

Consideration of McNicoll Public School in the Review of 23 TDSB Properties as Community Assets

Date:	July 5, 2016
To:	City Council
From:	Executive Director, Social Development, Finance and Administration
Wards:	All
Reference Number:	AFS# 23379

SUMMARY

This report corrects an omission related to McNicoll Public School in the Staff Report for Action entitled, "EX 16.21 Schools as Community Assets: Review and Prioritization of 23 TDSB Properties".

This report explains that the March 2016 City Council directions related to McNicoll Public School have been addressed in EX 16.21.

McNicoll Public School was not assessed to be a priority community asset for the City of Toronto to develop; however the site is a hub for provincially-funded mental health services for children and families. The City encourages the Province of Ontario to pursue its expressed interest in the facility to ensure ongoing service provision. The City also seeks to work with the Province to ensure public access to the green space behind the building and ongoing delivery of child care services onsite.

RECOMMENDATIONS

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

1. City Council receive this report for information.

Financial Impact

There is no financial impact associated with the recommendation in this report. The Deputy City Manager & Chief Financial Officer has reviewed this report and agrees with the financial impact information.

DECISION HISTORY

On March 31, 2016, City Council approved a Member's Motion introduced by Councillor Shiner and seconded by Councillor Filion, which directed the City Manager to notify the Toronto District School Board and the Toronto Lands Corporation of the City's interest in the potential surplus property at 155 McNicoll Avenue for use as a community hub, and to prepare a community hub proposal for the McNicoll Avenue site for the May 24 2016 Executive Committee Meeting.

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2016.MM17.26>

At the same meeting, City Council directed staff to conduct an assessment of municipal interests in TDSB sites identified for potential disposition between 2016 and 2019 and to report back to Executive Committee by June 2016. Council also urged the Province of Ontario to coordinate actively across ministries, school boards, and other public sector bodies to retain surplus TDSB properties that represent valuable public infrastructure, particularly properties where provincially-funded services, including mental health services, child and youth services, and community and social services are already being delivered. City Council also urged the Province of Ontario to apply appropriate financing tools to ensure that seller school boards are made whole through the disposition of school properties to public sector entities.

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2016.EX13.20>

On April 1, 2015, City Council adopted EX4.4, Schools as Community Assets, which defined the City's four interests in school properties as sites for child care and early learning; green space; community programming; and responding to future growth.

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2015.EX4.4>

ISSUE BACKGROUND

In early March 2016, the TDSB initiated stakeholder consultations related to school properties, including McNicoll, that were scheduled for surplus declaration by the Board on June 22, 2016. These properties are part of a longer list of 23 schools that the TDSB plans to consider for disposition over the next two years.

Later in March, City Council directed staff to prioritize the City's interests in the full list of TDSB properties under review, so that City can plan and respond thoughtfully rather than reactively when school properties are circulated for sale (EX13.20). At the same meeting, Council adopted a Member's Motion (2016 MM 17.26) directing

staff to prepare a community hub plan for the McNicoll school site and to notify the Board of a City interest in a community hub on the McNicoll site.

In response to all of these directions, staff conducted a cross-divisional analysis of the community asset attributes of 23 school properties, including McNicoll, using a detailed 25-item Community Asset Evaluation Framework. Recommendations resulting from this work were approved by Executive Committee in June 2016 (EX 16.21).

An omission in EX 16.21 is reference to MM 17.26 and an explanation of staff actions related to McNicoll School in fulfillment of this Council direction.

COMMENTS:

As part of the March 2016 TDSB stakeholder consultation, the Deputy City Manager of Cluster A submitted early comments on the McNicoll Public School site and several other sites.

During the preparation of EX 16.21, staff evaluated the characteristics of each school property, including McNicoll. Staff communicated closely with TDSB about the sites and also met with Toronto Catholic School Board and with provincial counterparts at the Ministry of Education, Ministry of Children and Youth Services, Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing and the Community Hubs Secretariat, to discuss next steps for the various properties. During these meetings, particular attention was paid to the McNicoll and Silver Creek sites.

The McNicoll property, along with Silver Creek, has been recognized by the Province, the school boards and the City as an important hub for provincially-funded mental health services for children and families and for licensed child care. On March 7, 2016, the Ministry of Children and Youth Services (MCYS) submitted a letter to TDSB expressing early interest in the McNicoll and Silver Creek properties. On June 3, 2016, MCYS confirmed with City staff that it is working actively to define its interest and prepare a business case in relation to these properties. Both of these properties are occupied by MCYS-funded agencies that have made substantial capital investments in indoor and outdoor facilities to deliver children's mental health and developmental services to families from across the city. The sites are also home to licensed child care operators that provide specialized child care in coordination with MCYS-funded programming.

The Staff Report EX 16.21 concludes that, although McNicoll is not a priority community hub site for the City of Toronto to develop, it is an important site for provincial interests. The report recommends that City Council should encourage the Government of Ontario to pursue its expressed interest in the site for the delivery of children's mental health and developmental services.

Executive Committee has adopted this recommendation related to McNicoll and an amendment recommending that the City Manager work with the Ontario Government to develop options to maintain public access to the green space behind the school building and to ensure that the childcare services currently offered in the building are able to continue on the site.

On June 22, 2016, in light of provincial expression of interest in McNicoll and Silver Creek schools, the TDSB Board decided not to transfer them to the Toronto Lands Corporation for sale, but to continue discussions with the Province to keep current services operating in the sites. The Board's decision to work with the Province to retain McNicoll for children's services aligns with the findings of the Staff Report EX 16.21 and will advance the goal of an ongoing community service hub at this site.

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