SUBJECT: Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board School Closures – Surplus Sites to be Considered for Acquisition – Phase 2 (PD03135(a))

COMMENDATION:

(a) That staff of the Planning and Development Department, Development and Real Estate Division be authorized and directed to commission:

(i) one Building Condition Assessment Study;
(ii) one Environmental Audit; and,
(iii) one appraisal to establish market value for each property occupied by Fairfield Elementary School (Homeside Neighbourhood) and Tweedsmuir Elementary School (Lansale Neighbourhood), identified as priority acquisitions and shown on Appendix "A" to Report PD03135(a).

(b) That staff of the Planning and Development Department, Development and Real Estate Division be authorized and directed to initiate negotiations with the HWDSB for the acquisition of Tweedsmuir and Fairfield Elementary Schools to alleviate parkland shortages in these respective neighbourhoods.

(c) In the event, the City is successful in acquiring the Tweedsmuir and Fairfield school sites that the Director of Fleet and Facilities, be directed and authorized to make the necessary application for demolition.
(d) That City staff be authorized to discuss with the School Board matters related to in the conditions of sale and redevelopment of the Stinson School site with the aim of preserving this facility, in light of the existence of the municipal heritage easement on the building.

(e) That City Council request the HWDSB to extend their ninety-day request for interest until July 2, 2004, to allow the City time to obtain appraisals and condition reports for the two school sites identified in sub-section (d) above.

(f) That City Council inform the HWDSB that the City is not interested in acquisition of the Queen Victoria, Dundas District, Pleasant Valley and Central Park School sites.

Lee Ann Coveyduck
General Manager
Planning and Development Department

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

The HWDSB has developed a revitalization program aimed at renewing and ultimately expanding its school infrastructure. The renewal includes closing thirty-nine (39) schools and building nine (9) new ones. In Phase 1, completed last year, the City reviewed seventeen (17) schools on the closure list to determine if the sites were needed for parks purposes. City Council agreed to the potential purchase of two (2) sites – Peace Memorial Elementary School (Ward 6) and Grange School (Ward 12).

The School Board is moving forward with Phase 2 of their revitalization strategy. This phase involves the closure of ten (10) schools and the disposal of potentially six (6). They include:

Ward 2 - Tweedsmuir
- Queen Victoria

Ward 4 - Fairfield

Ward 13 - Dundas District
- Pleasant valley
- Central Park

Appendices “A” and “B” details the planning information for the sites, as well as the parkland needs for the neighbourhood.

In December 2003, the Board circulated the list three (3) surplus school properties to the City of Hamilton. However, there are several more school sites that the Board has indicated it intends to be declared surplus within the next few years. Staff has reviewed
all current and up-coming surplus school sites to determine the need for their acquisition for municipal parkland purposes.

Given the very limited resources within the City’s parkland fund, the municipality cannot purchase all the surplus school sites, even though deficiencies may exist. A series of criteria were established by staff to assess which of these schools should be considered of highest priority for purchase. This analysis concluded the City should purchase two (2) school sites for the following reasons:

- Tweedsmuir Elementary (50 Victoria Street N.) – the site is adjacent to J.C. Beemer Park and its purchase would not only address a neighbourhood deficiency, but also create more useable space within the existing park; and,

- Fairfield Elementary School (1501 Barton Street E.) – The neighbourhood has a significant parkland deficiency. Purchase of this site will improve the distribution of parkland within the neighbourhood.

In addition, staff assessed if any of the schools that are to be demolished have historic or architectural significance.

**BACKGROUND:**

**1.0 Introduction**

The purpose of this report is to respond to the second phase of the Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board’s (HWDSB) revitalization plan.

On a City-wide basis, the HWDSB now has considerably more student capacity than there is student enrolment. The excess capacity, and the student accommodation problems it generates is aggravated by the fact there are too many schools in the system. The Board is forced to bus students from new development areas to the nearest school, leading to potential overcrowding, while more distant schools remain underutilized. Some schools are severely under capacity (60%) while others are operating at levels well over capacity (120%).

This imbalance in school capacity restricts the HWDSB’s eligibility to pay for the construction all new schools. The HWDSB is not eligible to receive New Pupil Place Grants from the Ministry of Education nor collect education development charges until its surplus capacity is resolved.

**2.0 HWDSB School Revitalization Strategy**

The HWDSB approved a School Revitalization Strategy in December 2002. The strategy includes two (2) integrated components: school catchment area redefinition and pupil accommodation (school closures and new school development). The objective of the strategy is to rebuild and revitalize the educational infrastructure of the Hamilton-Wentworth public school system.
Closure of existing schools is a difficult and controversial process, but it will help eliminate excess capacity and allow the HWDSB to become eligible for New Pupil Place Grants from the Ministry of Education and collect education development charges that are essential to finance construction of new schools. Catchment area redefinition will, amongst other things, address demographic changes within neighbourhoods and maximize the use of schools across the entire system. Further, the Board is moving towards a new JK-8 school accommodation model for its new schools, which replaces the previous elementary (JK-5) and middle school (6-8) system. This strategy will be implemented over a several years.

*Phase 1:* In the first phase, the Board approved the closure of seventeen (17) schools and the construction new schools. In response, City Council, at its meeting of June 17, 2003, approved a recommendation to purchase Peace Memorial Elementary School (Ward 6), and Grange Elementary School (Ward 12) for park purposes. Grange School will not close until the new Kitty Murray Lane (Meadowlands) School is built in 2005.

*Phase 2* deals with 3 geographic areas:

- City East (lower city – centre line of Sherman Avenue east to the Red Hill Creek)
- City West (lower city – centre line of Sherman Avenue west to former Dundas boundary)
- Dundas

The City East and West accommodation strategies were approved by the Board on September 23, 2003, and a modified Dundas Accommodation Strategy was approved on January 26, 2004.
City East:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Neighbourhood</th>
<th>School Name</th>
<th>Address</th>
<th>Area (ha.)</th>
<th>Strategy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ward 3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stipely</td>
<td>Prince of Wales</td>
<td>40 Lottridge St.</td>
<td>1.16</td>
<td>Closure June 2006. New school to be built on Price of Wales site to open September 2008.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homeside</td>
<td>Fairfield</td>
<td>1501 Barton St. E.</td>
<td>0.87</td>
<td>Closure June 2004.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Fairfield site is to be sold following closure.

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1 For the purposes of this report, the proposed school changes that have not been part of the previous Report PD03135 are reviewed. The closure of Lloyd George was dealt with in Report PD03135, approved by City Council on June 17, 2003.
City West:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Neighbourhood</th>
<th>School Name</th>
<th>Address</th>
<th>Area (ha.)</th>
<th>Strategy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ward 2</td>
<td>Beasley</td>
<td>Dr. Davey (JK-5)</td>
<td>99 Ferguson Avenue N.</td>
<td>0.76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Queen Victoria</td>
<td>201 Walnut Street S.</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>Closure June 2006.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Stinson</td>
<td>Stinson Street</td>
<td>200 Stinson Street</td>
<td>0.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tweedsmuir</td>
<td>50 Victoria Street N.</td>
<td>0.37</td>
<td>Closure June 2008.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Following closure, the Queen Victoria and Tweedsmuir School sites are to be sold.

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For the purposes of this report, the proposed school changes that have not been part of the previous Report PD03135 are reviewed. The closure of Sanford, Gibson, and Robert land were dealt with in Report PD03135, approved by City Council on June 17, 2003.
3.0 Review of Parkland Deficiency

The City’s Planning and Development Department, Long Range Planning and Design Division, with the assistance of the Real Estate Section, Public Works Department, Open Space Development and Parks Maintenance Sections and Public Health and Community Services Department - Culture and Recreation Division reviewed the need for parkland in the neighbourhoods or communities serviced by these six (6) school sites, which are to be sold by the HWDSB.

A large percentage of neighbourhoods in the City have current parkland deficiencies. Even though deficiencies may exist, the City cannot afford to purchase all the surplus school sites. Priorities for the purchase are based on the following considerations:

- The existence and distribution of parks within the neighbourhood.
- The location of the school site.
- The proximity of park sites in adjacent neighbourhoods.
- A current parkland deficit greater than one (1) hectare.

An evaluation of each of the six (6) school sites is contained in Appendices “B” and “C”, as attached to Report PD03135(a). The following have been identified as the highest priorities:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>Neighbourhood</th>
<th>Site Area</th>
<th>Parkland Deficiency (ha.)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fairfield</td>
<td>Homeside</td>
<td>.97</td>
<td>5.35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tweedsmuir</td>
<td>Lansdale</td>
<td>.37</td>
<td>6.71</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
As noted in Appendix ‘B’, the other four (4) school sites do not meet all of the criteria listed above and, as such, are not recommended for acquisition.

4.0 Review of Heritage Matters

Stinson School is designated under Part IV of Ontario Heritage Act (89-219). The majority of its interior and exterior elements are identified in reasons for the designation.

Stinson is subject to a Heritage Conservation Easement under the Ontario Heritage Act, Section 37. Heritage conservation easements are generally accepted as the most important preservation tool under the Ontario Heritage Act, as they specifically seek to prevent demolition. This easement was negotiated as a condition of a previous Ministry of Culture grant ($147,200) to Hamilton Board of Education. The easement is intended to protect investment of public funds in the renewal and preservation of the existing buildings heritage. It restricts building demolition and controls alterations to the façade. The grant funding received by the HWDSB stipulated the continued use of facilities until 2010. The City is the easement holder and serves as the primary custodian or steward for these significant attributes of the property.

Stinson School comprises two (2) substantial building masses. The front building was constructed 1894-5 with a rear addition built in 1915. It is considered a landmark because it occupies a full block. It is one of three remaining 19th century schools in the City, and the only one used fully for educational purposes.

Tweedsmuir, Hillcrest, Prince of Wales and Fairfield Schools are listed on the City of Hamilton’s Inventory of Buildings of Architectural and/or Historical Interest list. In staff’s opinion, they may be worthy of designation under the Ontario Heritage Act, but their demolition is not currently restricted. Should the buildings be demolished a full recording of the original building with measured drawings, photogrammetry is considered desirable.

The HWDSB requested that the City inform them if it is interested in purchasing any of these surplus properties. In order to determine the City’s interest in these properties, the Real Estate Section circulated the list to all City Departments and Councillors to comment on which properties were required to carry on the core business activities of the City.

**ANALYSIS OF ALTERNATIVES:**

If the recommended sites are not purchased by the City, and are redeveloped by private interests, the only parkland benefit to ameliorate existing deficits in these neighbourhoods would come from development approval requirements. These would be minimal. As per the City’s Parkland Dedication By-law No. 03-199, as a condition of development or redevelopment or the subdivision of land, the City could either require dedication of 5% of the lands or receive 5% cash in lieu of parkland dedication. Neither of these options would address the parkland shortages in these neighbourhoods.
It should be noted the opportunity to purchase suitable property to significantly increase parkland in an established area of the City is extremely rare. In the past, when parkland is required in older sections of the city, the Real Estate Section has been directed to purchase a series of smaller single properties as they come onto the market. This process is long, costly and seldom results in the assembly of sufficient land for establishment of a park in the required time frame.

**FINANCIAL/STAFFING/LEGAL IMPLICATIONS:**

The current balance, as of December 31, 2003, of the Parkland Acquisition Fund for Wards 1 to 8 (original City of Hamilton) is $2,353,929. The current market value of each of the two (2) school sites to be acquired will be determined by an appraisal. In the interim, their current value assessment is offered as rough estimates of value. The current value assessment of Fairfield (land and building) is $1,122,000, and Tweedsmuir Elementary School (land and building) is $757,000. Market value is expected to be significantly lower than the assessed values.

Once the City acquires these sites, they would have to be developed into parkland suitable for the residents and users of the area. Those funds would come from the Open Space Development budget, which is traditionally funded from the park land dedication accounts or the development charges reserves, if they apply.

The exact costs associated with the purchase of these sites will be known once the appraisals, condition assessment and environmental audits are complete. A report will be prepared for further consideration by City Council to address the issue of funding, prior to a final acquisition decision.

**POLICIES AFFECTING PROPOSAL:**

Both the Planning and Development, Long Range Planning and Design, and the Public Works Department, Operations and Maintenance Divisions reviewed the Summary of Parkland Deficiency, which concludes that the neighbourhoods around Tweedsmuir and Fairfield Schools are deficient in parkland.

**CONSULTATION WITH RELEVANT DEPARTMENTS/AGENCIES:**

The Real Estate Section circulated the HWDSB’s list of surplus schools to all City Departments and Councillors. In addition to the Long Range Planning and Design Division, the Public Health and Community Services Department and the Operations and Maintenance Division of the Public Works Department, indicated that two (2) sites should be pursued to correct certain parkland deficiencies within the City. The Corporate Services Department provided information on the current balance of the Parkland Acquisition Fund for Wards 1-8 (original City of Hamilton).
CITY STRATEGIC COMMITMENT:

Purchasing these sites will allow for the development of parkland in under serviced areas of the city. In supporting this direction, the City will be directly accomplishing a number of goals of Vision 2020. Specifically:

- to preserve our natural and historical heritage;
- to promote Hamilton’s environment as a desirable place to live and work; and,
- to develop our physical environments to enable the participation of all.

CONCLUSION:

Based on the foregoing, the following recommendations are:

(a) That staff of the Planning and Development Department, Development and Real Estate Division be authorized and directed to commission:

   (i) one Building Condition Assessment Study;
   (ii) one Environmental Audit; and,
   (iii) one appraisal to establish market value

   for each property occupied by Fairfield Elementary School (Homeside Neighbourhood) and Tweedsmuir Elementary School (Lansale Neighbourhood), identified as priority acquisitions and shown on Appendix “A” to Report PD03135(a).

(b) That staff of the Planning and Development Department, Development and Real Estate Division be authorized and directed to initiate negotiations with the HWDSB for the acquisition of Tweedsmuir and Fairfield Elementary Schools to alleviate parkland shortages in these respective neighbourhoods.

(c) In the event, the City is successful in acquiring the Tweedsmuir and Fairfield school sites that the Director of Fleet and Facilities, be directed and authorized to make the necessary application for demolition.

(d) That City staff be authorized to discuss with the School Board matters related to the conditions of sale and redevelopment of the Stinson School site with the aim of preserving this facility, in light of the existence of the municipal heritage easement on the building.

(e) That City Council request the HWDSB to extend their ninety-day request for interest until July 2, 2004, to allow the City time to obtain appraisals and condition reports for the two school sites identified in sub-section (d) above.
(f) That City Council inform the HWDSB that the City is not interested in acquisition of the Queen Victoria, Dundas District, Pleasant Valley and Central Park School sites.

bf/jhe

Attach.
SCHOOL CLOSURES – PROPERTY INFORMATION

**Former City of Hamilton**
All of the above noted school sites are designated Major Institutional in the Official Plan, which permits residential uses provided they are compatible with the surrounding area, and are in keeping with the Residential policies set out in Sub-sections A.2.1 and C.7 of the Official Plan. Potential for redevelopment for most of the sites is limited to residential and institutional uses. For single and two family residential developments, a Plan of Subdivision application would be required. Use of the building or site for anything other than residential or institutional would require an Official Plan Amendment and rezoning.

**Fairfield School** is located in the Homeside Neighbourhood. The property is zoned “C” (Urban Protected Residential) District. There is an open space component associated with this property along with a play structure. There is one park (1 ha), which is part of the hydro corridor in the southern part of the neighbourhood. According to the summary of park deficiencies in Hamilton, there is a deficiency of 5.35 ha. Based on the limited park areas within the neighbourhood, and this site is almost a hectare in size, this site is considered as a high priority for purchase.

The school is listed on the City of Hamilton Inventory of Buildings of Architectural and/or Historical Interest. In staff’s opinion, it may be worthy of designation under the [Ontario Heritage Act](#). Should the building be demolished, a full recording of the original building with measured drawings and photogrammetry, prior to demolition is desirable.

**Tweedsmuir School** is located in the Lansdale neighbourhood. The lands are zoned “DE-3” (Multiple dwellings, etc.) District. The school site is adjacent to J.C. Beemer Park. The Lansdale neighbourhood has a deficit of 6.71 ha in size. There is park in the northern part of the neighbourhood. This land is considered as a high priority purchase because it is adjacent to an existing park and the additional school board land would create a park 1 ha in size, which is a standard size for a neighbourhood park. Furthermore, it would reduce the deficiency in this area.

The School is listed on the City of Hamilton Inventory of Buildings of Architectural and/or Historical Interest. In staff’s opinion, it may be worthy of designation under Ontario Heritage Act. Should the building be demolished a full recording of the original building with measured drawings, photogrammetry prior to demolition is desirable.
Queen Victoria School is located in the Corktown neighbourhood. The lands are zoned “D” (Urban Protected residential – One and Two Family dwellings District). There is a parkland deficiency in this area of 1.76 ha. Notwithstanding the deficit, there are sufficient park sites within the Corktown neighbourhood as well as park in the Stinson neighbourhood. In addition, significant investment has been made in parkland in this area within the last 10 years. This land is considered as a low priority for purchase.

Former Town of Dundas
All of the above noted school sites are designated Major Institutional in the Official Plan. In addition to institutional uses, this designation permits residential uses provided they are compatible with the surrounding area. However, the lands are zoned Public and Private Service Zone (PPS), which restricts the lands for institutional purposes. Any other use would require a rezoning and possible Official Plan Amendment.

Pleasant Valley School is in the Pleasant Valley West neighbourhood. According to the Parkland deficiency this neighbourhood has surplus parkland. However, there is no neighbourhood park in the immediate area. Notwithstanding the deficiency, this park would be considered as a medium priority for acquisition because it provides for a better distribution of park in the neighbourhood.

Central park school is in the Creighton East neighbourhood. There is a deficiency of 0.74 ha in this neighbourhood and there are no parks in the neighbourhood. Notwithstanding the above, this site is not appropriate for purchase because it is located behind several homes, creating limited access and safety concerns. This site is considered as a low priority.

Dundas District High school is located in the Colborne neighbourhood. Similar to the Central park site, this neighbourhood has a deficit of 0.66 ha and no parks within the neighbourhood. Notwithstanding the above, this school site would be considered as a medium priority for neighbourhood park purchase because it is located on the periphery of the neighbourhood and along a busy arterial road.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Neighbourhood (Planning Unit)</th>
<th>School Name</th>
<th>Address</th>
<th>School Site Area (ha.)</th>
<th>2001 Pop</th>
<th>Parks</th>
<th>Play Structures (Yes/No)</th>
<th>Other Facilities Used by City</th>
<th>Park Deficiencies by Neighbourhood (1 ha/1000 pop.)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ward 2</td>
<td>Corktown (6702)</td>
<td>Queen Victoria</td>
<td>201 Walnut St. S.</td>
<td>0.70</td>
<td>1. Corktown Park - Community</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>3 soccer fields, 1 multipurpose court, spray pad</td>
<td>1.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2. Wolverston Park - N'hood</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>1 multipurpose court, wade pool</td>
<td>0.56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3. Shamrock Park - N'hood</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.74</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>4855</td>
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<td>Ward 3</td>
<td>Landsdale (6608)</td>
<td>Tweedsmuir</td>
<td>50 Victoria Ave. N.</td>
<td>0.37</td>
<td>1. J.C. Beemer - N'hood</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Multipurpose court, spray pad</td>
<td>0.69</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2. Birge Park - N'hood</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>1 multipurpose court,</td>
<td>0.42</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
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<td>7821</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ward 4</td>
<td>Homeside (6509)</td>
<td>Fairfield</td>
<td>1501 Barton St. E.</td>
<td>0.97</td>
<td>1. Andrew Warburton Memorial Park - N'hood</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Multipurpose court, spray pad,</td>
<td>1.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>swim/wade pool</td>
<td>6345</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ward 13</td>
<td>Creighton East (2217)</td>
<td>Central Park</td>
<td>14 Kemp Dr.</td>
<td>2.10</td>
<td>no existing n'hood parks but access and visibility is limited creating safety concerns</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>740</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Colborne (2220)</td>
<td>Dundas District</td>
<td>397 King St. W.</td>
<td>0.80</td>
<td>no existing n'hood parks - poor location - on periphery of n'hood</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>661</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pleasant Valley West (2201)</td>
<td>Pleasant Valley</td>
<td>46 Turnbull Rd.</td>
<td>1.50</td>
<td>1. Sanctuary Park - N'hood</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>2 soccer fields</td>
<td>1336</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>3.69</td>
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