



Hamilton

INFORMATION REPORT

TO:	Chair and Members Planning Committee
COMMITTEE DATE:	August 15, 2017
SUBJECT/REPORT NO:	Mountain Secondary School Lands (PW17061) (Ward 7) (Outstanding Business List Item)
WARD(S) AFFECTED:	Ward 7
PREPARED BY:	Meghan Stewart (905) 546-2424, Extension 5653
SUBMITTED BY:	Craig Murdoch, B.Sc. Director, Environmental Services Division Public Works Department
SIGNATURE:	

Council Direction:

The following motion was brought forward at the December 6, 2016 Planning Committee and approved by Council December 14, 2016:

That staff be directed to investigate the feasibility of the City purchasing the Mountain Secondary School surplus lands to meet the needs of the Rolston/Yeoville neighbourhoods for more green space and report back to the Planning Committee.

Information:

The subject property, known as Mountain Secondary School is located at 60 Caledon Avenue. It is a 7.57 acre site legally described as Registered Compiled Plan 1469, Lot 13, Part Lot 14, City of Hamilton (PIN 16968-0367), including an existing 6,784 m² (73,022 sq. ft.) two storey school building.

On June 1, 2015, a memo concerning multiple school properties with potential for being declared surplus was circulated by Real Estate. That list of properties included Mountain Secondary School. Included below is the response from the Parkland Advisory Review Committee (PARC) to the 2015 circulation concerning Mountain Secondary School:

“Not a candidate site, Rolston NAP comments to be considered. The Outdoor Recreation Facilities & Sport Fields Provision Plan recommends additional tennis courts and a community-wide skate park in Hamilton Mountain; from a distribution standpoint, this site would be a candidate for one or both of these facilities, but would have to be evaluated further at a site-specific level”.

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On February 21, 2017, a re-circulation for a portion of the Mountain Secondary site was distributed by Real Estate staff requesting any updated comments and business case proposals. This re-circulation indicated that the Hamilton Wentworth District School Board (HWDSB) was proposing to dispose of part of the subject property, specifically a landlocked strip of land along the west side of the site abutting Calvin Christian School consisting of 0.415 acre (approximately) and being 52 feet by 345 feet (approximately). The response to the 2017 circulation concerning Mountain Secondary School has been included below:

“Landscape Architectural Services, Environmental Services Division, Public Works has no interest in the subject lands for park purposes”.

Real Estate staff has been advised that thereafter, it is the intent of the HWDSB to circulate another notice to preferred agencies indicating its intent to dispose of the remaining property at 60 Caledon Avenue, being 7.155 acres (approximately) including the school building. Accordingly, circulation of this second notice is not expected until the latter part of 2017 and purchase of the remaining parcel of land is not possible until that time that it is declared surplus.

As a part of surplus land acquisition review, staff considers geographic and demographic data. The City’s Planning and Economic Development Department has divided the City into a total of 237 planning units/neighbourhoods, each having distinct boundaries based on roads or other barriers. Current census data shows that the average population in each neighbourhood is approximately 2,250 people. The Urban Hamilton Official Plan provides direction for parkland provision at a rate of 0.7ha/1000 people, with a typical park minimum of 2ha size. However, for reference, the median ratio of residents per planning unit parkland is 1,600, which is below the recommended threshold for a neighbourhood park. It is recognized that each neighbourhood area is unique in its built form and socio-demographic composition, and that these characteristics have a strong impact on parkland needs. Such characteristics may include:

- Higher densities which often mean smaller or non-existent backyards and fewer open space opportunities;
- Younger population profiles as youth are the predominant user of active parks; and
- Lower income profiles as these residents may have fewer options for meeting their leisure needs.

Mountain Secondary School is located in Planning Unit 7104, also called the Yeoville Neighbourhood. This neighbourhood has a population of 1,115 residents and is made up primarily of single or double family residential housing, institutional lands and commercial lands along Upper James Street. As per the policy noted above, the population independent of other criteria would not require a neighbourhood park. In addition, no parkland is identified in the Neighbourhood Plan.

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Having made comments on the two circulations above, staff wish to reiterate that although the Outdoor Recreation Facilities & Sport Fields Provision Plan recommends additional tennis courts and a community-wide skate park on the Hamilton Mountain, there is not enough of a parkland deficiency in the area of Yeoville to warrant the acquisition of additional parkland in the immediate area and when looking at parkland needs as a whole, city-wide. The tennis courts and skate park will be considered for other park land sites across the Hamilton Mountain.

Parkland deficiencies exist in many wards across the City, with the greatest deficiencies identified in lower Hamilton. With limited funding sources that are typically used to fund parkland acquisition, development and maintenance, continued acquisitions without prioritization is not sustainable. As such, it is critical that the City focus on addressing priority areas of parkland deficiency.

In summary, a neighbourhood park is not warranted based on quantitative measures applied, therefore the responses and comments made by PARC and Landscape Architectural Services remain unchanged from the June 1, 2015 and the February 21, 2017 Real Estate comment circulations.

APPENDICES AND SCHEDULES ATTACHED

Not applicable.