



STAFF REPORT ACTION REQUIRED

Update on surplus TDSB and TCDSB School Board Properties

Date:	April 4, 2014
To:	Executive Committee
From:	Executive Director, Social Development, Finance & Administration
Wards:	All
Reference Number:	AFS # 18953

SUMMARY

This report provides information about anticipated impacts of recently surplused Toronto Catholic District School Board (TCDSB) school properties. Five TCDSB school properties have recently been offered for sale, four of which are currently operating schools which will be relocated to new facilities and one which is the sale of a portion of land attached to a school property. This report identifies potential impacts on local community access to green space and recreational and other community facilities.

This report also provides information on requested reassessments of City of Toronto interest in two Toronto District School Board (TDSB) school sites: the Vincent Massey site and the Lawrence-Midland Redevelopment site.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Executive Director, Social Development, Finance and Administration recommends that:

1. Executive Committee receive this report for information.

Financial Impact

There are no financial implications resulting from the adoption of the recommendations included in this report. The Deputy City Manager and Chief Financial Officer has reviewed this report and agrees with the financial impact information.

DECISION HISTORY

At its meeting of May 11 and 12, 2010, City Council approved a School Lands Acquisition Framework.

See: <http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2010.EX43.2>

At its meeting of July 16, 17, 18 and 19, 2013, City Council established a City of Toronto – Toronto School Boards Task Force as an advisory committee reporting to Council through the Executive Committee for the remainder of the 2010-2014 term of Council.

See: <http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2013.EX33.16>

As its meeting of November 19, 2013, Scarborough Community Council directed City Planning staff to schedule a community consultation meeting for the lands at 1555 Midland Avenue together with the Ward Councillor.

See: <http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2013.SC28.22>

As its meeting of December 16, 17 and 18, 2013, City Council adopted motions: 1) requesting a reassessment of the City's interest in the Midland/Lawrence redevelopment site, 2) directing a reassessment of the Vincent Massey Site, and 3) directing preparation of a report on the status of Toronto Catholic District School Board surplus properties.

See: <http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2013.EX36.11>

As its meeting of January 15, 2014, Etobicoke York Community Council requested City Heritage staff to evaluate and prepare a report on the heritage value of the former Vincent Massey School located at 68 Daisy Avenue, including the appropriateness of designating it under Part IV of the Ontario Heritage Act.

See: <http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2014.EY30.29>

ISSUE BACKGROUND

School buildings serve many roles in their communities, including providing locations for child care, recreation programs, community meetings and neighbourhood green space.

The closure and sale of schools and their lands can have a range of effects on neighbourhoods, particularly those neighbourhoods that are already underserved and also those facing the impacts of new residential and mixed-use development.

The City of Toronto has identified an interest in ensuring that select school properties which are vital to service delivery in neighbourhoods, including recreational opportunities and spaces for social activity, are maintained for public use. For this reason, City Council adopted a School Lands Acquisition Framework to identify and prioritize properties that become available for sale by local school boards and the Toronto Lands Corporation (TLC), the Toronto District School Board's (TDSB) real estate subsidiary.

School boards are under increasing financial pressure. This financial pressure is a result of the Ontario Ministry of Education funding formula, which assigns funding based on student enrolment and the number and size of schools in the board. Specifically, the

formula does not recognize the role or use of schools for any purpose other than formal education.

COMMENTS

Official Plan policy on preservation of school lands

The City's Official Plan provides policy guidance on the preservation of school lands, particularly Section 3.2.2 Community Services and Facilities and Section 3.2.3 Parks and Open Spaces.

Official Plan Policy 3.2.2.2 states that “Keeping surplus schools for community service purposes will be pursued where the need for such has been identified as a priority. Where this is not feasible, alternate uses of closed schools must be compatible with the surrounding neighbourhood and should provide City residents with continued access to school playgrounds and playing fields.” Policy 3.2.2.4 states that “Council recognizes that schools are an integral community resource that serve not only as learning institutions but also as socio-cultural centres and a source of valuable community open space. The City will encourage and promote the shared use of schools, parks and public open space. The City will consider acquiring publically owned school sites [...] for parks and open space purposes should they no longer be needed as learning institutions.”

The Provincial funding formula for schools does not support this wider recognition of school sites as community resources which is captured by the City's Official Plan policies.

Toronto Catholic District School Board school sites

In March, 2013, the Toronto Catholic District School Board (TCDSB) circulated four surplus properties for which it is offering for sale all or a portion of the property. TCDSB did not receive any formal interest within the 90 days response period required by Ontario Regulation 444/98. TCDSB staff have received direction from their board to market and dispose of three properties: St Philip Neri Catholic School, St Simon Catholic School, and the vacant land next to St Basil the Great College School. TCDSB is in discussions with an interested party for the fourth site, Christ the King Catholic School.

Ward	Site	Address
6	Christ the King Catholic School	3672 Lake Shore Blvd West
7	St. Philip Neri Catholic School	20 Beverly Hills Drive
7	St Simon Catholic School	20 Wallasey Avenue
7	Vacant land next to St Basil the Great College School	20 Starview Lane

An additional site was declared surplus by the TCDSB on February 13, 2014, and this property is currently being circulated for sale under Regulation 444/98. May 28, 2014 is the deadline for the City of Toronto to make an offer on this circulation.

Ward	Site	Address
7	St Gerard Majella Catholic School	35 Heavitree Drive

For the four TCDSB schools being sold, the sales are occurring as part of plans to relocate the schools to new sites.

TCDSB school properties sale impact on child care facilities

Staff in Children’s Services indicate that none of these school sites currently host Child Care facilities. No impact on child care facilities is anticipated.

TCDSB school properties sale impact on open space and recreation

The loss of any green space, recreational facility or other community amenity can significantly affect a neighbourhood. The jurisdictional distinction as to whether it is a City-owned park or a school yard playing field is often not particularly important to the affected community.

Parks, Forestry and Recreation staff evaluates surplus school sites on a case by case basis for suitability for acquisition. Due to the diversity of the city and its communities, parkland acquisition requirements are based on a contextual approach that recognizes demonstrated area requirements and opportunities. One of the key assessment tools is a measurement of the amount of local parkland per 1,000 population relative to other parts of the City termed a Local Parkland Acquisition Cell (LPAC). Other assessment criteria include alignment with City or Division priorities, proximity to other parkland, recent residential growth, natural heritage significance, suitability for recreation facilities, and available acquisition funding.

Of the five sites declared surplus by TCDSB, Christ the King Catholic School and St Gerard Majella Catholic School are located within LPACs that are in the second highest quintile of parkland provision – 1.91 ha of parkland / 1,000 people and 1.57 ha of parkland / 1,000 people respectively. St. Philip Neri Catholic School is located in a primarily commercial area with less than 300 population and is not assessed using LPACs. These three sites would not be considered priorities for acquisition for the development of new parks.

The two other sites, St Simon Catholic School and the vacant land next to St Basil the Great College School, are approximately 1 km away from each other and located within the same LPAC. This LPAC is in the lowest quintile of parkland provision with 0.35 ha of parkland per 1,000 people and has experienced recent residential growth. This means this is an area where additional parkland is needed, and a loss of school open spaces would have significant local impact.

Parks, Forestry & Recreation has commenced discussions with TCDSB regarding the acquisition of the vacant 4.78 acre parcel adjacent to St Basil the Great College School. This site is being considered as a potential location for the new Western North York Community Centre, an identified priority in the 1999 Recreation Needs Assessment and Feasibility Study. The site adjacent to St Basil the Great College School would provide

an opportunity to develop a shared-use recreation facility with TCDSB and a small park. The TCDSB has already completed the circulation under Regulation 444/98 and has listed the property for sale on the open market. Real Estate Services will report back to Council if Parks, Forestry & Recreation makes the recommendation that the 4.78 acre site be acquired for a community centre and/or parkland.

Toronto District School Board School Site Reassessments

City Council requested reassessments of the City of Toronto's interest in two Toronto District School Board (TDSB) properties.

Ward	Site	Address
6	Vincent Massey site	68 Daisy Avenue
37	Lawrence-Midland redevelopment site	1555 Midland Avenue

Reassessment of Vincent Massey site

City staff in the Children's Services, City Planning, Parks, Forestry and Recreation, and Social Development, Finance and Administration divisions have reviewed the Vincent Massey site at 68 Daisy Avenue.

The Vincent Massey school site at 68 Daisy Avenue is one four TDSB school sites identified for sale as a part of the Board's 2013-2016 capital plan. Staff initially reported to City Council through Executive Committee on properties affected by this capital plan in December, 2013. City staff have also been requested by Etobicoke York Community Council to report on the heritage value of the former Vincent Massey school. This report is forthcoming.

The Vincent Massey school site contains a licensed commercial child care centre with a total capacity of 180 child care spaces. Because the Vincent Massey Child Care Centre is a commercial enterprise, finding a new site for the program is additionally complicated as the TDSB has a policy barring for-profit child care operators from its schools. Staff in Children's Services continue to work with the operator to find a new location for the centre.

Parks, Forestry & Recreation staff report that Vincent Massey is located with an area of parkland provision of 1.92 ha per 1,000 population which is in the 2nd highest quintile Local Parkland Assessment Cells (LPACs). Based on LPAC and proximity to local parks, the Vincent Massey site is not considered to be a priority area for new parkland.

Parks, Forestry & Recreation does not provide recreation programming at the Vincent Massey Site. The surplus school is approximately 750 m from existing recreation facilities Gus Ryder Pool and Health Club at Don Russell Memorial Park and 1.5 km from the Ken Cox Community Centre in Colonel Samuel Smith Park.

Based on current parkland provision and proximity to nearby parks and recreation facilities, Parks, Forestry & Recreation did not identify the Vincent Massey site as a priority for acquisition for parkland or recreation facilities.

Lawrence-Midland redevelopment site

City staff in the Children's Services, City Planning, Parks, Forestry and Recreation, and Social Development, Finance and Administration divisions have reviewed the Lawrence-Midland Redevelopment site at 1555 Midland Avenue comprising Bendale Business and Technical Institute and David and Mary Thomson Collegiate Institute to reassess City of Toronto interest in the site.

Bendale Business and Technical Institute and David and Mary Thomson Collegiate Institute were declared surplus by the TDSB and circulated by the Toronto Lands Corporation on October 19, 2012. The current proposal for the site is to consolidate the two schools into a single facility and dispose of a portion of the site for residential development.

The David and Mary Thomson Collegiate Institute site has been sold to the Conseil Scolaire Viamonde. The TDSB has applied for an amendment to the zoning by-law to demolish the existing Bendale Business Technical Institute school building to permit the redevelopment of another parcel of the site as residential development.

Children's Services staff report no anticipated impact on child care services. Bendale BTI and David and Mary Thomson CI are secondary schools with no child care facilities. There is a child care facility located within Donwood Park Public School - N.Y.A.D. Donwood. This school will be converted from a JK-6 school to a JK-8 school in a campus setting with the new TDSB secondary school.

Parks, Forestry & Recreation staff report that the Lawrence-Midland TDSB site falls within an area with a parkland provision level of 0.99 hectares of parkland per 1,000 population, which places it in the middle quintile of the Local Parkland Assessment Cells (LPACs). Therefore, it would not be a high priority site to acquire for parkland purposes. It is anticipated that non-institutional development at the Lawrence-Midland site may generate a parkland dedication requirement which could be satisfied through additional lands being added to Donwood Park.

The City of Toronto currently runs aquatics programming at Bendale BTI. The pool is owned and operated by the TDSB but programmed by Parks, Forestry & Recreation under a shared use agreement. The new TDSB school facility will not include a pool which has created concerns about continuation of aquatic programs.

Parks, Forestry & Recreation has assessed its schedule of aquatics programs offered at Bendale BTI and determined that the current program can be accommodated at nearby Parks, Forestry & Recreation facilities at Wexford Collegiate Institute, Agincourt Recreation Centre, Cedarbrae Collegiate Institute and Centennial Recreation Centre-Scarborough. The new Scarborough Aquatics Centre being constructed for the Pan Am

Games is approx 9 km from the Lawrence-Midland site and will provide new capacity for premier aquatics programs and competition.

Other than the aquatics programming provided at Bendale BTI, Parks, Forestry & Recreation does not provide regular recreation programming at Bendale BTI or David and Mary Thomson CI. Recreation Branch has applied for single permits to use space at David and Mary Thomson CI for delivery of March Break camps. These camps will be relocated to nearby Recreation Facilities so the overall recreation provision level will be unaffected.

Toronto School Boards Task Force

The City's interest in maintaining certain school board sites as re-usable publically accessible community resources may not be compatible with the shorter term needs of a school board to divest itself of underused school properties in order to fund its new major capital projects.

In part to address challenges such as this, the newly formed Toronto School Boards Task Force has been created to investigate and propose means to coordinate strategic direction between the City and the School Boards, particularly on land-related issues regarding school properties. The Task Force has held its first meeting and will report to Council through Executive Committee later this year.

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SIGNATURE

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ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1: Location Maps of Surplus TCDSB and TDSB sites