

## Report to Planning and Environment Committee

**To:** Chair and Members  
Planning & Environment Committee  
**From:** John M. Fleming  
Managing Director, Planning and City Planner  
**Subject:** Closed School Sites: Evaluations and Approach (18 Elm Street and 1958 Duluth Crescent)  
**Meeting on:** May 27, 2019

## Recommendation

That, on the recommendation of the Managing Director, Planning and City Planner, the following actions be taken with respect to the letters of interest from the London District Catholic School Board for the surplus school sites at 18 Elm Street and 1958 Duluth Crescent:

- (a) That the City of London **TAKE NO ACTION** in response to the letters of interest from the London District Catholic School Board (LDCSB) for the two surplus school sites;
- (b) That this report **BE CIRCULATED** to the Housing Development Corporation London; and,
- (c) That this report **BE RECEIVED** for information.

**IT BEING NOTED** that the Housing Development Corporation, London (HDC), as the delegated Service Manager for new affordable housing, will be expressing an interest in these lands for the purpose of providing affordable housing and accommodating suitable parkland to meet municipal needs.

**IT BEING FURTHER NOTED** that the Board of the HDC has authorized its participation in this expression of interest.

## Executive Summary

- In March 2019, the London District Catholic School Board advised the City that it had identified two school properties as surplus and available for potential acquisition.
- Public agencies are to identify their interest to the school board before June 13, 2019.
- The school board will negotiate a land sale with public agencies expressing interest, based on the agencies' ranking (per O. Reg. 444/98). If no public interest is received then the properties will be put up for sale to the private market.
- In accordance with Council's "Surplus School Site Evaluation and Acquisition Policy", an administrative review team has evaluated each property for potential use as the identified municipal purposes: affordable housing, parkland, and community facilities.
- The review has identified municipal needs for affordable housing and park land.
- City of London City Planning and Parks and Recreation Staff have collaborated with the Housing Development Corporation to consider a high level development concept for each site that establishes the amount and configuration of parkland that will be required. It is important to recognize that development proposals for these lands will need to go through the full develop approvals process.

- The HDC, as the delegated Service Manager, will respond to the expression of interest for these lands for the purposes of affordable housing and accommodating parkland to satisfy specific municipal needs. The HDC will negotiate the acquisition(s) with LDCSB for each property and the HDC will provide the necessary financing to support the acquisition(s).
- Pending any required changes identified through the development approvals process, the City will acquire, from the HDC, the amount and configuration of parkland identified in the concept plans for these sites. Such acquisition will be achieved through parkland dedication from the development approvals process and/or parkland purchase at the same cost per hectare paid by the HDC in acquiring these lands from the school board.

## Analysis

### 1.0 Surplus School Sites

#### 1.1 Background

At its meeting on February 4, 2019, the London District Catholic School Board (LDCSB) determined that two (2) school sites are surplus to the school board's needs based on the results of an accommodation review. The two sites available for disposition are:

- 18 Elm Street (Holy Cross Catholic Elementary School); and
- 1958 Duluth Crescent (St. Robert Catholic Elementary School).

Under Ontario Regulation 444/98 of the *Education Act*, school boards are required to offer surplus school properties to public agencies, including municipalities and Service Managers, prior to offering a land sale to the private market. If more than one public agency expresses an interest in a property, the school board will negotiate the land sale with the highest ranking public agency (per O. Reg. 444/98).

Letters of offer notifying the City that the two properties are available for a potential acquisition were sent by the LDCSB on March 13, 2019 (See Appendix "A" for letters). A response back to the school board regarding each property is required before June 13, 2019. The required responses are to indicate whether or not there is City interest in acquiring the properties. Negotiations to finalize the conditions for a land sale have a separate timeline of an additional ninety days.

Civic Administration and the Housing Development Corporation have completed an evaluation of each site, in accordance with Council's "Surplus School Site Evaluation and Acquisition Policy". This report summarizes the evaluations based on the three identified municipal needs of affordable housing, parkland, and community facilities, and recommends that the City not indicate an interest in acquiring these lands, noting that the HDC, as the delegated Service Manager for new affordable housing, will be indicating to the London District Catholic School Board that it has an interest in these lands.

## 1.2 Sites at a Glance

### 1.2.1 18 Elm Street (Holy Cross Elementary)

18 Elm Street is a rectangular-shaped, 1.94 acres (0.79 hectare) property located in the Hamilton Road district of the city. The property is located mid-block and under *The London Plan* is in the Neighbourhoods Place Type on a “Neighbourhood Street”, adjacent to the Urban Corridor Place Type of Hamilton Road. In the 1989 Official Plan the property is in the Low Density Residential (LDR) designation.



Figure 1: Aerial photo of 18 Elm Street



### 1.2.2 1958 Duluth Crescent (St. Robert Elementary)

1958 Duluth Crescent is an irregular-shaped, 5.39 acre (2.18 hectares) property located in the Argyle district of the city. Under *The London Plan* the site is in the Neighbourhoods Place Type, with frontage onto a “Neighbourhood Connector” class of street (Admiral Drive) as well as a “Neighbourhood Street” (Duluth Crescent). In the 1989 Official Plan the property is in the Low Density Residential (LDR) designation.



Figure 2: Aerial photo of 1958 Duluth Crescent

## 2.0 Evaluations and Recommendation

### 2.1 Evaluation

Both of the surplus school sites at 18 Elm Street and 1958 Duluth Crescent have been evaluated for potential acquisition to meet one or more of the identified municipal needs. The evaluations are for municipal needs as: (1) affordable housing (noting that this municipal need is evaluated first); (2) a community facility such as a community centre; and (3) as parkland.

The evaluation found that both sites meet the criteria for acquisition for the municipal purposes of affordable housing and some parkland.

### 2.2 Affordable Housing Evaluation

The closed school site evaluation team includes the Housing Development Corporation, London. The HDC is the “Service Manager” for development of new affordable housing under authority delegated by Council. The HDC is an arms-length City agency that acts as a tool to deliver housing that satisfies the municipal need for affordable housing and works in partnership with the City.

Both 18 Elm Street and 1958 Duluth Crescent are sites required to meet the municipal need for the development of affordable housing units. These two surplus school sites meet the criteria for affordable housing sites, including that they:

- Are located within the Urban Growth Boundary;
- Are appropriate to meet the community need for affordable housing;
- Would support and provide for regeneration and redevelopment opportunities;
- Are in proximity to community amenities and services as well as infrastructure (including public transit); and,
- Are not constrained for redevelopment and regeneration by features such as pipelines, utility corridors or significant environmental features.

### **2.3 Parkland Evaluation**

Acquisition of both 18 Elm Street and 1958 Duluth Crescent would also help to satisfy parkland objectives of the city.

The lands bounded by Hamilton Road, Trafalgar Street and Highbury Avenue contain over 725 housing units, but have no convenient neighbourhood level parkland. The *Planning Act* ratio for parkland is 1Ha / 300 units. Land at 18 Elm Street is desired for park use because the existing surrounding urban and neighbourhood parks accessible to the community are either further than the “walkable service radius” of 800 metres or require crossing of a major street. Acquisition of only a portion of 18 Elm Street for park uses could permit the use of most of the former school lands for housing. Additional parkland acquisition opportunities are anticipated within this neighbourhood in the future.

A portion of 1958 Duluth Crescent is warranted as parkland in order to maintain pathway connections through the neighbourhood (such as the existing pathway connecting St. Robert school grounds to Garland Crescent to the north), and in order to maintain some of the existing public amenity and green space that is associated with the St. Robert school grounds. It is important to note that while school board properties are not considered a municipal park or recreation facility, these sites often function as *de facto* community green space areas for their surrounding neighbourhoods. Also, a small area of homes on Duluth Crescent and Crystal Crescent are outside of the 800m distance to local parks.

City of London City Planning and Parks and Recreation Staff have collaborated with the Housing Development Corporation to consider a high level development concept for each site that establishes the amount and configuration of parkland that will be required. It is important to recognize that development proposals for these lands will need to go through the full development approvals process.

### **2.4 Municipal Community Facility Evaluation**

Both of the surplus school sites have also been evaluated for their potential as a City community facility. The community facility evaluation is based on a real estate evaluation, a service delivery evaluation, and an accessibility evaluation.

The real estate criteria takes into consideration the size of a site and constraints to development. The service delivery component takes into consideration the potential for encroachment upon the service area of existing community facilities and any service gaps for the population living in proximity to the site. The accessibility component considers access to the sites based on public transit and bicycle routes, number of students and older adults within a 15 minute walk, and the city’s total population in proximity to the site.

Based upon the City’s community facility evaluation, neither of these two properties are recommended for a City acquisition for a municipal community centre.

Notwithstanding that no City community facility is required, the HDC may solicit interest in partnerships from non-profits or other community partners as part of its acquisition

submission to the school board.

### **3.0 Conclusion: Approach to Meet Municipal Needs**

The evaluation of 18 Elm Street and 1958 Duluth Crescent, undertaken in accordance with Council's "Surplus School Site Evaluation and Acquisition Policy", has concluded that there is a municipal need for both sites for both affordable housing and parkland.

In order to acquire these lands for the two identified municipal needs, the HDC London will be the respondent to each of the School Board's "letters of interest". This approach recognizes that Council has delegated authority to the HDC as a "Service Manager" for the City's development of affordable housing units, and as such Council is exercising its interest in these sites through the HDC.

If the HDC is the highest ranking public agency identifying interest in the two sites, the school board will enter into a land sale negotiation with the HDC for each property and the HDC will provide the necessary financing to support the acquisition(s) and any other related costs (e.g. ongoing holding costs). The City will not contribute financially to the acquisition(s), but if the HDC is successful, the City will acquire, from the HDC, the amount and configuration of parkland identified in the high level concept plans developed for these sites (pending any required changes identified through the development approvals process). Such parkland acquisition will occur through a combination of parkland dedication from the development approvals process and parkland purchase at the same cost per hectare that is paid by the HDC in acquiring these lands from the School Board.

The redevelopment and regeneration process will ensure that overall objectives of affordable housing, parkland, and key directions of *The London Plan* are implemented.

Subsequent reports will be brought to Council with the results of the London District Catholic School Board's disposition of these surplus school sites.

Acknowledgements: This report and site evaluations were prepared with assistance from: Kimberly Wood, Development Manager, HDC London; Brian Turcotte, Development Manager, HDC London; Stephen Giustizia, CEO, HDC London; Bill Warner, Manager, Realty Services; Andrew Macpherson, Division Manager, Parks Planning and Operations; Alan Dunbar, Manager, Financial Planning and Policy; Kyle Murray, Director, Financial Planning and Business Support; Tim Wellhauser, Division Manager, Facilities; Donna Baxter, Manager, Policy and Planning Support (NCFS); Dave Purdy, Manager, Housing Services.

<b>Prepared by:</b>	<b>Travis Macbeth, MCIP, RPP Policy Planning, Long Range Planning and Sustainability</b>
<b>Submitted by:</b>	<b>Gregg Barrett, AICP Manager, Long Range Planning and Sustainability</b>
<b>Recommended by:</b>	<b>John M. Fleming, MCIP, RPP Managing Director, Planning and City Planner</b>
Note: The opinions contained herein are offered by a person or persons qualified to provide expert opinion. Further detail with respect to qualifications can be obtained from Planning Services	

May 1, 2019  
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## Appendix A

### Letters of Interest for 1958 Duluth Crescent and 18 Elm Street



CATHOLIC EDUCATION CENTRE  
5200 Wellington Road S. London, Ontario N6E 3X8 Canada  
T 519-663-2088 F 519-663-9250

March 13, 2019

Cathy Saunders  
City Clerk  
City of London  
300 Dufferin Avenue, PO Box 5035  
London, Ontario  
N6A 4L9

Dear Cathy Saunders:

**Re: St. Robert Catholic Elementary School  
1958 Duluth Crescent, London, ON**

Under Regulation 444/98 of the Education Act, the London District Catholic School Board is required to offer surplus school property to specified public agencies. You are one of those agencies.

At its regular meeting on February 4, 2019, the Board determined that St. Robert Catholic Elementary School, located at 1958 Duluth Crescent, London, Ontario, is no longer required. The property is 5.39 acres in size and has a one-storey building with a gross floor area of 33,584 square feet containing 15 regular classrooms, a general purpose room, and a library (see location map attached). Accordingly, the Board is offering the property at fair market value to you and other agencies listed in Regulation 444/98. If more than one agency expresses an interest in the property, the Board is required to convey the property to the highest ranking agency as per the priority ranking specified in the regulation.

If your agency wishes to acquire the property at fair market value, you must provide a written letter of interest to my attention **before June 13, 2019**.

All offers will be subject to the approval of the Board of Trustees and the Ministry of Education.

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jacquie Davison".

Jacquie Davison  
Superintendent of Business  
London District Catholic School Board  
(519) 663-2088, ext. 43602  
Email: [jdavison@ldcsb.ca](mailto:jdavison@ldcsb.ca)

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### Location Map

**St. Robert Catholic Elementary School**  
1958 Duluth Crescent, London, ON





**CATHOLIC EDUCATION CENTRE**  
5200 Wellington Road S. London, Ontario N6E 3X8 Canada  
T 519-663-2088 F 519-663-9250

March 13, 2019

Cathy Saunders  
City Clerk  
City of London  
300 Dufferin Avenue, PO Box 5035  
London, Ontario  
N6A 4L9

Dear Cathy Saunders:

**Re: Holy Cross Catholic Elementary School  
18 Elm Street, London, ON**

Under Regulation 444/98 of the Education Act, the London District Catholic School Board is required to offer surplus school property to specified public agencies. You are one of those agencies.

At its regular meeting on February 4, 2019, the Board determined that Holy Cross Catholic Elementary School, located at 18 Elm Street, London, Ontario, is no longer required. The property is 1.94 acres in size and has a three-storey building with a gross floor area of 26,995 square feet containing 12 regular classrooms, a general purpose room, and a library (see location map attached). Accordingly, the Board is offering the property at fair market value to you and other agencies listed in Regulation 444/98. If more than one agency expresses an interest in the property, the Board is required to convey the property to the highest ranking agency as per the priority ranking specified in the regulation.

If your agency wishes to acquire the property at fair market value, you must provide a written letter of interest to my attention **before June 13, 2019**.

All offers will be subject to the approval of the Board of Trustees and the Ministry of Education.

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jacquie Davison".

Jacquie Davison  
Superintendent of Business  
London District Catholic School Board  
(519) 663-2088, ext. 43602  
Email: [jdavison@ldcsb.ca](mailto:jdavison@ldcsb.ca)

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**Location Map**

**Holy Cross Catholic Elementary School  
18 Elm Street, London, ON**



## **Appendix B**

### **Additional Reports**

October 9, 2019 “Neighbourhood School Strategy – Evaluation and Acquisition of Surplus School Sites,” Planning and Environment Committee.