



## Media Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

December 11, 2019

### **City seeks to build trust with affected property owners**

City officials apologize for missing key opportunities to communicate and consult with affected property owners during critical times in the development of mitigation and land acquisition programs.

As acknowledged by the City's Strategic Initiatives & Flood Recovery Manager Graham Watt, "We understand there has been miscommunication about and with property owners affected by land acquisition. When the City heard in June that funders would not support pre-flood values, we should have engaged with affected residents right away to find solutions. On behalf of the City, I apologize, and promise to enhance communication and consultation."

Watt also emphasized that, "Affected property owners are taxpayers and not flood victims looking for handouts. Rather, this is a flood mitigation program to make the community as a whole more flood resilient. While the City wants to reach acceptable, voluntary agreements with property owners, we know that many would not have decided to leave if given the choice."

Mayor Brian Taylor agreed with the need for openness and collaboration, saying that, "We must proceed recognizing the need to build trust and strengthen relationships."

To that end, the Land Acquisition Team led by Keystone Appraisals will soon invite community input into the design of the Land Acquisition Program.

"Community input is critical moving forward," said Watt, "especially from those who have been impacted the most. The time we've spent, and will continue to spend, meeting with affected property owners has reaffirmed the challenges they're facing, and how we can best work together on solutions."

---

#### **MEDIA CONTACT**

**Graham Watt**

Manager of Strategic Initiatives & Flood Recovery

[gwatt@grandforks.ca](mailto:gwatt@grandforks.ca)

250-442-4159