



## STAFF REPORT INFORMATION ONLY

### Review of Surplus Sites

<b>Date:</b>	October 1, 2008
<b>To:</b>	Parks and Environment Committee
<b>From:</b>	Brenda Patterson, General Manager, Parks, Forestry and Recreation
<b>Wards:</b>	All
<b>Reference Number:</b>	

#### **SUMMARY**

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Staff considered the Committee request to distribute lists of surplus sites to Councillors and to review the sites from an environmental and parks point of view and to report to the Parks and Environment Committee.

The existing process for the circulation of surplus city and school board lands includes agencies, boards, commissions and City divisions (the City ABCDs), as well as the affected Ward Councillor. Parks, Forestry and Recreation Division (PFR) reviews all such circulations in light of the Division's mandate and service requirements.

This report to the Parks and Environment Committee is to provide this information as requested.

#### **FINANCIAL IMPACT**

There is no financial impact to this report.

#### **DECISION HISTORY**

The Parks and Environment Committee, at its meeting of May 13, 2008, referred a communication from Councillor Moeser to the Deputy City Manager – Cluster A for consideration and direction with a request that current and future lists of surplus properties be distributed to every Councillor; that a process be developed to review surplus sites from an environmental and parks point of view; and the process be reported to the Parks and Environment Committee.

<http://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2008/pe/decisions/2008-05-13-pe15-dd.pdf>

## **COMMENTS**

Staff reviewed the requests and are reporting for the information of the Parks and Environment Committee that there are existing systems in place that can accommodate them.

### **Circulation of Surplus Land Information:**

When a property is released from the operational requirements of any City ABCD, staff in Facilities and Real Estate Services (F&RE) circulates the property information to the City ABCDs and Ward Councillor(s) who are directly impacted by the potential disposal of surplus lands to determine if another City need for the asset exists or whether the property can be declared surplus for disposal. In terms of surplus school land, the school board is required by Provincial legislation (*Ontario Regulation 444/98, Disposition of Real Property*) to circulate notice of property that is surplus to its needs. Among others, the City receives this information and F&RE, in turn, circulates to the City ABCDs and all Councillors. If an interest is expressed in submitting a proposal pursuant to *Regulation 444/98*, appropriate Council authority to acquire, together with an approved budget allocation, should be obtained before F&RE undertakes negotiations. Pursuant to *Regulation 444/98*, proposals must be submitted to the Board no later than 90 days after the day the Board issued the proposal.

Given this current practice, the request to advise Councillors of current and future lists of potentially surplus properties is met.

### **Process to Review Surplus Sites from an Environmental and Parks Point of View:**

Parks, Forestry and Recreation is one of the key Divisions to whom F&RE circulates surplus City and School Board information. Parks, Forestry and Recreation staff consider all circulations in the context of overall parkland provision levels and identified priorities, keeping in mind the need to focus scarce acquisition funding on those areas of the City most in need of open space.

Every circulation is viewed by PFR from a parks and environmental point of view, looking at the characteristics of the property, as well as its context. Park size, linkages, tree cover, land base for facilities in the capital plan, and park provision in given areas are all considered when surplus land circulations are reviewed by PFR. See Attachment 1 for a checklist of the factors considered in reviewing surplus properties.

Given this current practice, the request to develop a process to review surplus sites from a parks and environmental point of view is already in place and a new process is not seen as being needed.

This report has been prepared in consultation with staff from Facilities and Real Estate Services.

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## **SIGNATURE**

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Sue Corke  
Deputy City Manager – Cluster A

Attachment 1: Checklist for Determining Acquisition of Park Land

## Attachment 1: Checklist for Determining Acquisition of Park Land

<p><b>Council Direction:</b> Is there a Council direction to acquire a specific parcel of land?</p>
<p><b>Official Plan (Sec. 3.2.3.1):</b>  Toronto’s system of parks &amp; open spaces will continue to be a necessary element of city-building as the City grows &amp; changes. Maintaining, enhancing &amp; expanding the system requires the following actions:</p>
Adding new parks and amenities, particularly in growth areas and maintaining, improving and expanding existing parks
Designing high quality parks and their amenities to promote user comfort, safety, accessibility and year-round use and to enhance the experience of “place”, providing experiential and educational opportunities to interact with the natural world
Protecting access to existing publicly accessible open spaces, as well as expanding the system of open spaces and developing open space linkages
Promoting and using private open space and recreation facilities, including areas suitable for community or allotment gardening, to supplement the City’s parks, facilities and amenities
<p><b>Official Plan (Section 3.2.3.2):</b>  Park acquisition Strategies including decisions about whether to accept parkland or cash as a condition of development, will take into account a range of factors:</p>
Amount of existing parkland
Parkland characteristics and quality
Providing safe, stimulating and engaging play spaces for children
Existing natural features of the site
Existing amenities and facilities
Population change, demographic and social characteristics
Anticipated development
Amount of publicly accessible open space
Opportunities to link parks and open spaces
Urban form
Land availability and cost
<p><b>PFR Strategic Plan “Our Common Grounds”</b></p>
Environmental Stewardship: Extension of our tree canopy from its current 17% to 30 to 40% of the City
Child & Youth Development: A 20 % increase in the number of children participating in registered programs
Child & Youth Development: A 40% increase in the number of youth participating in programs

Lifelong Active Living: 20% increase in the city’s population enrolled in programs to 190,000 more by 2020
Lifelong Active Living: A 40% increase in seniors participating in programs by 2010
Lifelong Active Living: A 20% increase in the number of Torontonians who are physically active by 2020
Action Item No. 1: Increase Toronto’s tree canopy coverage of 17% to 30-40%
Action Item No. 24: Prepare a Sport Strategy Framework with Toronto Sports Council
Action Item No. 26: Increase numbers of sports fields by 10%
<b>Recreation Facilities Report</b>
Increase provision of soccer fields across the city (#25)
Establish a network of “multi-purpose” sports fields (#29)
Pursue the designation or development of 31 multi-purpose (#30)
Consider artificial turf surfaces - “multi-purpose” sports fields (#31)
<b>Parkland Acquisition Strategic Directions Report</b>
Located in lower existing local & district parkland provision areas
Site should be in a local or district priority area as set out in PASDR
A potential site that is large enough to be usable
The potential acquisition would also have to: satisfy a department need, address a deficiency, or replace a facility so that there is no net loss in service provided
Special Opportunities (i.e., natural heritage protection, improving linkages & functionality of existing parks)
<b>Key Partners</b>
TRCA Objectives
WES Objectives
Toronto Water Objectives
<b>Funding, Feasibility &amp; Market Value</b>
Funding Availability
Feasibility - - ability to accommodate a range of PF&R objectives (i.e., environmental & recreation)
Market value