



**SUBJECT: Robert Bateman Community Centre – update on construction and site development**

**TO: Committee of the Whole**

**FROM: Environment, Infrastructure and Community Services**

Report Number: EICS-06-24

Wards Affected: Ward 5

Date to Committee: February 5, 2024

Date to Council: February 13, 2024

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**Recommendation:**

Receive and file report environment, infrastructure and community services report EICS-06-24 an update on the Robert Bateman Community Centre construction and site development.

**PURPOSE:**

The purpose of this report is to provide an update on construction and site development for the renovated Robert Bateman Community Centre with a specific focus on the plan to achieve occupancy for phase 1 development.

**Vision to Focus Alignment:**

- Increase economic prosperity and community responsive city growth
  - Support sustainable infrastructure and a resilient environment
  - Building more citizen engagement, community health and culture
  - Deliver customer centric services with a focus on efficiency and technology transformation
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## **Background and Discussion:**

The City of Burlington (City) purchased the former Robert Bateman High School building and site. With sustainability and community-building in mind, the City is repurposing the existing Robert Bateman High School into a city-owned multi-purpose community-focused asset that will align with the city's objective of being net-zero carbon in city operations by 2040. The reuse and conversion of the former secondary school will require extensive interior renovations including renewal of all major building systems and exterior site and building modifications in order to support the intended community uses. When complete, tenants including Brock University, Burlington Public Library, Halton District School Board, Tech Place and the City will occupy the building and provide services as part of a future phase.

### **Phase 1 Construction Update**

Council awarded the tender for the Phase 1 construction project at their meeting of April 18, 2023 (EICS-01-23) to Norlon Builders London Limited. A Building Permit has been issued for construction based on the existing/former use as a High School. Construction of Phase 1 has commenced on site and Substantial Performance is scheduled for April 30, 2025.

As of the end of January 2024, the demolition and abatement activities for the construction are 95% complete and anticipated to be substantially completed by mid-February. The project remains on schedule and on budget for occupancy by major tenants for fit up in Q2-2025.

Consistent with the City's objectives to achieving net-zero carbon in municipal operations by 2040, the Robert Bateman Community Centre's infrastructure has been designed to be geothermal-ready. Pending approval of funding for the second phase, this preparedness includes a geothermal bore field strategically located north of the facility.

### **Site Development**

The existing on-site parking was suitable for the previous use as a high school. With the new uses planned for this community hub, there is a requirement for additional parking. It is important to note that the city, as every other landowner in the city, is subject to the minimum parking requirements in the city's Zoning By-Law. These requirements are a function of the size and use of the building.

It is important to reiterate that the city is motivated to retain as much open space and park land as possible to provide outdoor opportunities for the community to be active and connected.

With the re-purposing of the former Robert Bateman High School into a multi-use

Community Facility including City uses, Brock University, Halton District School Board, Burlington Public Library and Tech Place, the requirements for parking on the site for Phase 1 increased from the existing 235 spaces on the site to 370.

In order to provide this number of spaces onsite, the removal of the track and sports field would be required, leaving a portion of the greenspace available to be redesigned for community use.

Since the last report was received and discussed with Council, a staff working team, reporting to a steering team, has completed a review of the various parking options being considered to mitigate the impact on the green space and park, while providing sufficient parking to effectively support the delivery of the various services offered at the site.

As part of the prior report, it was confirmed that a decision on how to handle at minimum the Phase 1 parking needs, was required by the end of 2023 in order to allow for the design and construction of the required parking to take place during the 2024 construction season to be implemented in time to secure the occupancy permit by Q2-2025. This timing is important so that the Phase 1 tenants can commence to move in and undertake required tenant fit-ups and in particular, for Brock to be able to commence classes in September 2025.

As part of the planning for how to manage the increased parking requirements for the soon to be busy community hub, it continues to be important to keep top of mind the customer experience that will be provided when the many and varied attendees come to the site, as well as the impact on the local community and their experience as the city draws more people to this community hub, and integrates it's day-to-day operations into the existing neighborhood. A longer-term strategy for parking needs, inclusive of Phase 2, can come at a later date and/or be phased.

In an effort to reduce the impact of increased parking on the amount of greenspace available for community use, Council, at their September 26, 2023 meeting, received Report EICS-12-23, which provided an overview of various options to address the increased parking needs. A series of staff directions were passed at this meeting to support the future parking needs for this site. The remainder of this section will provide an update on staff's follow ups to these staff directions as well as outline the future parking plan.

#### **Staff Direction #1**

1. *“Direct the Manager of Realty Services to explore with the Halton Catholic District School Board the option of utilizing land behind the Ascension Elementary School in order to include park amenities for the public and school for outdoor activities.”*

There is the opportunity to rebuild outdoor space behind the Ascension Elementary School to expand the greenspace footprint for public access after school hours and in the summertime. Refer to Appendix A - Phase1 and Overall Future Site Potential. Halton Catholic District School Board is supportive of this concept in principal and will continue to work with the City on refining scope and proposed features, that will benefit both the school and the community.

### **Staff Directions #2 thru #5**

2. *“Direct the Manager of Realty Services to enter into discussions with the Pineland Baptist Church and Good Neighbour Ministries, for the option of leasing parking spaces to support the Phase 1 occupancy requirements for the former Bateman site; and*
3. *Direct the Executive Director of Environment, Infrastructure and Community Services to apply to the Committee of Adjustment for a variance to reduce on-site parking requirements at the former Bateman site based on a site-specific parking justification analysis giving consideration of alternate modes of transportation and peak demand timing of the various uses on site; and*
4. *Direct the Executive Director of Environment, Infrastructure and Community Services to apply to the Committee of Adjustment for a reduction of the on-site parking required at the former Bateman site based on leasing parking spaces at Pineland Baptist Church and/or Good Neighbour Ministries (subject to a lease agreement being agreed to) in order to support parking requirements and obtain occupancy for Phase 1 operation of the former Bateman site; and*
5. *Based on the outcome of the submissions to the Committee of Adjustment for on-site parking reductions, authorize the Executive Director of Environment, Infrastructure and Community Services to design and construct any additional surface parking at the rear of the site to accommodate Phase 1 occupancy requirements.”*

Staff submitted a request to the CofA to reduce the amount of parking by 41 spaces, providing a parking plan that would accommodate 329 spaces on site. This reduction would retain more green space for redesign however the existing running track and play field will need to be removed. On December 6, 2023, the CofA approved the request to reduce parking by the 41 spaces for Phase 1 development. CofA supported staff’s position that the parking reduction of 41 spaces can be mitigated through shared parking, the use of active and sustainable travel modes, and the incorporation of end-of-trip facilities on-site (e.g. secure indoor bike parking, shower facilities, etc.) to further promote active transportation and transit use. The City’s CofA application to reduce Phase 1 parking requirements to 329 spaces has now been

approved and staff are proceeding with the 41 parking space reduction as part of the parking plan for Phase 1 occupancy.

Staff have had further discussions with the two churches located proximate to the facility and there is some opportunity to lease their parking spaces on their sites to support the parking requirements at this site, however this access would not be guaranteed.

In further discussion with Planning staff, they advised that they were not supportive of utilizing this restricted off-site parking on a permanent basis to support parking needs for Phase 1 and that a decision to utilize any off-site parking would require Council approval of a zoning amendment, as this type of decision is not within the jurisdiction of the Committee of Adjustment (CofA).

The option of off-site parking will be considered for Phase 2 parking which is estimated at 100 parking spaces, which is approximately the same the number of parking spaces that could be available from the 2 churches.

#### **Staff Direction #6**

6. *“Direct the Director of Engineering Services to undertake a conceptual design exercise of the open space at the former Bateman site, including the Frontenac Park land and the land behind Ascension School (subject to HCDSB approval) to provide enhanced pedestrian connections, looped pedestrian trail and park amenities such as a junior sports field that would meet the needs of the students at Ascension Elementary school and the public.”*

With the City of Burlington being the new landowner of the former Bateman Highschool property as well as the adjacent Frontenac Park, there is an opportunity to better integrate the two parcels with the goal of enhancing the quality of the overall site. This would be accomplished by the expansion of environmental features, an improved “doormat” to the new public entrance at the back of the building, intentional and dedicated pedestrian connections throughout the site and preserving space for the future addition of outdoor recreational amenities. Refer to Appendix A - Phase1 and Overall Future Site Potential.

This plan reflects the reconfigured Phase 1 parking which now includes an “urban treatment” around the main entrance and a sizable east/west tree-lined pedestrian connection that links the adjacent school and north/south trail. The plan delineates the maximum area for Phase 2 and the inclusion of significantly more trees. What is most important is that this plan demonstrates the untapped potential of the overall site which will serve as a solid backdrop for the upcoming visioning exercise of the outdoor space.

As indicated above, Appendix A also reflects the potential opportunity to rebuild space behind the Ascension Elementary School to expand the greenspace footprint for public access after school hours and in the summertime.

### **Staff Direction #7**

7. “Direct the Director of Transportation Services to assess the parking utilization of the former Bateman site after the opening of Phase 1 and report back to council on the outcomes for Phase 1 and parking requirements to support Phase 2.”

A parking plan for Phase 2 requirements will be presented for Council consideration and approval when the details of the new amenities and services to be provided as part of Phase 2 development are determined and presented to Council for approval.

When the facility opens for Phase 1 operations, staff will monitor the parking patterns, benefitting from actual data from Phase 1 parking utilization which will further inform and support any recommendation in Phase 2 to reduce on-site parking and/or utilizing proximate parking to support the fully operational facility, while retaining as much greenspace as possible.

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### **Financial Matters:**

The project is currently within the approved funding allotment that was set out in the Council tender award report EICS-01-23.

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### **Climate Implications**

On April 20, 2020 Council approved a Climate Action Plan which provides a framework to reduce the use of fossil fuels in the community, the main contributor to greenhouse gas emissions, which are causes of climate change.

The Climate Action Plan focuses on the following key areas: low-carbon new buildings, deep energy retrofits for existing buildings, renewable energy, electric mobility and equipment, integrated mobility, waste reduction and industry innovation.

The renovated Robert Bateman Community Centre will adhere to the City goals of providing sustainable infrastructure and a resilient environment by the implementation of the following design features:

- Addition of EV (Electric Vehicle) charging stations.
- Infrastructure to support active transportation (biking, walking, transit)
- LED lighting and associated controls.
- Upgrade the existing building envelope, including additional insulation for walls and replacement of windows.
- Replacement of air handling units and terminal units throughout the building that will utilize ultra-low temperature heating water. Including piping and pumps where required.
- Energy recovery, demand-controlled ventilation, and other energy efficiency improvements to HVAC systems.
- Addition of heat recovery chiller plant which is capable of heat pump operation to suit future geothermal system.
- A 17% reduction in overall energy use and a 32% reduction in GHG emissions from the baseline.

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### **Engagement Matters:**

There has been extensive community engagement for this project. Staff have gathered great ideas from the community, business and not for profit sectors. There are some overlapping themes between community desires and business interest. Under separate cover, Report RCC-01-24 on this same agenda provides a detailed discussion around many of the ideas and themes collected as well as a roadmap of next steps in the engagement process.

Outside of this report, the high-level summary of the next steps in the engagement process are as follows:

- In the coming months, staff will reach back out to the community to help prioritize the potential service providers and programs to be located out of the former high school location related to the indoor space.
- At the same time staff will start the outdoor engagement which will unfold as two separate processes but ultimately result in one larger enhanced and cohesive outdoor space.

The first process is working with the Catholic School Board and the Ascension Elementary School community to design options for the HDCSB land. The outdoor

space behind the school will remain in the ownership of the school board but will be publicly accessible outside of school hours and function as an expansion of the RBCC greenspace.

The second process will be a visioning exercise to make enhancements to the area behind RBCC and Frontenac Park. This work is anticipated to start in this spring.

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## **Conclusion:**

The redevelopment of the now formally named Robert Bateman Community Centre is on schedule and on budget. The demolition and abatement phase is almost complete. The site development plan is in place that takes into consideration the amount of on-site parking needed to support Phase 1 as determined by the City's Zoning By-law and Committee of Adjustment variance approval taking into account a parking justification study specific to this site. Community engagement on the outdoor space opportunities to be incorporated into the greenspace will be undertaken in the Spring of 2024. This is a large and exciting project for the City with Phase 1 construction and site development being on target to be completed by May 2025.

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Respectfully submitted,

Ken Pirhonen  
Manager of Facility Assets

Marion Rabeau  
Manager Parks Design & Construction

## **Appendices:**

Appendix A - Phase1 and Overall Future Site Potential

## **Report Approval:**

All reports are reviewed and/or approved by Department Director, the Chief Financial Officer and the Executive Director of Legal Services & Corporation Council.