



REPORT FOR INFORMATION

Feasibility of Acquiring 185 Balliol Street for Parkland

Date: December 16, 2019

To: City Council

From: General Manager, Parks, Forestry and Recreation

Wards: Ward 12 - Toronto-St. Paul's

SUMMARY

This report provides an assessment of acquiring a private property, located at 185 Balliol Street, in the Davisville Apartment Neighbourhood, for parkland purposes. The property is located in an "Area of Parkland Need" as per the Parkland Study and Acquisition Priority Area Map (Figure 18) in the City's Parkland Strategy, and a portion of the property is identified as a "Proposed Public Park" in the Yonge and Eglinton Secondary Plan.

The private property, 185 Balliol Street, was recently listed for sale through a commercial real estate company. Following direction received from Toronto and East York Community Council on December 3, 2019 to assess the feasibility of acquiring the subject property for parkland, staff submitted a letter to the owner's agent, identifying the City's interest in purchasing the property, but were not able to negotiate terms of a potential acquisition before the offer deadline established by the current property owner. Upon receiving staff's letter of interest, the current owner indicated that they would not accept conditional offers. Given the tight timeline associated with the sale of this site and the need for staff to receive the appropriate authorities to advance a formal offer, the City was not able to advance the acquisition of the site.

Staff will continue to explore opportunities for future parkland at this location, as well as assess other options to expand and improve the parks network in the high growth Yonge and Eglinton area.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

There is no financial impact resulting from the adoption of this report.

The Chief Financial Officer and Treasurer agrees with the financial impact information.

DECISION HISTORY

On July 23, 2018, City Council adopted Official Plan Amendment 405 (Midtown in Focus), a new Secondary Plan for the Yonge-Eglinton Area that identified a portion of the subject site as a "Proposed Public Park" on Map 21-8 (Parks and Open Space Network Plan).

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2018.PG31.7>

On June 5, 2019, the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing issued his decision on the Yonge-Eglinton Official Plan Amendment (OPA 405), approving the Amendment as modified.

<https://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/refdocs/11188.pdf>

On November 26, 2019, City Council adopted the Parkland Strategy, a city-wide framework to guide park planning and acquisition.

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2019.EX10.3>

On December 3, 2019, Toronto and East York Community Council requested City staff to report to the December 17, 2019 meeting of City Council if there are recommendations to acquire the subject property for parkland and amend the Approved 2019-2028 Parks, Forestry & Recreation Capital Budget and Plan to fund the acquisition.

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2019.TE11.65>

COMMENTS

Parks are essential for liveable communities. To keep pace with growth and intensification, the City of Toronto is actively assessing opportunities to expand and improve the parks system.

The Parks, Forestry & Recreation Division conducted an assessment of acquiring a privately owned property at 185 Balliol Street for parkland purposes. The property has an area of approximately 4,370 square metres (1.08 acres) and is located at the southwest corner of Pailton Crescent and Balliol Street, in the centre of the Davisville Apartment Neighbourhood Area.

The property, which currently operates as a private tennis club, was listed for sale through a commercial real estate company. Staff sent a letter of intent to the owner's agent but was not able to negotiate terms for a potential Agreement of Purchase of Sale before the offer deadline established by the current owner. Upon receiving staff's letter of interest, the current owner indicated that they would not accept conditional offers. As the timeline for the sale of this property was extremely tight and given the need for staff to seek the appropriate authorities to advance a formal offer, the acquisition of this site was not advanced.

Staff will continue to have discussions with the current and/or future owners to explore opportunities for potential parkland at this location.

Staff from Corporate Real Estate Management and City Planning were consulted during the development of this report.

Suitability of the site for Parkland

The Parkland Strategy is Toronto's new city-wide strategic parks planning framework, which will ensure that Toronto's parks system grows and evolves. The Parkland Strategy provides the City with a long-term vision and framework to inform future parks planning, decision-making, land acquisition, and park investment.

The Parkland Strategy identifies Yonge and Eglinton as an "Area of Parkland Need" as per the Parkland Study and Acquisition Priority Area Map (Figure 18), given that the area has a low Parkland Provision based on the 2016 population (supply of parkland per person) and the area will experience a further decline in parkland provision based on anticipated population growth reflected in the development pipeline (2033).

The Davisville Village Apartment Neighbourhood is experiencing significant intensification through infill development that is placing increasing pressure on existing parkland. There is a very low parkland supply in the Davisville Village Apartment Neighbourhood. Given the concentration of high density residential development and anticipated growth, additional parkland is required to increase parkland provision and provide outdoor recreation facilities such as playgrounds, splash pads, multi-purpose sports courts and fields, and social gathering spaces.

The Council approved Parkland Strategy provides additional criteria for assessing and prioritizing parkland acquisition opportunities. The assessment confirms that the acquisition of additional land for parkland purposes is a priority in this area based on the following criteria:

- Located within a parkland priority area with high growth
- Suitable for parkland purposes (e.g. appropriate size, shape and utility)
- Addresses a gap in parkland in the area
- Would serve a diverse range of residents and employees
- Can accommodate outdoor recreation facilities

Yonge – Eglinton Secondary Plan

In July 2018, City Council adopted Official Plan Amendment 405 (Midtown in Focus) that identifies a portion of the site as a "Proposed Public Park" on Map 21-8 (Parks and Open Space Network Plan). The Parks and Open Space Network Plan was informed by the [Midtown Parks and Public Realm Plan 2018](#), which set out a comprehensive vision and priorities for achieving an improved, expanded, and connected parks and public realm system in Midtown. In June 2019, the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing issued a decision on OPA 405, modifying and adopting the Plan. As such, the Plan is in full force and effect. Policy 3.3.5 of OPA 405 states that "Proposed Public Park" sites will be acquired and/or secured by the City over time.

While a portion of the property is identified for a "Proposed Public Park", the property is designated as Apartment Neighbourhoods and is zoned for residential uses. The

property is within a Parkland Acquisition Priority Area, as per Chapter 415, Article III of the Toronto Municipal Code, and development will be subject to the Alternative Parkland Dedication Rate.

Advancing the Parks and Public Realm Plan in Midtown

Staff will continue to explore opportunities with the current and/or future owners of the subject site to secure parkland at this location. Further, staff will assess options for new, expanded and improved parks throughout the Yonge and Eglinton area as part of the implementation of the Secondary Plan and the Parkland Strategy.

CONTACT

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SIGNATURE

Janie Romoff
General Manager, Parks, Forestry and Recreation

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1: Yonge-Eglinton Secondary Plan (OPA) 405 - Map 21-8 (Parks and Open Space Network Plan)

Attachment 1: Yonge-Eglinton Secondary Plan (OPA 405) - Map 21-8 Parks and Open Space Network Plan

Map 21-8, Parks and Open Space Network Plan, Yonge-Eglinton Secondary Plan (OPA 405)

