

## Report to Planning and Environment Committee

**To:** Chair and Members  
Planning & Environment Committee

**From:** John M. Fleming  
Managing Director, Planning and City Planner

**Subject:** The Corporation of the City of London  
Neighbourhood School Strategy - Evaluation and Acquisition  
of Surplus School Sites

**Meeting on:** April 3, 2018

## Recommendation

That, on the recommendation of the Managing Director, Planning and City Planner, the following actions be taken regarding the evaluation and acquisition of school sites identified as surplus to School Boards' needs:

- (a) That the following report **BE RECEIVED** for information;
- (b) That the report **BE CIRCULATED** to the Thames Valley District School Board, the London District Catholic School Board, the Urban League and the Child and Youth Network for their review and comment, prior to the final report being brought before a future meeting of Planning and Environment Committee; and;
- (c) The attached draft Surplus School Sites Evaluation and Acquisition Policy **BE CONSIDERED** at a future meeting of the Planning and Environment Committee following the public consultation.

## Executive Summary

- School Boards undertake "Pupil Accommodation Review" (PAR) processes to evaluate schools for consolidations, closures and/or new school development as a means of ensuring that the School Boards' resources are managed effectively and that students are provided appropriate and sustainable accommodations.
- In some instances, the results of a PAR may identify a school for closure. The School Boards' surplus school site disposition processes provide the City with an opportunity to acquire an identified surplus school site.
- The purpose of this report is to provide a strategy for the evaluation of school sites that have been declared surplus through the School Boards' PAR process to determine if there is a municipal purpose for the lands.
- There are three municipal purposes for which the City would consider acquiring an identified surplus school site:
  - Affordable housing
  - Parkland
  - Community Facility
- If no municipal purpose for the site is identified, the site will not be acquired.
- Consistent with City policies, all surplus public lands are to be evaluated for affordable housing opportunities before the consideration of other public uses.
- In all evaluations, the City shall consider the adaptive re-use potential of the existing school building in its evaluation of the surplus school site.
- Heritage considerations will be part of the Staff evaluation for acquisition of sites. School buildings that have been evaluated to be significant heritage resources will be retained. However, if the site is not required for municipal purposes, the site will not be acquired.
- Where the site is required for municipal purposes and the surplus school building has been identified as a significant heritage resource, the site evaluation shall include the costs of the restoration and rehabilitation of the heritage structure.
- If the site evaluation identifies that the entire site is required for municipal

purposes, and the surplus school building is not a heritage structure or able to be re-purposed for an identified municipal purpose, the structures on the site will be removed.

- Where a City need for the land is identified, partners for the intended future development may be sought. Any potential partnerships will be supplementary and complementary to the identified City purpose for the use of the lands. The City will not acquire surplus school sites to meet the needs of any potential partner if there is no identified municipal need for the lands.

### **Council Strategic Plan**

Council has identified in the 2015-2019 Strategic Plan that the Strategic Focus of creating and maintaining “Vibrant, Connected, and Engaged Neighbourhoods” requires the City to “*work with our partners in Education to help keep neighbourhood schools open and use former school sites efficiently*” (Strategy 1.c).

## **1.0 Relevant Background**

Schools play an important role creating complete communities and neighbourhoods. Demographic changes, the age and condition of buildings, the ability of older buildings to accommodate changing educational instruction needs, and other operational and programming requirements may result in a school board undertaking a Pupil Accommodation Review (PAR) process. The results of this review may include the identification of school sites to be closed and ultimately disposed of.

The City has a role in the PAR process, but the purpose of this report is to identify the City’s role and process for evaluation of school sites that have been identified as surplus to a School Boards’ needs, not to describe the City’s role in the PAR process.

This evaluation strategy establishes a more proactive process to respond to sites that have been identified as potentially surplus to School Boards’ needs. By evaluating all of the sites that are under consideration at the outset of the PAR process, rather than waiting to evaluate any final site identified for closure, the City will be able to identify potential budget impacts of any acquisition, consider partnership opportunities for any sites that are identified for potential acquisition to meet an identified municipal need, and advise the School Boards within the prescribed timeframe at the end of the PAR process if there is a municipal interest in acquiring the site.

The City’s current practice is to evaluate the final site that is identified through the PAR process. This requires the City to undertake this evaluation within the now 180 day (formerly 90 day) period established in the legislation once a school has been declared surplus. By evaluating all of the sites that have been identified for consideration as part of a PAR process at the outset of the process, the City will have sufficient time to more fully evaluate all sites for municipal purposes. Previous PAR processes have taken up to two years to complete.

Closing schools results in the loss of these important community assets. Once the property is no longer used for school purposes, it no longer fulfills its former role within the community. Instead, the closed school site would provide an opportunity for the City to acquire the lands for other uses. The re-use of closed school lands may be as infill for new development, or for use as one of several municipal purposes which warrant City acquisition and redevelopment of the property.

Policy 440\_ of the London Plan recognizes this opportunity:

440\_ For a variety of reasons, non-municipal public facilities may close from time to time, leaving important community sites for redevelopment. The City will consider acquiring these sites, where there is an identified public benefit in doing so.

There are three possible municipal needs that could be addressed through the acquisition of an identified surplus school site:

- As a site for affordable housing

- As parkland
- As a Community Facility

Each of these possible uses could result in the school site maintaining its role as an important community asset and as an element of a complete community.

The City has an “affordable housing first” policy for surplus public lands. Policies 502 and 523 of the London Plan state:

502\_ The City will seek out opportunities to acquire surplus lands from school boards, the provincial and federal government, and other institutional entities and stakeholders for housing purposes.

523\_ Subject to the City Structure Plan and Urban Place Type policies of this Plan, surplus public lands will be evaluated for their suitability for the development of affordable housing prior to their consideration for any other uses.

As such, affordable housing opportunities for surplus school sites will be given priority over other potential municipal uses.

## **2.0 Closed School Site Evaluations for Potential City Acquisition**

### **Site Evaluations by Municipal Team**

An evaluation team consisting of various departmental and agency representatives, including but not limited to: Planning; Parks Planning, Parks and Recreation; Neighbourhood, Children and Fire Services; Housing Services; Realty Services; Facilities; Finance; and the Housing Development Corporation will be struck to evaluate any schools sites identified as surplus and available for redevelopment. This team will also consult with additional departments and agencies as needed.

### **Timing of City’s Site Evaluations: As Soon As Sites Identified by the School Board for Consideration of a Pupil Accommodation Review**

As part of the recent changes to School Boards’ community planning and partnerships initiative, the City now meets with the Boards annually to evaluate projected student populations, demographics, and planned land uses within different geographic areas. As part of these yearly planning meetings, there is an initial identification of which schools may be considered in an upcoming Pupil Accommodation Review process.

The Pupil Accommodation Review process is a multi-step process that would allow the City to initiate its evaluation of potential surplus school sites at the initiation of this PAR process. The PAR process includes: (1) the initial school board recommendation at the outset of a PAR that identifies the schools under consideration, (2) the final recommendation by the school board following the public process that may include a recommendation for a school closure, and (3) the actual date of closing of the school or schools (e.g. at the end of June at the end of a school year). Only after the PAR is completed, the final accommodation review recommendations are approved, and a school has closed at the end of the school year will the regulations for a property sale take effect. It should also be noted that the Board must declare a school site surplus before the final stage of the PAR process begins, which could mean that the actual timing of a site’s availability would not be known until after a School Board has accepted any recommendation that would identify a school facility to be declared surplus.

Recent amendments to the Provincial regulations governing the sale of school board property (O. Reg. 444/98) have added some additional flexibility to the PAR timelines. This is an extended period to “close the deal” on a land sale and allow for an additional 90 days to finalize terms of a land sale agreement. The recent amendments have extended the circulation period within which the City may identify interest and make an offer of purchase on a surplus school site. The circulation period has been extended from 90 days to 180 days; however, this deadline is only extended if the City has identified an interest within the first 90 days (i.e. the current circulation period) and must submit its bid to purchase within the new, additional 90 day period.

To allow the City the maximum amount of time to evaluate sites for potential acquisition, the City’s site evaluation will commence with initial identification of the schools to be

considered through the PAR. The City evaluation process would then occur in parallel to the School Board’s Pupil Accommodation Review process and the City will have time to address key evaluation considerations, potential site constraints, and budget matters in preparation for the final step, which is the 180 day land sale process provided under the process. Opportunities for public participation related to site re-use may also be explored through the parallel City process. Appendix ‘B’ illustrates a generalized chart of such evaluation process timelines.

**Key Considerations for Staff Evaluations**

As identified in the table below, the key factors and considerations for the team evaluation will include: identified needs for municipal public uses, constraints to City acquisition or public re-development, and financial planning and budget consideration.

Key Factors for City Decision	Considerations	
Municipal Need	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Affordable Housing</li> <li>• Community Facility</li> <li>• Parks</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Land</li> <li>• Building(s)</li> <li>• Entire Site</li> <li>• Portion of the site</li> </ul>
Constraints to Re-use or Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Heritage and/or Archaeology</li> <li>• Use or Intensity (Official Plan policy/planning context; Zoning)</li> <li>• Physical attributes, access, location, and/or servicing</li> </ul>	
Financial Planning and Budgeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Costs (archaeology; demolitions; designated substance abatement; security, utilities, and maintenance holding costs)</li> <li>• Financial planning considerations (timing, availability of funding, partnership opportunities)</li> <li>• Land value (paying fair market value)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sources of financing:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Approved City capital budgets;</li> <li>○ Reserve funds;</li> <li>○ Combination of other sources (e.g. revenues from partners);</li> <li>○ HDC budget for affordable housing</li> <li>○ Opportunities to recoup costs through the sale of a portion of the site (portion not required to meet identified municipal need)</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

**3.0 Land Need Evaluation**

**Municipal Land Needs**

There are three municipal purposes that the City would consider for the acquisition of an identified surplus school site:

- (1) Affordable housing;
- (2) Community facility site; and/or
- (3) Public parkland.

The heritage value of the identified school buildings will be considered as part of the site evaluation. Where a significant heritage asset has been identified and recommended for retention, the identified surplus school site would be acquired by the City with the intention of retaining the former school buildings, and the costs related to the retention and rehabilitation will be included in the site evaluation. It is anticipated that this will be an exceptional circumstance, as the value of most surplus school sites for municipal purposes would be based on the development of a vacant, cleared site.

If the result of the site evaluation has determined that the adaptive re-use of the building for the identified municipal purpose is appropriate, the building will be retained, and the

costs related to the retention and rehabilitation will be included in the site evaluation.

As part of the evaluation of any surplus school site for municipal uses, the site evaluation will include an assessment of whether the entire closed school property is required, or only a portion of the property is required to meet the identified municipal needs. If the entire property is required for any Affordable Housing, Community Facilities, or Parkland uses, then a budget and source of funding will be required to acquire the entire site.

If only a portion of the property is required to satisfy municipal needs, it is likely that a budget will still be required to acquire the entire site. It is unlikely that a School Board would consider selling only a portion of a site to the City. Evaluations will consider possible cost recovery options for the portion of lands not needed. This process was recently used in the acquisition of the former Sherwood Forest Public School site. The site evaluation determined that only a portion of the site was required for municipal purposes (in this instance, a park site), and the remainder was surplus to City needs. As part of the site acquisition process, the City, in consultation with the neighbourhood, developed a plan for the remainder of the site. The portion surplus to the City's needs was made available through a Tender process, and the lands have subsequently been sold for residential development.

It is recommended that only in instances where the evaluation has determined there is a City need for the surplus school buildings or lands should the City explore opportunities for municipal partnerships with private organizations or not-for-profits. To mitigate potential risks to the City associated with the organizational and/or financial ability and capability of any potential partner, the City must have an identified need for municipal acquisition of lands or buildings that is not reliant on the partnership with community groups or other private or not-for profit organizations.

Partnerships may be considered when constructing new facilities, such as affordable housing and community facilities, and will be based upon the City's existing processes to evaluate potential partners. Partnerships may also be considered in instances where the City would only require a portion of the school site, and the partner would be able develop the remainder of the site.

### **Review as Potential Affordable Housing Site**

The March 2016 Report entitled *London For All: A Roadmap to End Poverty* identifies the need for continued implementation of London's Homeless Prevention and Housing Plan, which includes increasing the stock of affordable housing and acquiring appropriate surplus buildings and properties from other levels of government. The Homeless Prevention and Housing Plan identifies that the surplus buildings and properties are, where possible, to be purchased for re-use as affordable housing.

Similarly, providing affordable and social housing opportunities supports the federal National Housing Strategy and implements the Province's Fair Housing Plan, which recognizes surplus lands as an opportunity to increase the supply of affordable housing.

Providing accessible and affordable housing options for all Londoners is an important element of building a prosperous city. The policies of the London Plan include affordable housing targets (policies 517\_ through 521\_). The policies of the Plan further state that the City will prepare housing monitoring reports that will, amongst other matters, evaluate the supply of, and assess the demand for, affordable housing. Appropriately located surplus school sites provide an opportunity to implement the affordable housing policies of the London Plan.

In accordance with the policies of the London Plan, surplus school sites are evaluated for their potential as affordable housing sites before consideration is given to any other land use, and access to appropriately sited land across the city is required in order to address the demand for affordable housing.

In evaluating the appropriateness of a surplus school site for affordable housing purposes, consideration will be given to the following:

- The site is within the urban growth boundary;
- Any buildings on the site will be evaluated to determine if they are capable of being adaptively re-use/re-purposed for housing;

- The use of the site for affordable housing purposes would be consistent with the City Structure and Urban Place Type policies of the London Plan;
- The site is identified as being within an area where there is a demonstrated need for affordable housing;
- The site would support and provide for the regeneration opportunities;
- The site is not constrained by built features (including gas lines, pipelines, utility corridors etc.) or significant environmental features or functions;
- The site is in proximity to a range of community amenities supportive of affordable housing including, but not necessarily limited to:
  - Transit;
  - Parks and/or open space;
  - Grocery stores and commercial centres;
  - Low cost public facilities such as libraries and community recreation centres;
  - Service agencies and/or supportive programming;
  - Day care centres; and,
  - Hospital or medical/dental services.

As noted above, sites will be evaluated for need as Affordable Housing sites before other public land uses are evaluated. Unless identified as a heritage resource worthy of retention, the adaptive re-use of existing buildings for affordable housing is unlikely. An important criterion in the Board's evaluation of its built assets as part of the PAR process considers the quality, condition and age of the structure. It is not likely that a purpose-designed building that is determined to not be worthy of retention because of its age or condition would be worthy for retention for another purpose.

In those instances where the building is worthy of retention due to its heritage value or its ability to be re-used for affordable housing, the evaluation will need to consider the costs of both the site acquisition and the additional costs associated with the retention of the building in the site evaluation.

More intensive land uses, including affordable housing, which could be in more intensive residential forms than the surrounding neighbourhood may require Special Policy consideration. In the London Plan, the intensity of use is based on the Place Type and the street classification. Most surplus school sites are located in the interior of neighbourhoods and the former school sites may be located on lower-order streets that permit limited intensity for redevelopment.

If a closed school site's location, size, configuration or other site-specific factors limit its potential as a future affordable housing development opportunity, then the site will next be evaluated for its potential as both a Community Facility and a Parkland site.

### **Community Facility Site Evaluation**

The site evaluation for a Community Facility use will be based upon the principles and objectives of the *Parks and Recreation Strategic Master Plan*. The objective is to create a balanced distribution of recreational opportunities across the City, with a network of neighbourhood and city-wide facility types.

Targets for each type of facility exist as general guidelines to determine needs, with needs based upon area populations and participation rates in community centre programs. Existing and future needs are established through public input, demographics and participation trends, as well as consideration of projects currently being undertaken by the City.

Once the broader need for a facility has been identified in a particular area of the city, Staff will assess specific sites based on the following criteria:

- **Real estate criteria:** takes into consideration the physical size of the site, whether currently available for sale, the existence of constraints to development, and potential for municipal ownership of land;
- **Service delivery components:** considers whether creation of new community facility sites will encroach on the areas served by existing facilities; and also

considers the population living in proximity to the potential site that is currently under-served by community facilities (i.e. the area or population with a gap in service); and,

- **Accessibility component:** which takes into consideration how accessible the new site would be, including access to existing bus/bike routes, number of students, older adults and households within a 15 minute walk, and the city's total population living in proximity to the site.

Evaluation criteria for community facilities is currently under review as part of the update to the Parks and Recreation Strategic Master Plan (anticipated in 2018). Any changes to the evaluation criteria or space criteria for community facilities through the Master Plan Update would be reflected when applied to the evaluation of closed school sites.

All Community Facility projects will be identified in the Master Plan, and included in the 10-year capital plan. Any opportunities for the planned City expenditures to be developed on identified surplus school sites will require that the site match the planned locations and need as identified in the Master Plan.

It is important to note that the City's standards do not count any school site amenities towards meeting the City targets. In other words, amenities on school board properties, like play structures, sports fields or tennis/basketball courts, etc., are not counted as part of the City's inventory, so the loss of these facilities on school sites identified for closure would not need to be replaced to maintain the City's service standard. In those areas where there is an identified parkland deficit, the use of the surplus school site will be considered and evaluated based on the requirements identified under Parkland Site Evaluation.

### **Parkland Site Evaluation**

Identified surplus school sites would be evaluated for possible parkland use based on the following requirements:

- City-wide parks to take advantage of prominent land forms and natural environmental features, such as riverbanks, ravines, or wetlands. Topographic variation and natural environment features may be developed for sports activities or special events;
- Urban and neighbourhood parks that are accessible to the community within a walkable service radius of 800 metres (10 minute walk), and not crossing major streets;
- Priorities for parkland acquisition will include consideration of:
  - i) existing and forecasted population densities;
  - ii) existing facilities and their accessibility to the neighbourhood residents;
  - iii) the availability of funds for acquisition;
  - iv) the suitability of lands available for sale; and,
  - v) acquisitions which will serve to create a more continuous or linked park system.

Additional considerations for parkland use include:

- Other opportunities for parkland acquisition. In the development or redevelopment of land, the City may acquire a 5% dedication of land under consideration for development for parkland purposes. For small developments, this would not provide a sufficient land base to meet parkland needs. In older parts of the City, the required dedication is not always achieved. As an alternative, the *Planning Act* provides for a dedication of 1 hectare of park space per 300 dwelling units (or 500 units for cash-in-lieu).
- Other opportunities to meet neighbourhood parkland needs on other lands that are open and accessible to the public, such as other school sites within the neighbourhood.
- The location of other nearby amenities and the convenience of access to park space. The service standard objective is for neighbourhood park space and play equipment to be located within an approximately 800 metre radius of every home

in a residential neighbourhood.

If the neighbourhood is deficient in parkland and the school functions as the primary park within that immediate neighbourhood, then retention of the school site as municipal parkland will be given high priority.

To address park needs in areas planned for further intensification and regeneration, the City is currently developing a 'Parks Acquisition and Renewal Strategy'. The Parks Acquisition and Renewal Strategy will assess parks needs in areas of intensification and provide strategies for land acquisition within built-up areas as well as a strategy for intensified use of existing parks. The current acquisition targets may be modified through the preparation of this acquisition and renewal strategy. Parks funding mechanisms are also being addressed through the strategy. A consultant is starting work on this strategy and a draft report will be prepared in early 2018 for consideration as part of the Development Charges Background Study.

#### **4.0 Financial Considerations**

For sites that have been evaluated and a potential municipal use has been identified, a financial analysis of the potential site acquisition will be required. This analysis may be taken in parallel with the evaluation of the sites identified for consideration through the PAR process.

Costs and budget implications to be evaluated include:

- The cost to repurpose a school property, including the cost of demolitions and site clearance and/or designated substance abatement and building stabilization for the refurbishment of any structures to be retained;
- Costs associated with sub-surface site assessment, including archaeological or brownfield matters; and,
- Determination of and the financial implications associated with paying Fair Market Value (FMV) for the school property.

These three factors would be considered as part of the determination of what the City would pay to acquire the site.

Additional factors to be considered include:

- Evaluation of the City's existing capital plan to determine if funding for an approved capital project can be redirected to purchase a school property that would replace that capital project or represents a higher priority than the existing approved capital project;
- Ongoing operating budget impacts associated with timing of repurposing the site, including maintenance, security and other associated holding costs of a property;
- For sites where it is recommended that all or a portion of the buildings be retained for future municipal use, the additional capital costs associated with retaining the structure will need to be determined; and
- Evaluation of the cost of land purchase now versus future land purchase to provide the same services. In other words, the opportunity cost of not acquiring land and the Net Present Value (NPV)/financial costs of acquiring (or assembling) the same or similar land assets later.

Sources of Funding may include:

- Approved City of London capital budgets;
- Reserve funds;
- Any other potential sources including, for example, revenues from sub-leases to partners, noting that evaluations must stand on their own without partners (i.e. cannot assume that partners will be available); and,
- For affordable housing projects, the HDC's budget for affordable housing development projects, noting that this is not a City budget or allocation, and that the HDC would work with the City on sources of funding for eligible affordable housing projects.

If the evaluation determines that only a portion of the site is needed, then the financial evaluation would need to consider if the entire site should be acquired. It is not likely that the School Board declaring the lands surplus would consider the sale of only a portion of the lands.

Three options include:

- a) Acquire the entire site for the identified municipal use, even if the site has more land than is required for the identified municipal use;
- b) Acquire the entire site for a municipal use with another partner to use the portion of the site not required for municipal uses; or,
- c) Acquire the entire site, and re-sell the portion of land not required for municipal purposes.

Option (a) could have a significant budget impact, depending on how much more land would be acquired than is needed for the identified municipal purpose, and the City would need to consider that it would not recoup this extra cost.

Option (b) would require that the City have a partner with the financial ability to pay for the portion of the lands not required by the City.

Option (c) was recently used in the acquisition of the Sherwood Forest Public School site. This recent acquisition resulted in:

- Retained parkland in area – addressed difficult accommodation review result for community
- Intensification demonstration project – showing how community could get behind quality intensification within very low density area; opportunity for aging in place
- High quality development design entrenched in the agreement – ensuring good fit
- Good financial result – Recouping all of the original costs and significantly more that can be contributed to the Land Acquisition Reserve Fund for other projects.

The City may need to consider establishing a reserve fund in the future to acquire sites that are larger than what is required for the identified municipal use. This would be used as an additional source of financing for a site for which a budget may exist to fund the portion of the site acquisition required for the municipal use, but where there is no budget to acquire the additional lands associated with the surplus site.

## **5.0 No Municipal Acquisition Required**

If the closed school site is not required for a municipal need, external community organizations would be able to pursue their own land acquisition negotiations directly with the School Boards. Through its relationships with the School Boards and community, the City could assist with consultations between the groups, but the City would not be a party to the land acquisition.

## **6.0 Conclusion**

Closed school sites provide unique opportunities for the City to address deficiencies or needs for uses that are important for neighbourhoods and communities, such as affordable housing, parkland, and community facilities. Closed school sites also provide opportunities for non-municipal development. In most instances, this would be new residential development within established neighbourhoods.

Once a school board determines that a school site is surplus to the Board's needs, the site no longer serves its role as a community asset based on its school function. In most instances, the value of the school site to the City is its value as a land asset that can be used for municipal purposes. Where there is an opportunity for the adaptive re-use of a school building, the City may retain all or a portion of the structure.

The re-use or redevelopment of any site identified to be acquired for municipal purposes would be subject to the Official Plan policies and Zoning on the site. If required, the City would consider the change from the former Institutional land use as a school to other land

uses using policies of the Official Plan (the *London Plan*), Zoning By-law and Site Plan. Any such changes to land use on closed school sites would require public consultations in accordance with the *Planning Act* and City's policies and practices.

**Acknowledgements:**

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<b>Prepared by:</b>	<b>Travis Macbeth, MCIP, RPP Planner II, Long Range Planning and Research</b>
<b>Submitted by:</b>	<b>Gregg Barrett, AICP Manager, Long Range Planning and Research</b>
<b>Recommended by:</b>	<b>John M. Fleming, MCIP, RPP Managing Director, Planning and City Planner</b>

March 26, 2018

TM/GB/tm

## Appendix A

### Surplus School Site Acquisition and Evaluation Policy (Draft)

#### Policy Statement

To establish a proactive approach to the evaluation of sites identified by School Boards as surplus to school needs. Surplus school sites will be evaluated for municipal acquisition if they meet an identified municipal need.

#### Municipal Needs

Surplus school sites will be evaluated for acquisition to meet an identified municipal need:

- As a site for an affordable housing project. This will be the first need evaluated.
- As a site for a community centre
- As a site to address an identified parkland deficiency

#### Timing of the Evaluation

All sites within the City that have been identified by a School Board to be considered as part of a Board-approved Pupil Accommodation Review (PAR) process will be evaluated. This municipal evaluation shall be undertaken in parallel with the School Board's process. The City's evaluation of all of the identified sites identified in the PAR shall be completed before the School Board completes the PAR process and identifies any site to be declared surplus through the process.

If a site meets the evaluation criteria, a source of financing will be identified to acquire the site so that funds will be available to acquire the site within 180 days after the School Board has declared a site surplus.

If a site is declared surplus by a School Board at the end of the PAR process, the City may consider the acquisition of the site if it has been evaluated as meeting an identified municipal purpose. If the site that is declared to be surplus does not meet an identified municipal need, it will not be recommended for acquisition by the City.

#### Site Evaluation Team

Surplus school sites will be evaluated by a Staff Team representing the following Service Areas

- Planning Services/Parks Planning
- Parks and Recreation
- Neighbourhood, Children and Fire Services
- Housing Services
- Finance
- Realty Services
- Housing Development Corporation

#### Site Evaluation Criteria

##### Affordable Housing

- The site is within the urban growth boundary;
- Any buildings on the site will be evaluated to determine if they are capable of being adaptively re-use/re-purposed for housing;
- The use of the site for affordable housing purposes would be consistent with the City Structure and Urban Place Type policies of the London Plan;
- The site is identified as being within an area where there is a demonstrated need for affordable housing;
- The site would support and provide for the regeneration opportunities;
- The site is not constrained by built features (including gas lines, pipelines, utility corridors, etc.) or significant environmental features or functions;

- The site enjoys proximity to a range of community amenities supportive of affordable housing including, but not necessarily limited to:
  - Transit;
  - Parks and/or open space;
  - Grocery stores and commercial centres;
  - Low cost public facilities such as libraries and community recreation centres;
  - Service agencies and/or supportive programming;
  - Day care centres; and,
  - Hospital or medical/dental services.

#### Community Centre

- Real estate criteria: takes into consideration the physical size of the site, whether currently available for sale, the existence of constraints to development, and potential for municipal ownership of land;
- Service delivery components: considers whether creation of new community facility sites will encroach on the areas served by existing facilities; and also considers the population living in proximity to the potential site that is currently under-served by community facilities (i.e. the area or population with a gap in service); and,
- Accessibility component: which takes into consideration how accessible the new site would be, including access to existing bus/bike routes, number of students, older adults and households within a 15 minute walk, and the city's total population living in proximity to the site.

#### Parkland

- City-wide parks to take advantage of prominent land forms and natural environmental features, such as riverbanks, ravines, or wetlands. Topographic variation and natural environment features may be developed for sports activities or special events;
- Urban and neighbourhood parks that are accessible to the community within a walkable service radius of 800 metres (10 minute walk), and not crossing major streets;
- Priorities for parkland acquisition will include consideration of:
  - i) existing and forecasted population densities;
  - ii) existing facilities and their accessibility to the neighbourhood residents;
  - iii) the availability of funds for acquisition;
  - iv) the suitability of lands available for sale; and,
  - v) acquisitions which will serve to create a more continuous or linked park system.

Additional considerations for parkland use include:

Other opportunities for parkland acquisition. In the development or redevelopment of land, the City may acquire a 5% dedication of land under consideration for development for parkland purposes. For small developments, this would not provide a sufficient land base to meet parkland needs. In older parts of the City, the required dedication is not always achieved. As an alternative, the *Planning Act* provides for a dedication of 1 hectare of park space per 300 dwelling units (or 500 units for cash-in-lieu).

- Other opportunities to meet neighbourhood parkland needs on other lands that are open and accessible to the public, such as other school sites within the neighbourhood.
- The location of other nearby amenities and the convenience of access to park space. The service standard objective is for neighbourhood park space and play

equipment to be located within an approximately 800 metre radius of every home in a residential neighbourhood.

If the neighbourhood is deficient in parkland and the school functions as the primary park within that immediate neighbourhood, then retention of the school site as municipal parkland will be given high priority.

#### Financial Considerations

- The cost to repurpose a school property, including the cost of demolitions and site clearance and/or designated substance abatement and building stabilization for the refurbishment of any structures to be retained;
- Costs associated with sub-surface site assessment, including archaeological or brownfield matters; and,
- Determination of and the financial implications associated with paying Fair Market Value (FMV) for the school property.

These three factors would be considered as part of the determination of what the City would pay to acquire the site.

Additional factors to be considered include:

- Evaluation of the City's existing capital plan to determine if funding for an approved capital project can be redirected to purchase a school property that would replace that capital project or represents a higher priority than the existing approved capital project;
- Ongoing operating budget impacts associated with timing of repurposing the site, including maintenance, security and other associated holding costs of a property;
- For sites where it is recommended that all or a portion of the buildings be retained for future municipal use, the additional capital costs associated with retaining the structure will need to be determined; and
- Evaluation of the cost of land purchase now versus future land purchase to provide the same services. In other words, the opportunity cost of not acquiring land and the Net Present Value (NPV)/financial costs of acquiring (or assembling) the same or similar land assets later.

#### Partnerships

The City may partner in the development of a site that has been identified for acquisition for municipal uses in accordance with City policies regarding partnerships. Such partnerships may include the development of any portion of a site not required for municipal uses.

#### Sites Recommended for Acquisition

Only sites that meet the evaluation criteria for an identified municipal need will be recommended for acquisition. An evaluation of the acquisition costs shall be undertaken for any site identified to be acquired, and a Source of Financing will be identified.

The City may consider the acquisition of sites that are larger than required to meet the identified municipal need, and may dispose of the portion not required to offset costs associated with the acquisition and development of the site.

**Appendix B**

**City's Closed School Site Evaluations: Generalized Process**



