

## Report to Corporate Services Committee

**To:** Chair and Members  
Corporate Services Committee

**From:** Anna Lisa Barbon, Deputy City Manager, Finance Supports

**Subject:** Declare Surplus - City Owned Property  
Public Walkway South of 10 Rossmore Court

**Date:** October 23, 2023

## Recommendation

That, on the recommendation of the Deputy City Manager, Finance Supports, on the advice of the Director, Realty Services, with respect to City owned property, the following actions be taken:

- a) the subject property being a public walkway south of 10 Rossmore Court, legally described as PIN 08461-0118, **BE DECLARED SURPLUS**; and
- b) the subject property (“Surplus Lands”) **BE TRANSFERRED** to the abutting property owner, in accordance with the City’s Sale and Other Disposition of Land Policy.

## Executive Summary

This report recommends that the City owned public walkway located at the south of 10 Rossmore Court be declared surplus and disposed of in accordance with the City’s Sale and Other Disposition of Land Policy.

The walkway in question is elevated approximately 5 meters above adjacent significant woodland, notably Highland Woods. Historically, the City had a raised boardwalk in place that connected to a hike only trail system. Following a public engagement process in 2021, the boardwalk was removed due to a combination of environmental and technical considerations, regulatory constraints, and funding limitations. The continued existence of the subject walkway has presented several operational challenges notably, it has become a hotspot for illegal dumping, and it also provides access to protected wetlands, which raises environmental concerns.

## Linkage to the Corporate Strategic Plan

Municipal Council’s 2023-2027 Strategic Plan identifies “Well-Run City” and “Wellbeing and Safety” as strategic areas of focus.

Well-Run City: The surplus declaration reflects the City’s efficient and responsible management of its assets. The decision to declare surplus land indicates a proactive approach to resource optimization, demonstrating the City’s commitment to being a well-run and fiscally responsible municipality.

Climate Action and Sustainable Growth: The Strategic Plan emphasizes the importance of well-planned, sustainable community growth while safeguarding London’s natural environment. By recommending the declaration of surplus for the City-owned public walkway, we are directly addressing the plan’s core strategies.

By addressing the operational challenges posed by the walkway, including access to protected wetlands and illegal dumping, we are taking steps to protect our vital wetlands, in line with the Strategic Plan’s objectives.

Wellbeing and Safety: This surplus declaration report underscores the City's commitment to enhancing the safety and quality of life for all Londoners. The decision to declare as surplus is a strategic move that resonates with the broader objectives outlined in the Strategic Plan.

The Strategic Plan places "Wellbeing and Safety" at the forefront of its strategic areas of focus. It acknowledges that community safety is a paramount concern for Londoners, directly impacting their overall quality of life. This surplus declaration report echoes this sentiment by addressing the safety concerns associated with the continued existence of the elevated walkway in Highland Woods.

The walkway's current state does not support any recreational benefits and has posed operational challenges, including its unfortunate transformation into a hotspot for illegal dumping. Such activities negatively impact protected woodland and wetland environments in Highland Woods and the overall quality of life for residents in the vicinity.

The mandate to discontinue use of the walkway block was provided to Realty Services by the Environment and Infrastructure service area.

The land will be disposed of in accordance with the City's Sale and Other Disposition of Land Policy.

## **Analysis**

### **1.0 Background Information**

#### **1.1 Previous Reports Related to this Matter**

None

#### **1.2 Summary**

The subject property is a public walkway located south of 10 Rossmore Court, legally described as PIN 08461-0118, in the City of London, to be described in a reference plan to be deposited. The subject property has rectangular-like shape, total of approximately 2,421.88 square feet in size. The land is currently zoned as R1-13.

The abutting owner was contacted by Realty Services to determine if there was an interest in purchasing and closing off the public walkway which would include removing the fences and concrete.

The land will be transferred to the abutting owner at fair market value in accordance with the City's Sale of Other Disposition of Land Policy.

### **2.0 Discussion**

The primary driver for this recommendation is the pressing need to rectify the operational challenges and environmental concerns associated with the continued existence of the subject land. To address this issue, it is imperative that we take proactive steps through the disposal of this land. This strategic action not only resolves the current problems but also aligns with responsible resource management and policy compliance, demonstrating our commitment to enhancing public safety and environmental preservation.

The City Sale and Other Disposition of Land policy under Section 4 Methods of Sale allows for the disposition of lands to abutting property owners through direct negotiation.

There are multiple condominium owners to the north of the pathway that would create a high degree of complexity in disposing of the pathway. The abutting owner to the south was solicited for interest in the property. The abutting owner expressed an interest in acquiring the property and subject to this report a negotiated outcome will follow.

The disposition of this municipal walkway block is not expected to impact current or future design and public use of Highland Woods.

### **3.0 Benefits to the City**

**Ecological Preservation:** By declaring the property surplus, the City can better protect the adjacent significant woodland and wetland environment, which should be the focal point of this decision. This ecological protection is of utmost importance and aligns with the City's commitment to environmental conservation and sustainability.

While there may be a potential for some financial gain through the sale of the land, it's important to emphasize that this gain is minimal and not the primary motivation behind this decision. The revenue generated from the potential sale can be seen as a secondary benefit, albeit a minor one.

Additionally, it's worth noting that retaining the land without the need for costly maintenance and improvements is a strategic approach. This approach ensures the efficient allocation of resources while still achieving our primary goal of ecological preservation. This decision reflects the City's commitment to prudent fiscal management and responsible use of taxpayer funds while prioritizing environmental stewardship.

### **4.0 Financial Impact**

There are no significant cost implications to the City in declaring this property surplus and transferring ownership to the abutting owner, in accordance with the City's Sale and Other Disposition of Land Policy. A sale of the subject property indeed has the potential to generate revenue for the City.

It's important to note that while revenue generation is a possibility, there may be associated remediation costs related to the removal of site improvements. However, the goal is to have all these costs reimbursed by the proponent. Any necessary expenses will be deducted from the transaction amount, ensuring that the City does not bear the financial burden of remediation.

This approach demonstrates our commitment to responsible financial management and ensures that the City's fiscal position remains stable throughout the transaction.

## **Conclusion**

The benefits in declaring the subject land surplus include enhanced protection of significant woodland and wetland environments within Highland Woods and releasing the City from liability and maintenance responsibilities.

It is therefore recommended that the subject property be declared surplus, allowing the City to efficiently allocate resources, prioritize essential projects, and streamline its operations while safeguarding its financial interests. This decision exemplifies the City's commitment to responsible resource management and the well-being of its community.

A Location Map of the subject property is attached as Appendix A.

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**Submitted by:** Bill Warner, Director, Realty Services

**Recommended by:** Anna Lisa Barbon, Deputy City Manager, Finance Supports

cc: Gary Irwin, Division Manager and Chief Surveyor, Geomatics  
Sachit Tatavarti, Solicitor  
Paul Yeoman, Director, Parks & Forestry  
Jeff Bruin, Manager, Parks Design and Construction, Environment and Infrastructure

October 12, 2023

**Appendix A - Location Map – Area to be Declared Surplus**

