

Good morning Chair Sharman, Mayor Goldring, Members of Committee & Staff:

On behalf of the BurlingtonGreen Environmental Association, I appreciate the opportunity to offer comment on the staff report regarding the criteria to purchase surplus school sites. You may recall BurlingtonGreen shared input on the Strategic Land Acquisition Fund back in May of this year and this item is directly related.

We support the staff recommendations to approve criteria and share it during a 2012 stakeholder and public consultation process. While our thoughts may differ on some of the discussion points identified, we do believe the implementation of criteria to be a definite step forward in providing a consistent framework of which to assess surplus school lands.

When delegating on the Parks and Rec Master Plan, the draft Strategic Land Acquisition fund as well as our more recent input regarding the City's proposed strategic plan, we have offered our viewpoint on the need for the City to create a greenspace masterplan with criteria to rank mapped inventory. We suggest the proposed school site acquisition process would dovetail this masterplan.

As Burlington fast approaches buildout, so to do increased pressures for development. We suggest a proactive approach the greenspace masterplan would provide to be appropriate and necessary. Taking stock of greenspace and ranking it based on established criteria and integrating the strategic acquisition plan are required to support vibrant neighbourhoods and is needed before further development continues in Burlington.

While oversimplified, imagine if you will an overlay map system. A map that highlights currently City owned greenspace, an overlay with *school site greenspace* and another with other private/corporately owned greenspace. Factor in intensification planning models to paint a picture of what our communities could look like with and without accessible, walk to greenspace.

The report's Decision Making Matrix may fall short of recognizing the true "value" of the school property's greenspace if not applied against a citywide greenspace backdrop. What if there are dual or multiple surplus school sites for sale at any given time? What if there are school sites available for purchase at the same time as another at risk area of greenspace in the City? We suggest an overarching framework would better address this extremely important issue. Ottawa has a model that Burlington could consider.

In summary, BurlingtonGreen views greenspace preservation as a vital component in respecting the health of the local environment and of significant benefit in supporting a quality of life for the citizens of Burlington. We would welcome the opportunity to learn of the City's interest in supporting our longstanding recommendation to establish a greenspace masterplan of which the surplus school site criteria and process can be integrated.

Amy Schnurr  
Executive Director

BurlingtonGreen Environmental Association