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More than \$3 million is being spent this fiscal year to renovate former Kapyong Barracks homes. The Department of National Defence is also paying to demolish homes.

Dollars earmarked for Kenaston demolition

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OTTAWA — The Department of National Defence will spend up to \$400,000 next year to demolish military houses along Kenaston Boulevard, which will allow the city to finally widen the often congested artery.

It appears to be the first significant step in years toward Winnipeg's desire to add two additional lanes to Kenaston between Grant Avenue and the St. James Bridge. It is one of the most bottlenecked streets in the city during rush hour and has been a priority for the city for years, but progress ground to a halt because of a lawsuit between Ottawa and Treaty 1 First Nations over land entitlement to the nearby Kapyong Barracks.

It has been eight years since the city held public consultations to sort out the best way to widen the road. In 2012, the mayor's executive policy committee directed the city to begin negotiating with Ottawa to acquire more than 100 private- and military-owned homes along Kenaston that have to be demolished to make room for the additional lanes.

In 2015, widening Kenaston was one of the city's four top-priority projects for infrastructure funds from Ottawa, but it was dropped to

the bottom of the list because the ongoing legal battle put it on hold indefinitely.

The lawsuit did not cover the land the houses are on; the fight was over the Kapyong Barracks site at the corner of Kenaston and Grant, which Ottawa declared surplus in 2007 and attempted to sell off to its Crown corporation developer.

But the whole plan to redevelop was shelved as Ottawa and the First Nations squared off in an eight-year legal battle over whether Ottawa should have consulted the First Nations before selling the land to someone else.

Federal courts sided with the First Nations and during the 2015 federal election, the former Conservative government decided not to appeal the latest ruling.

The First Nations and Justin Trudeau's Liberal government have been negotiating since, although a deal has not been concluded.

The houses are on what is known as the South Site of Kapyong Barracks, about 136 acres along Kenaston, Corydon Avenue and other area streets.

There were 350 homes there until recently, when demolition began on some of the homes on Corydon and nearby streets. Nine houses are being torn down now, at a cost of about

\$250,000, because they are structurally unsound.

A military official told the *Free Press* Tuesday \$400,000 has been set aside in next year's budget to demolish homes along Kenaston "to permit the eventual road widening by the City of Winnipeg." He did not say how many or which ones are targeted for demolition.

More than \$3 million is also being spent to renovate 100 of the homes in this fiscal year. There is almost \$2.88 million in the 2017-18 budget to renovate additional homes.

The official said 283 of the houses are currently occupied and the other 67 are vacant; the Defence Department needs 480 housing units in Winnipeg to meet its needs and currently has a total of 558.

Only 350 are on the South Site.

Nobody was available from the city Tuesday to discuss the widening plan, expected to cost about \$375 million.

The Defence Department is also set to begin tearing down the buildings on the Kapyong site to get it ready for development as soon as negotiations between Ottawa and the First Nations conclude.

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