



**SUBJECT: General Brock Surplus School Park Site**

**TO: Committee of the Whole**

**FROM: Capital Works**

Report Number: CW-15-17

Wards Affected: 4

File Numbers: 575-17

Date to Committee: May 29, 2017

Date to Council: June 12, 2017

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**Recommendation:**

Receive and file capital works department report CW-15-17 regarding the General Brock Surplus School Park Site

**Purpose:**

Respond to staff directions.

A City that Grows

- Intensification

A Healthy and Greener City

- Healthy Lifestyles

An Engaging City

- Good Governance

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**Background and Discussion:**

On November 7, 2011, Council approved the following staff directions:

**APPROVAL TO PURCHASE A PART OF THE FORMER GENERAL BROCK HIGH SCHOOL GREEN SPACE**

Proceed with the purchase of approximately 11 acres of the former General Brock High School green space, including flood plain, driveway and south-east portion of the site

shown as parts 2,3, and 4 on Appendix A of Community Services department report COMSERV-2-11 ; and

Direct the General Manager of Community Services to meet with the Halton District School Board regarding the 6.36 acre surplus lands at the former General Brock High School site no longer being purchased by the Halton Catholic District School Board; and

Direct the General Manager of Community Services to report back on the issues and processes required for the City to achieve greater control of the potential development of the site for development purposes and not for the purpose of preserving park lands at this site. (COMSERV-2-11)

In 2011, the City purchased acquired the following parcels of land:

- 2.57 ha (6.365 acres) from the Halton District School Board (HDSB) for the purpose of developing a city-owned park.
- 1.48 ha (3.66 acres) was received through dedication and as flood plain lands.
- The above parcels form a contiguous park block of 4.05 ha (10.025 acres.
- 0.5 ha (1.26 acres) for future road purposes for access to the park, the existing school site and a future development site.

On March 23, 2015, Council approved the following staff directions:

Direct the Executive Director of Capital Works to defer the naming of the General Brock High School park site (SD-16-15)

Direct the Executive Director of Capital Works to report on the issue of development of General Brock High School site (SD-17-15)

Direct the Executive Director of Capital Works to bring back a report that identifies opportunities to recognize the Honourable George Kerr at the General Brock High School site (SD-18-15)

## **Strategy/process**

### **Existing Site Features**

Presently the park has a mature character with the natural elements provided by existing vegetation and recreational features developed under HDSB ownership. When planning future park development or renewal, it will be important to engage the community on existing features and facilities that are valued by the community and stakeholders and gauge on what new features are desirable (refer to Appendix A – Existing Site Features).

The following sections provide an overview of existing site features, their condition, level of use and considerations/issues for continued use of each feature.

## **Baseball Diamonds**

Currently there are 2 baseball diamonds existing on site that are sized for youth play. Based on recent condition assessments, these baseball diamonds are rated as fair/poor indicating a present need to replace the backstops and renewal of the infields to maintain these as viable facilities.

The Organized Sport Support Service (Sport Service) has indicated the use of the diamonds is limited, as a result of existing conditions and size. In 2016 the east field was used for 93.5 hours and the west field was used for 120 hours. Typical use of a diamond in our inventory is booked 145 hrs per year.

There is a present need to replace or remove the existing baseball diamond backstops. Before the city invests in the renewal of baseball infrastructure, public engagement with the community and sport users is required to inform whether these diamonds are to be maintained as a park feature.

## **Soccer Fields**

Currently there are 2 full sized soccer fields that are primarily used for adult play. Soccer goal posts are also located in the outfield of the south west baseball diamond however, this smaller field is not permitted by sport organizations. Based on recent condition assessments, these soccer field goal posts are rated as fair indicating replacement is required within the next three years.

The Sport Service has indicated the use of the soccer fields is slightly lower than that of comparable school facilities. The east field was used 103 hours and the west field was used 103 hours. Typical use of a school soccer field in our inventory is booked between 98 - 168 hours per year.

The first consideration with the soccer fields is the overlap of both fields with the surplus lands to the north of the park. When the HDSB sells the lands for development, the 2 soccer fields will no longer be available. Public engagement with the community and sport users is required to determine whether park development should include a soccer field when the existing fields are removed.

It is important to note these fields will continue to operate until which time the school board sells the land for development purposes.

## **Wood Lot**

Extensive vegetation exists on the site providing a wood lot character that divides the open space into distinct separate areas. The trees were originally planted as nursery stock for park projects.

The condition of the vegetation is generally good, however there are species such as Manitoba Maple that are not desirable in a park setting. In 2017 the Community Matching fund provided funding to the community to remove invasive species and other wood lot maintenance. This work is currently underway by the community group.

Future park development will consider the responsible enjoyment of the woodlot, while encouraging continued naturalization and removal of undesirable species.

## **Flood Plain**

A majority of the south- west portion of the park is within a regulated flood plain as defined by Conservation Halton. While this doesn't preclude development of park amenities, it will require consideration to maintaining or enhancing the area for flood storage during storm events.

## **Options considered**

### **Developing a Park Plan**

The size of the parkland purchased in 2011 would be classified as a large neighbourhood park and is approximately half the size of what would be considered a small community park. According to the Parks, Recreation and Cultural Assets Master Plan (2009) Recommendation 15, Neighbourhood Parks are defined as:

- Venues intended to support the outdoor recreational needs of defined local neighbourhood areas
- Access is primarily via walking and bicycling with parking to support facilities as required
- Site development features include a wide range of neighbourhood level services, such as playgrounds, passive areas, open space play areas, trail linkages, secondary level sport fields for youth and similar activities
- Natural features could include small woodlots and naturalized areas.

In addition to the definition, additional development considerations include consideration for shade structures, multi-use courts, public art, leash free areas, community garden and floral or heritage features.

As previously discussed, this park has the benefits of existing recreational facilities and natural elements that give the park a mature character. Considering the existing features of the site, the development of a park plan will include the following:

- To use the public engagement goal of “Involve” as the basis to undertake a public engagement process as described in the public engagement matters section of the report
- Determine what existing features are valued by the community and sport users for retention, renewal and enhancement
- Identify what new facilities or uses are desirable
- Develop a phased implementation plan that facilitates partial implementation of existing or new park features in order to continue use of the soccer fields located partially on HDSB property until they are sold for development
- Construct as a final phase, park features located in the area where soccer fields will be removed on city owned land.

Capital works department plan to present the preferred design option and implementation plan in the first quarter of 2019.

### **Opportunities to Recognize the Honourable George Kerr**

Several opportunities are available to recognize Mr. Kerr including:

- Naming the proposed street to be constructed through the development of the site e.g. George Kerr Place
- Providing an historical/heritage plaque after Mr. Kerr outlining his contributions to Burlington. This would be similar to the plaque dedicated to W.E. Breckon
- Use of the celebration process to place a plaque in honour of Mr. Kerr on a park amenity
- Naming a feature in the park in his honour
- Creating a public art feature in honour of Mr. Kerr
- Naming the Park after Mr. Kerr

City Policy 1.3.7. Naming of Corporate Assets, is in place with a purpose to encompass the naming of corporate assets including parks, open spaces, facilities, streets and other municipal buildings or properties. The policy framework guides the decision process by which council ultimately approves the naming or renaming of a City of Burlington corporate asset. Based on current policy, the above noted opportunities could be supported when considering the criteria outlined in the Naming of Corporate Assets Policy.

Through the public engagement process to develop a park plan, staff proposes to discuss options for the naming of the park. This would include the possibility of naming the park in honour of Mr. Kerr, or other names that will be considered. Staff will report to

Council with the results of the public engagement on options for the naming the park when the preferred design option is presented.

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### **Financial Matters:**

The approved 2014 Capital Budget identifies \$90,000 for the General Brock Surplus School Land Park Planning project. This funding is intended for public engagement, topographical survey, design options and preparation of detail design for construction.

A further \$900,000 is identified in the forecast year 2023 as part of the approved 2017 Capital Budget & Forecast for the general Brock Surplus School Land Park Construction project. This is recognized as a place holder for future park development resulting from public engagement and design process.

### **Other Resource Impacts**

The Roads & Parks Maintenance Department currently maintains the park land purchased to current service level standards and the soccer fields partially located on school board property. Any incremental increase in current budget impact will be identified when the design is brought forward to committee for consideration.

Any new park amenity will be added to the Parks Asset Management System in order to update and plan the assets future repair and renewal and associated lifecycle costs.

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### **Public Engagement Matters:**

The open space areas of the general Brock Surplus Schools lands have been used by the community and sport organizations since the school was opened.

The starting point of the park design process will be a public engagement process including both public workshops and information sessions, as well as online opportunities (such as surveys) to understand how the community and sport organizations value the existing park features. This will help guide the revitalization of existing park features and development of potential enhancements. The public engagement process will include the following steps:

- SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Treats) analysis workshop
- Documentation of findings and posting on the project web page through all phases of the public engagement
- Public meeting and online opportunities to review and get input on park options and park naming opportunities

- Public meeting and online opportunities to consider a preferred option and implementation plan

This process is intended to understand how the park currently serves the community and what improvements and uses are desirable. The public engagement process for park development and naming options is planned to commence in the fourth quarter of 2017.

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## **Conclusion:**

Understanding the value of existing park features to the park users will be key to the development of a park plan for this park. A phased approach to implementation of park features will minimize disruption of existing field use shared with the HDSB while providing a blueprint for park development in other areas of the park. The public engagement process provides an opportunity to identify naming opportunities for the park.

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Respectfully submitted,

Robert Peachey  
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## **Appendices:**

A. Existing Site Features

## **Notifications:**

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|----------------|---------------------------------------|
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## **Report Approval:**

All reports are reviewed and/or approved by Department Director, Director of Finance and Director of Legal. Final approval is by the City Manager.