. Several PowerPoint presentations have greatly facilitated our understanding of the options through detailed visual depictions, and we are extremely grateful.

In 2023, we contracted with Dave Harder of Trinity Centres Foundation to facilitate a retreat, and more recently with Daniel Hussey, to provide advice on our fundraising capacity. We had several meetings with Daniel Hussey during 2024, who rightly advised that we should wait for the report of the Housing Sub-group and clarify our vision of Parkdale United as a church hub in advance of organizing a Campaign Readiness Retreat. We hope to be in a position to host this in May or June 2025. We believe that we have been faithful stewards of the resources allocated to us.

Our Budget request in the amount of \$45,000 for 2025 was reduced by the Finance Committee to \$20,000 in recognition of the financial challenges confronting us in 2025. This amount should enable us to continue working with Daniel Hussey and organize a Campaign Readiness Retreat sometime in 2025, but it will not take us much further than that. There is currently no specific budget for the Housing Sub-group.

COST OF A REDEVELOPED CHURCH:

Figures provided by Kindred Works: (January 2024)

Total New Residential GCA 71,800 ft²
Total New Community GCA 19,320 ft²
Underground Parking Needed GCA 21,600 ft²
Units 108

Philanthropic Dollars to be Raised \$11.5M

NOTES:

GCA - Gross Construction Area above grade

The size of the building proposed, the number of units envisaged, and the parking square footage differ from what is proposed in the Housing Sub-group report, but are included here for comparative purposes.

The philanthropic dollars to be raised were recently reviewed and updated by Barry Hobin, who predicts that we are now in the range of **\$14-15M** for the Church portion of the overall project.

When this amount (\$14M) is added to the amount required for the apartment building (\$2.6M), we are looking at a total of \$16.6M.

Options continue to be explored.

OTHER HIGHLIGHTS

We were sorely disappointed by the decision of EOORC's Church Extension Fund in late 2022 to deny our application for funding, resulting in our inability to purchase the former Knights of Columbus building at 1177 Gladstone. The building remains unoccupied and unsold.

We have been in regular contact with EOORC, most recently with Phyllis MacRae, Chair of the Future of Properties Leadership Team. We have also met with representatives of Kindred Works - Tim Blair, Miriam Bowlby, and Geoff Turnbull, and have received a Feasibility Study from them. It concluded that there is potential for a typical Kindred Works project on our site. We asked for detailed information, including details of the assumptions and estimates they used in calculating their cost figures, on their feasibility study and were told that this would not be revealed unless we entered into a contract with them. This causes us concern as other developers we have consulted, in particular CAHDCO, which provided an earlier feasibility study, were very forthcoming in providing this type of information. As a result, our dealings with them have been on hold since January 2024. Phyllis MacRae is aware of our reluctance to deal with Kindred Works and the reasons why. It now appears that working with Kindred Works may not be mandatory, as it was at some earlier point. It will be necessary to work closely with EOORC and to demonstrate the viability of our total project, including both church redevelopment and the proposal for housing. We will work, God being our helper, to formulate an overarching vision that will be compelling not only from a pragmatic but also from a missional point of view.

We have also been in regular contact with Jim Galloway of Abbeyfield. For several months, Jim and two other Abbeyfield representatives joined our PDWG. The Abbeyfield representatives withdrew a couple of years ago, asking that they be reconnected to the group when our plans were more concrete. Barry Hobin spoke recently with Jim to provide an update on recent activities, including the Housing sub-group report. This important conversation will continue.

We have been recently advised that there remains a possibility of partnering with Dominion Chalmers United Church (DCUC). As you will recall, DCUC currently leases space from Carleton University. They have a serious decision to make whether to extend their lease for an additional five years. The congregation is currently in the process of discerning their future, with a decision expected in the Fall of 2025. Reverend Andrew Love was a guest minister at Parkdale in the Fall and he assured us that the door has not closed to a stronger, closer relationship. Our ministerial staff continues to explore possibilities.

Your PDWG was saddened by the resignation from our team of three valued members during 2024: David Mason, Anthony Bailey and Michelle Bailey. We look forward to the hiring of a new minister, one who will be an advocate for the transformational work that we envisage.

VISION

Our Parkdale vision calls us to be followers of Jesus and to transform our community and our world. Our mission includes a clear statement of response to God's call and Jesus' teachings by

“supporting one another through pastoral care and concern, reaching out to people in need, and promoting justice.”

Parkdale has a tradition of working with others to address community needs and concerns. We see opportunities for Parkdale to expand and enhance its mission in the community and, in the name of God’s love, to contribute to transformation.

We are confident that the Holy Spirit is leading us towards a future for Parkdale United as a hub of missional and community collaboration, a place where Christian faith is embodied in service to the community, a beacon of hope for many, housed in an environmentally responsible and fully accessible building. We do not know exactly what form this will take but we know it must include outreach to the more vulnerable including supportive and affordable housing, which are also identified priorities for all levels of government – municipal, provincial and federal.

The most immediate challenge in crystallizing our vision is to narrow down the list of possible activities and programs for a community hub. Your PDWG has considered a range of possibilities and a few of them are outlined below. A longer and more comprehensive list of possibilities is attached as Annex A. It goes without saying that the successful delivery of these will depend on volunteers. We will be asking members of the congregation to identify priority areas of interest and those areas where they would be willing to help.

Rob Hilkes, our past Chair of Council, has been unfailingly supportive the work of your PDWG and we recently welcomed him to our small but mighty team. Rob shared this quote from Clarence Jordan (Richard Rohr Devotional)

I am increasingly convinced that Jesus thought of his messages as not dead-ending in a static institution but as a mighty flow of spirit which would penetrate every nook and cranny of human personal and social life.... I really don't think we can ever renew the church until we stop thinking about it as an institution and start thinking of it as a movement.

Rob believes that we are further along than we may realize in defining a vision and that we have, in various ways, developed some very strong “missional” areas of focus.

- First and foremost, we are committed to a flexible, bright, acoustically rich meeting place for worship, performance arts, community gatherings, etc. In addition, our redeveloped building would include flexible rooms for Sunday School, music teaching, small meetings, etc.
- We are committed to providing bright, well-equipped spaces where children and youth can learn and play, and where people of all ages can engage in physical activity, which would help in attracting interest from the community, especially youth. A gymnasium for activities such as basketball and volleyball is an important component of our vision for space for children and youth.
- We believe that IFTC will grow, requiring an inviting, accessible space in which to feed over 150 people. To support this expanding outreach program, we envisage a state-of-the-art commercial kitchen, which is busy, not just on Saturdays but seven days a week, preparing meals for the community, perhaps in partnership with groups like The Ottawa Mission’s cooking school.

- Our beautiful garden is very important to us and we see green space as part of the final project, preferably with street access contributing to our vision of 'community hub'.
- We also envisage an inviting street-front space as a missional community touchpoint, a coffee shop, for example, that would lead naturally into an inside welcome/reception area.
- We hope that the Queensway Pre-school will continue to have space in a new building. We will undertake discussions with them in coming months. The Pre-school in our new building would be designed by them, in accordance with City requirements.

NEXT STEPS:

This Report and the Housing Sub-group Report will be tabled with Council at its meeting on February 4, 2025. Any required adjustments to both reports will be made before sharing with the congregation by e-mail in advance of the AGM on March 2, 2025.

There will be no motions with respect to these Reports tabled at the AGM although motions from the floor will be allowed.

Given the complexity of the overall project, a Q and A session will be held shortly after the AGM, when members of the congregation will have an opportunity to ask their questions and share their views followed by a congregational meeting at which motions will be tabled and votes will be held by secret ballot.

Respectfully submitted, on behalf of your PDWG Team

Camille Beaufort
Ed Ellis (Housing Sub-group Chair)
Helen Hayes (PDWG Coordinator)
Rob Hilkes
Barry Hobin
Hugh Nelson
Kathleen Stephenson
Alexandra Stockwell (Secretary)

COMMUNITY HUB IDEAS

Food Related

- Street-front café
- Expanded IFTC
- Community Kitchen - perhaps collaborating with Chef Ric of The Ottawa Mission to expand his cooking school.
- Refugee services – preparation of various ethnic dishes for community distribution or for sale.
- Food Co-op
- Grocery Bag Ministry

Arts and Culture

- Performance space
- Dance
- OrKidstra Hub
- Book exchange
- Library
- Literacy Programs
- Prayer Shawls
- Wood Carving
- Art Classes
- Handbell Choir

Health Related

- Safe injection site
- Addiction, mental health, and counseling services
- Mental Health Awareness Workshops
- CPR and First Aid Training
- Blood drives
- Nutrition Counselling
- Hair Care
- Foot Care
- Dental Assessments
- Smoking Cessation
- Showers
- Laundry
- Safe Exercise Programs for Seniors

- Tai Chi
- Walking Club

Drop-in Centre

- Youth – after school activities
- Children – after school activities
- Moms and Tots
- Gym night drop-in
- Drop-in centre for the vulnerable
- Seniors' drop-in centre
- Men's Devotional Group
- Bridge Club (or Euchre or other)
- Backgammon Club
- Chess Club

Sports

- Basketball
- Pickleball
- Baseball
- Hockey
- Indoor soccer

Garden

- Garden club
- Greenhouse
- Community Beautification

Hosting Community events

- Fairs
- Concerts
- Family Fun Days
- Church in the park

Small Groups for Targeted Outreach

- Community Clean-ups
- Food drives
- Bible Study in a coffee shop/community centre

Partnering with Schools

- Tutoring programs
- After-school clubs
- Weekend breakfasts

Mentoring Programs for Youth

- Career guidance
- Life skills coaching
- Spiritual growth

Legal Advice

- Income assistance
- Immigration
- Housing
- Family law
- Employment
- Criminal law
- Income Tax Preparation

Adopt a Nursing Home (or even Abbeyfield)

- Worship
- Games
- Conversation

Skills Workshops

- Cooking
- Budgeting
- Basic Home repairs

N.B. This list has been compiled from a variety of sources. It goes without saying that a wide variety of volunteers would be required to oversee and deliver these programs.