



Decision Letter

Toronto School Boards Task Force

TS2.1	ACTION	Amended		Ward:All
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Toronto School Boards Task Force Recommendations

Task Force Decision

The Toronto School Boards Task Force recommends that:

1. The Executive Committee forward the report (May 27, 2014) from the Executive Director, Social Development, Finance and Administration to the City Manager with the request that he consider including the City School Boards Advisory Committee as a recommended Advisory Committee in the new term of Council.

Decision Advice and Other Information

The Toronto School Boards Task Force:

1. Endorsed the proposed Terms of Reference, priorities and key areas of collaboration set out in the report (May 27, 2014) from the Executive Director, Social Development, Finance and Administration.
2. Requested the Executive Director, Social Development, Finance and Administration to report to the appropriate Committee on the status of the revisions of Ontario Regulation 444/98.

Origin

(May 27, 2014) Report from the Executive Director, Social Development, Finance and Administration

Summary

In July 2013, City Council established the City of Toronto – Toronto School Boards Task Force as an advisory committee reporting to Council through the Executive Committee. It was tasked with providing advice to the next term of Council as to the best means to ensure ongoing collaboration between the City and the School Boards.

This report provides a consultation summary from Task Force members and their resulting advice for how the City and the School Boards can best collaborate and the key priorities for such collaboration. The Task Force proposes that the next Term of Council establish a City-School Boards Advisory Committee. City staff will report at the beginning of the next term of City Council with recommendations on the establishment of Council advisory bodies and working committees.

Background Information

(May 27, 2014) Report and Appendices A-G from the Executive Director, Social Development, Finance and Administration on Toronto School Boards Task Force Recommendations
<http://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2014/ts/bgrd/backgroundfile-69653.pdf>

(March 25, 2010) Letter from the City Manager to the Minister of Education on Regulation 444, submitted by the Executive Director, Social Development, Finance and Administration
<http://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2014/ts/bgrd/backgroundfile-69667.pdf>

1a Request to Explore New Partnerships Through Revision of Ontario Regulation 444/98

Origin

(May 13, 2014) Letter from City Council

Summary

City Council adopted the following Recommendations in Motion MM51.38:

1. City Council request the Toronto School Boards Task Force to consider the issues raised in this Motion as it identifies recommendations to Council on ways of achieving greater coordination and cooperation between the City and the Toronto School Boards.
2. In anticipation of an impending review of Ontario Regulation 444/98 of the Education Act, City Council authorize the City Manager to initiate discussions with the Ministry of Education regarding Ontario Regulation 444/98 of the Education Act with a view to implementing changes that will permit greater flexibility in the process and support more creative solutions for retaining important community assets.

Pursuant to the provisions of Ontario Regulation 444/98 made under the Education Act, R.S.O. 1990, properties declared surplus by school boards such as the Toronto District School Board (TDSB) and the Toronto Catholic District School Board (TCDSB) are circulated to other school boards, educational and government institutions before they can be listed on the open market. The regulation specifies that any of these parties, if interested in acquiring the circulated property, must present the school board with an offer at fair market value within 90 days of the property being circulated.

Under the current framework, the prescribed response time is insufficient for the City to respond in cases where funding is not already identified in the current Capital Budget. From the time the City receives notice of surplus properties circulated by the school boards, several steps must be taken before a firm offer to purchase or lease can be presented back to the board. Detailed steps and associated time lines are outlined in Appendix "C" to the 2009 staff report headed "Issues Arising from the Purchase or Lease of Surplus School Board Properties".

In the specific case of the recent surplus designation of Bloor Collegiate lands, transfer of this property and future uses of the site will have a tremendous impact on this community for generations. Despite interest from numerous City divisions for portions of the site, Toronto Lands Corporation (acting on behalf of the Toronto District School Board) would not entertain any bid that was not for the entire site. Unfortunately, it was impossible for the City of Toronto to obtain the necessary funding approval to submit an offer for the entire property prior to the deadline, as such a bid could not progress through the appropriate reporting schedule within the 90 day bidding window.

The Regulation requires TDSB and the Toronto Lands Corporation to maximize value from the sale of its properties but this prevents the investigation of other possible solutions, including partnerships and long-term leases. As it exists currently, Ontario Regulation 444/98 remains overly prescriptive and inflexible to the exploration of such possibilities, which offer significant potential to both community and City benefit.

The TDSB faces immense capital pressures. A re-examination of the existing funding formula for school boards must be a fundamental component of any solution to the issues. In the meantime, this motion requests the Province improve flexibility in Ontario Regulation 444/98 to allow for greater opportunities within the surplus property bidding process.

This Motion is urgent in order to allow for the specific lessons raised to be formally considered by Council's School Board Task in advance of their final meeting and report to Council. This motion is also urgent as it relates the repeated indication by the Province of an "imminent" review of Regulation 444/98 and impacts any advocacy the City is planning on this issue.

Background Information

(May 13, 2014) Letter from City Council on the Request to explore new partnerships through revision of Ontario Regulation 444/98

(<http://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2014/ts/bqrd/backgroundfile-69609.pdf>)