



Hamilton

INFORMATION REPORT

**Ward 2
IMPLICATIONS**

To:	Chair and Members Emergency & Community Services Committee		
From:	Joe-Anne Priel General Manager, Community Services Department	Telephone: Facsimile: E-mail:	905 546-4839 905 540-5608 jpriel@hamilton.ca
Date:	May 30, 2008		
Re:	Beasley Community Centre (ECS07092(a)) (Ward 2)		

Council Direction:

At its meeting of December 12, 2007, Council approved Item 10 of the Emergency & Community Services Committee Report 07-015, as follows:

10. Beasley Community Centre (ECS07092) (Ward 2) (Item 8.3)

That the General Manager of Community Services be authorized and directed to draft, in partnership with the Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board, an Agreement respecting the design and build of a City owned community centre that is to be joined to the new school building, which is scheduled to be constructed on the existing site of the Dr. Edgar Davey Elementary School, and to report back to the Emergency & Community Services Committee.

Information:

Significant progress has been made in the plans for building a Community Centre in Beasley. This report provides an update on the effective collaboration between Hamilton Wentworth District School Board (HWDSB) and City staff groups, which resulted in an innovative and effective design that will support the development of a true "community hub" in Beasley. Further, this report advises that the Community Centre, due to the integration within the school building, can best be built by the HWDSB with City funds and leased to the City in return for a long-term, renewable lease.

Collaborative Approach

City and the HWDSB staff groups have been working collaboratively to develop plans for the Beasley Community Centre to be built in conjunction with the replacement school on the Dr. Edgar Davey Elementary School site. Representatives from Wesley Urban Ministries, who currently operates the Ontario Early Years Centre (OEYC) at the existing Beasley Community Centre, have participated in all meetings, as has the architect who is revising existing school plans to accommodate this project. All members of this informal working group have been encouraged by the opportunities that this collaborative approach as provided.

While the primary topic discussed has been changes to the standard HWDSB 3-story school plan, which is required to incorporate the Community Centre; discussions have included building aesthetics, on-site waste management, parking & traffic flow, as well as park access & improvements. A significant amount of time has been spent determining ways to increase the amount and multi-use aspect of common space that could be shared by both students and community members at different times of day. The resulting building and site plans are shown in Appendix “A” to Report ECS07092(a).

Creation of a Community Hub

The working group has developed plans for the Community Centre that is much more integrated within the school building design than first discussed. The proposed integrated building plan can provide synergistic benefits beyond those possible with a separate centre simply attached to the school, and certainly more than a new community centre located elsewhere in the community. Further, it addresses many of the challenges that exist on this small site that could not otherwise be satisfactorily addressed.

Key features of the proposed Community Centre include:

- A Wilson Street frontage for improved visibility, with a separate entrance and clear City signage;
- Interior access between Community Centre and gymnasium with restricted access to classroom spaces;
- Dedicated and purposefully designed space for the OEYC;
- Shared use of dedicated kitchen space by OEYC, Beasley Community Centre programs (such as the existing breakfast program), and school special events;
- Shared / coordinated use of ‘kindergarten’ playground space with school and OEYC participants;
- A multi-purpose room for daytime and evening programming;
- Adequate staff office space and storage;
- Controlled access to non-classroom space within the school on the 2nd floor, including the school library, computer laboratory and an equipped exercise room for potential after-school use by either City or community organization led programming. The proposed floor plan eliminates physical and classroom security issues that would otherwise prevent such collaborative uses of this space in the future;

SUBJECT: Beasley Community Centre (ECS07092(a)) (Ward 2) – Page 3 of 6

- Access to the school elevator for 2nd floor accessibility; and,
- Suitable onsite parking for Community Centre participants with an enlarged parking space with an electrical connection for periodic visits from the Community Health Bus.

At a minimum, the proposed design allows for community use of the school gym after school hours for recreational programming, which will supplement programs that will occur in the community centre multi-purpose room. Dedicated space for the OEYC with shared use of the kitchen facilities is also provided for in this design.

In addition, the floor plan provides for community use of the school library, computer lab, seminar room and exercise room after normal school hours should the need arise. While agreements for such use have not been negotiated, this floor plan maintains this option as a possible and workable opportunity to be pursued in the future.

This design overcomes many of the limitations that are present with this small site while leveraging the existing school design with minimal modifications. In addition, the proposed floor plan does address many of the security and people flow concerns that were raised when an integrated building approach was first proposed and allows for elements such as the kitchen and elevator to be shared between the school and community centre. It goes beyond what was originally discussed for the site, and provides much greater community access to the school building by the extended community. In short, the integration of the Community Centre within the redesigned school leverages these two public assets to provide flexible and appropriate space needed for the creation of a true community hub in Beasley. Each facility is greater than it would otherwise be on this constrained site, and each change to the original design has been made with improved community access as the driver.

Site Constraints & Opportunities

The constrained school site and decision to co-locate the ~6000 ft² Community Centre on HWDSB property puts further pressure on remaining space for school playgrounds and required parking. Three offsetting solutions have been identified and will be included in the site plan that will be submitted to the City by HWDSB:

- Provide exclusive, *school day* use of approximately 6000 ft² of City park land, immediately adjacent to the school playground. This area would be fenced to ensure security for and control of students during the school day, with gates locked in the open position outside of school hours. It is proposed that a multi-purpose court be installed in this area, for use by students during the school day and by residents outside of school hours.
- Road closure and sale of the dead-end section of Kelly Street that is immediately north of the HWDSB property to HWDSB, helping the school meet the required number of parking spaces and reduce the amount of parking elsewhere on this compact site. This will require a road closure of this underutilized portion of Kelly Street for which there is no thoroughfare required.

SUBJECT: Beasley Community Centre (ECS07092(a)) (Ward 2) – Page 4 of 6

- Incorporate the dead-end section of Elgin Street that is immediately west of the HWDSB property into the site access and parking solution for the community centre and school. This approach better utilizes this dead-end roadway and resolves concerns raised by City Planning representatives related to vehicle traffic and waste storage. This will require a road closure of this underutilized portion of Elgin Street for which there is no thoroughfare required, and an easement provided to the neighbouring Horizon Utilities hydro transformer site.

City representatives who have been meeting with HWDSB to develop the plans provided in Appendix B support all three solutions, subject to final review by the appropriate City Departments. They believe that these solutions are the best overall approach to addressing the site restrictions and balance HWDSB, City and resident perspectives.

When submitted, the site plan will identify some trees on City property that are to be removed to accommodate the proposed school and community centre design, particularly in the required play area. Plans have been optimized to reduce the impact on existing trees and park space to the greatest extent possible. Landscape plans to be submitted will recognize these concerns and remediate appropriately.

Long Term Lease

The original concept presented to Council in November envisioned a Community Centre that was attached to the school, built on HWDSB property. Ownership of the building by the City was envisioned, with a long-term lease from HWDSB for the land below the building. For the reasons outlined in this report, the current design of the Community Centre being proposed is nested within the school, with the school library and other rooms directly on top of the Community Centre space (see Appendix A to Report ECS07092(a)). In this configuration, direct ownership by the City of the Community Centre space becomes problematic.

The City's legal services division has recommended that a lease arrangement is the most feasible solution to this situation, albeit not the only solution. Ownership of the entire building, including the Community Centre, would be maintained by HWDSB. In the proposed arrangement, the City would provide construction costs for the portions of the project that are directly related to the Community Centre, and in return, receive a long-term, renewable lease from HWDSB. Monthly lease costs would only include amounts required for the ongoing maintenance & operation of the Community Centre space (i.e.: utilities).

Lease provisions would have to be negotiated to protect both the City's investment and ongoing interest in the Community Centre. The City's legal department has indicated that appropriate protections could be included in a lease, following approaches used in other lease arrangements in which the City has been involved. Key interests of the City to be protected through lease provisions include:

SUBJECT: Beasley Community Centre (ECS07092(a)) (Ward 2) – Page 5 of 6

- City lease would be for a twenty-five year period, with rights to renew after the twenty-five year period;
- Financial protection of the City's capital investment to construct the Community Centre portion of the project. It is envisioned that the investment would be protected on a straight line, declining balance basis over a twenty-five year period. Should HWDSB need to cancel the lease for some unforeseen reason, it would be required to repay the City the remaining balance;
- City would be among the parties with a first right of purchase in the event that the school was sold, in accordance with the Education Act.

The foregoing protections in favour of the City will have to be negotiated with the HWDSB along with the other lease provisions. Lease provisions will be developed in cooperation with the City's legal services division.

Financial

Project cost estimates are \$2.0 million, representing the City's share of design, construction and contingency costs. This estimate includes the proposed building as well as outdoor site improvements (parking, etc.), but does not include any estimate for additional improvements to Beasley. This project has been listed by Council on their March 20, 2008 Capital Budget Priorities list; financing of this project has not been further investigated pending additional direction of Council.

Review by Hamilton Wentworth District School Board Trustees

HWDSB staff will be presenting this overall project to school board Trustees at their June meeting and seeking approval to move forward with this concept. HWDSB staff has indicated that they cannot proceed with implementation of this project, as presented, until approval has been received. Trustee support is anticipated.

Next Steps

Staff are preparing agreements with HWDSB that protect City interests and leverage opportunities that co-location with the school may provide. All agreements will be prepared in a form satisfactory to the City Solicitor and presented to Council at a later date.

In addition, various applications will be submitted by HWDSB that are required to implement this project in time for the September 2010 required school re-opening. While each agreement and application need be prepared and reviewed to ensure all City interests are protected, it is important to highlight the inter-dependencies of each item that will come before staff and Council in the upcoming months. In order for this project to progress on schedule and succeed, all parties must understand the overall direction and agree in principle to that direction.

SUBJECT: Beasley Community Centre (ECS07092(a)) (Ward 2) – Page 6 of 6

HWDSB staff support this project and have been collaborative partners in the discussions. They do emphasize, however, that delays on the necessary approvals required will jeopardize the timely opening of their school in September 2010, which would be unacceptable to Board Trustees and the community. A timetable has been developed that reaches the required construction date and is respectful of the City's required approval processes and timeframes.

Next steps include:

- HWDSB will apply to rezone the current school site to allow construction of the community centre on HWDSB land;
- HWDSB will apply to close and purchase the portion of Kelly Street that immediately adjacent to the north border of their site;
- City will begin process of closing the affected portions of Elgin Street and Kelly Street;
- City will develop any mutual access agreement and necessary easements across Elgin Street and Kelly Street in favour of the various parties;
- Site plans will be submitted for approval pending zoning and road closure decisions;
- Construction, Facility Lease agreements and a Park-Use agreement will be prepared in a form satisfactory to the City Solicitor;
- Sub-lease agreement with Wesley Urban Ministries (OEYC) will be prepared in a form satisfactory to the City Solicitor and other parties;
- Existing reciprocal use agreements between the Recreation Division and HWDSB will be updated to include the gym at this new school.

Joe-Anne Priel
General Manager,
Community Services Department

Diagram 2

Ground Floor

Community Centre &
Gym highlighted

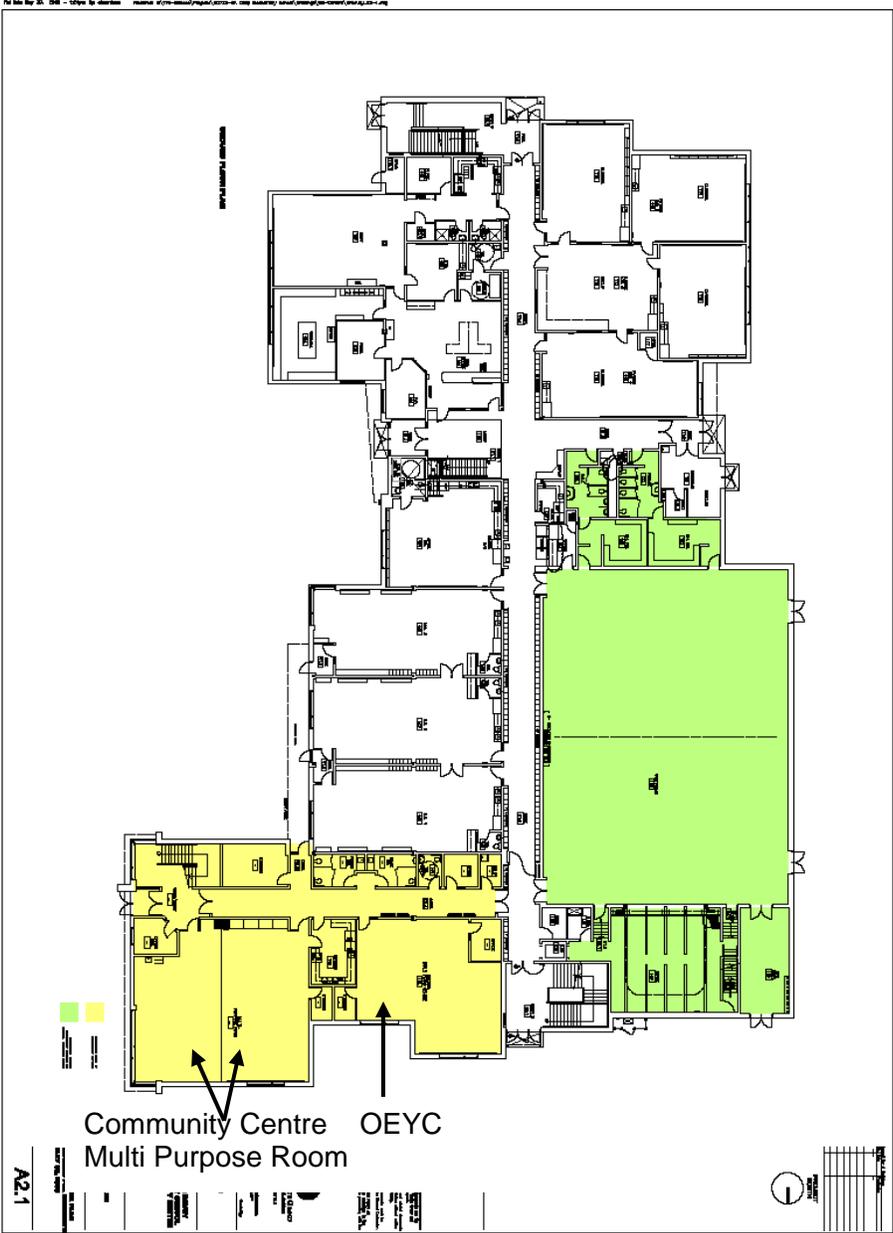
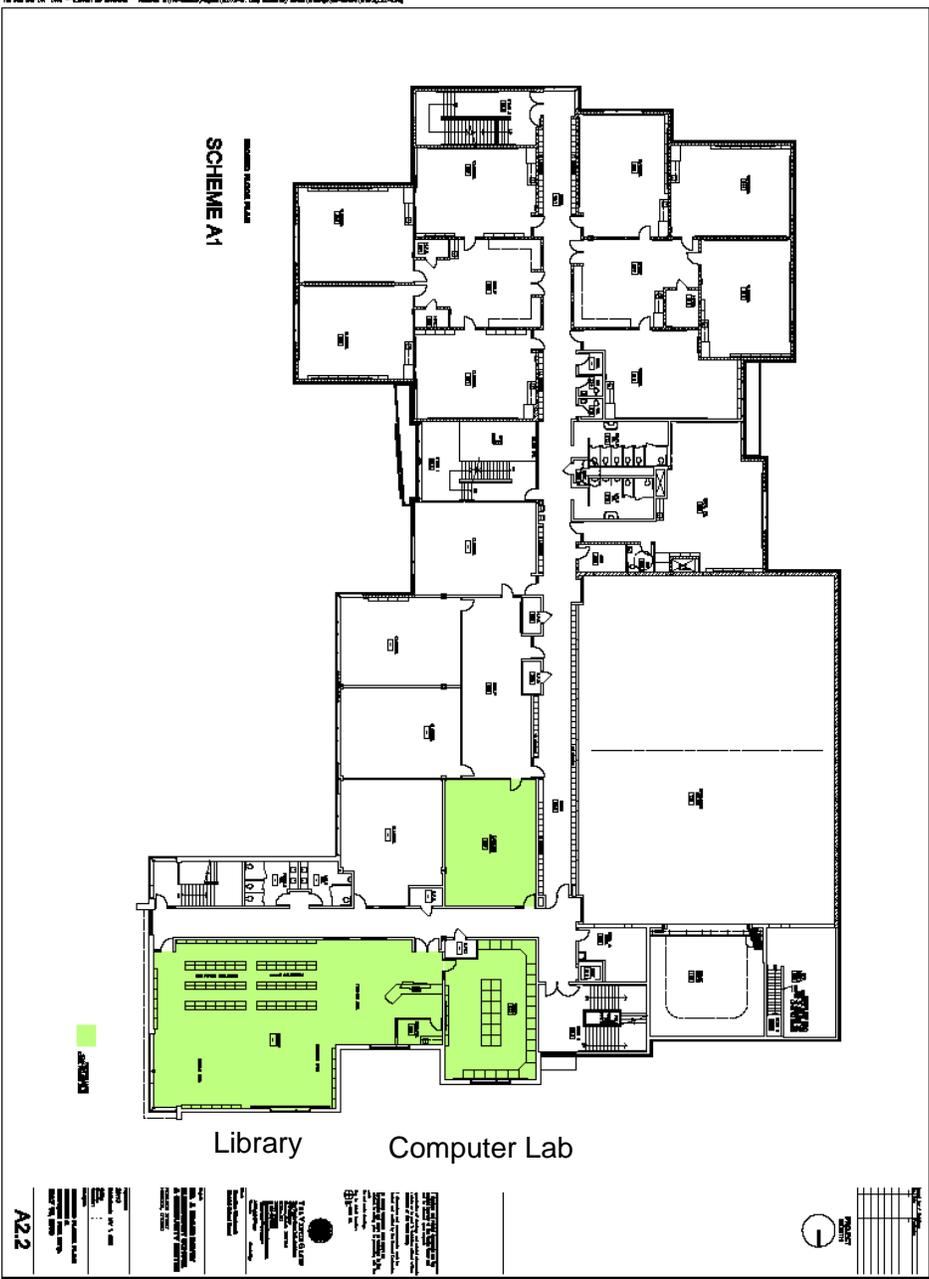


Diagram 3:
Second Floor of School.
Potential community-use space overtop Community Centre highlighted



Layout of second floor not finalized.