



Schools as Community Assets:  
Setting the Context & Looking Forward

# Overview

- Schools as Community Assets
- 3 Core Policy Barriers & Concrete Actions
  - Disposition of Schools
  - Identification of Surplus Schools
  - Access to Alternate Financing Tools
- Finding Shared Principles

# City-School Boards Advisory Committee

## **April 14, 2015: City Council directed the City-School Boards Advisory Committee to:**

- Prioritize in its 2015-2016 work plan, the development of a new multilateral, consultative relationship for the City of Toronto, the School Boards and the Province of Ontario with respect to schools lands utilization and disposition that:
  - a. takes into consideration the full value of schools as community assets, in addition to their value as educational institutions;
  - b. provides a viable framework for retaining public ownership of former school properties when there is agreement among the parties that the site should be retained;
  - c. identifies alternative funding sources beyond municipal funding to keep schools as community assets;
  - d. recommends changes to the “pupil accommodation” formula and Regulation 444/98 of the Education Act to address issues of common concern related to utilization of school space for education and community use; and
  - e. develops a new model for more coordinated capital and land-use planning; and
  
- Report back to Executive Committee on these issues by the fourth quarter of 2015 and to also consider compliance with Access for Ontario with Disability Act (AODA) requirements.

# New and Emerging Windows of Opportunity

- Political Environment
- Regulatory Environment
- Policy Environment

## Shared and Complementary Interests in the Role of Schools in Local Communities

# School Board Interests in School Properties (PAR)

- Good Distribution of Schools within Walking Distance/Transit
- Minimal Transitions for Students
- Opportunities for Service Integration
- Good Utilization and Efficient Use of Space; Minimal Use of Portables
- Responsive to Neighbourhood Boundaries
- Source of Capital for Reinvestment

# City of Toronto Interests in School Properties:

- Child Care and Early Learning
- Green Space for Parkland Deficient Areas
- Community Uses (e.g. Recreation/Sports, Health Services, Community Programs, etc.)
- Serve Growth/Intensification/Natural Population Increases

*Also: Neighbourhood Improvement Areas & Heritage Potential*

## ***Example: City-TDSB Information Sharing Workshops***

- 4 Workshops (Scarborough, North York, Etobicoke, Toronto & East York).
- Technical input into TLC property inventory and schools scheduled for PARC process, prior to initiation of public outreach per O.Reg.
- TDSB can use City information in PAR and public reports.

## **Potential Outcomes**

- Opportunity for City Divisions to identify common/aligned interests.
- May identify schools that should be retained as *Core Holdings* and options for short and/or medium term leases to various users.
- Opportunities for potential acquisition may be explored.

# Achieving Shared Interests: Policy Barriers and Actions

**Barrier 1:** How Schools are Sold out of Public Ownership

Action: Cities to Participate in Review of O. Reg 444/98  
(*Immediate*)

**Barrier 2:** How Surplus Schools are Identified

Action: Design and Adopt a *Community Asset Utilization Rate*  
(*Mid-Range*)

**Barrier 3:** How School Boards Access Alternate Financing Tools

Action: Investigate Best Practices: e.g. *EDCs*  
(*Longer-Range*)



# Barrier 1: How Surplus Schools May be Sold Out of Public Ownership (O. Reg 444/98)

- 90 Days time frame limits opportunities to review/respond/collaborate.
- Priority list of buyers promotes competition, not cooperation, between schools and other public sectors.
- Fair market value required by school boards but unaffordable for City.

## **ACTIONS:**

- Request that the Ministry of Education engage municipalities in the formal review of O. Reg 444/98. (AMO & City of Toronto).
- Request staff to report back on new processes for municipal involvement in Pupil Accommodation Reviews, in light of the Ministry of Education's 2015 revised guidelines.

## Barrier 2: How Surplus Schools Are Identified

- School Utilization Rate = incomplete picture of *how* the school property is occupied, *when*, and by *whom*.
- An objective, comparative measure of community use of schools could complement the school utilization rate, inform plans to dispose of public buildings, and contribute to a community hubs framework.

### **ACTIONS:**

- Request Ministry of Education to revise the school utilization formula to account for child care space loading in schools.
- Develop a *Community Asset Utilization Rate* to Measure the Full Community Value of a Public Property such as a School;
- Seek endorsement for a *Community Asset Utilization Rate* in the 2015 Report to the Premier on a Framework for Community Hubs.

## Barrier 3: How School Boards Access Alternate Financing

- Financing options to facilitate retention/improvement of high value public infrastructure in public ownership while also ensuring that new capital projects for school renewal in Toronto can be resourced.
- Remove Restrictions on Reg 20/98 - Access to Educational Development Charges that inequitably affect TDSB; Multipurpose Operating Agreements and Joint Venture, etc.

### **ACTION:**

- Request staff to conduct a review of promising financing tools for capital development in big city schools and to provide recommendations for relevant options for Toronto.

# Establishing Shared Principles

1. There is just “one taxpayer” who is better served when public organizations and governments align to address community needs.
2. Toronto is growing and changing and requires capital investments in new and also refurbished schools to ensure quality education for all students.
3. All schools are part of the public infrastructure and some schools are valuable community assets. Selling off valuable public infrastructure as a prerequisite for capital investments in schools is neither good nor viable public policy.
4. “Saving” every school in every community is neither good nor viable public policy. A shared, objective, comparative metric to assess the community asset value of a school is needed to guide decision-making.
5. Capital funding pressures on school boards cannot be resolved from a single source. Additional financing tools must be identified.

# Staff Contacts

## **Toronto District School Board:**

Donna Quan, Director of Education

Angelos Bacopoulos, Associate Director, Facilities and Urban Sustainability

Carla Kisko, Associate Director, Finance and Operations

Colin Grant, Special Counsel, Legal Services

## **Toronto Catholic District School Board:**

Angela Gauthier, Director of Education

Angelo Sangiorgio, Associate Director of Planning and Facilities

## **Conseil scolaire de district catholique centre-sud:**

Réjean Sirois, Director of Education

## **Conseil scolaire Viamonde:**

Gyslaine Hunter-Perreault, Directrice de l'éducation

Miguel Ladouceur, Directeur Du Secteur Des Immobilisations, De L'Entretien Et De La Planification

## **City of Toronto**

### **Social Development, Finance & Administration:**

Chris Brillinger, Executive Director

Kelly Murphy, Policy Development Officer

### **City Planning:**

Jennifer Keesmaat, Chief Planner & Executive Director

Kerri Voumvakis, Director, Strategic Initiatives, Policy & Analysis

Ann-Marie Nasr, Manager Strategic Initiatives

### **Children's Services:**

Elaine Baxter-Trahaire, General Manager

Karen Gray, Director, Children's Services

### **Parks, Forestry and Recreation:**

Janie Romoff, General Manager

Howie Dayton, Director, Community Recreation

### **City Manager's Office:**

Gwen McIntosh, Director, Executive Management