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Town of Aurora  
**Committee of the Whole Report**  
No. PDS24-062

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**Subject:** George Street Parkland Acquisition Next Steps – Demolition, Zoning and Park Design Consultation

**Prepared by:** Lisa Hausz, Manager, Economic Development

**Department:** Planning and Development Services

**Date:** June 4, 2024

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## Recommendation

1. That Report No. PDS24-062 be received; and
2. That staff be directed to proceed with the process to demolish the building and prepare the site for development; and
3. That a new capital project with total budget authority of \$415,800 be approved, to be funded from the Proceeds from Land Sales reserve; and
4. That staff be directed to begin the public consultation process for the design of the park and report back to Council; and
5. That staff be directed to proceed with the process to rezone the George Street property as outlined herein.

## Executive Summary

On April 11, 2024 the Town of Aurora completed the process to acquire 115 George Street from the York Region District School Board. The purchase price was \$10,722,000, which was funded from the CIL Parkland reserve. The property was acquired with the intention of a neighbourhood park, defined in the Parks and Recreation Master Plan as a park servicing the immediate surrounding residential area, of which the minimum size is approximately 1.6 to 4 hectares (4-10 acres) to allow for various outdoor recreation amenities such as multi-use courts, a playground or other outdoor recreation uses. The site, now in the ownership of the Town, is ready to proceed with next steps.

- The George Street School building is being prepared for demolition.

- The parkland design will be considered through a public consultation process.
- Staff recommend beginning the process of a Town-initiated amendment to the Zoning By-law.

## **Background**

**The George Street School building is being prepared for demolition.**

The Town closed the acquisition of 115 George Street on April 11, 2024 and immediately began preparations for demolition. The property has been cleared of any York Region District School Board property and has been secured. The next step is to demolish and remove the former school building, clearing the property of building materials, and preparing the property for future servicing. The process will be managed by the Operations and Parks team. It is anticipated that that demolition and removal will take place in Fall 2024, pending Council approval.

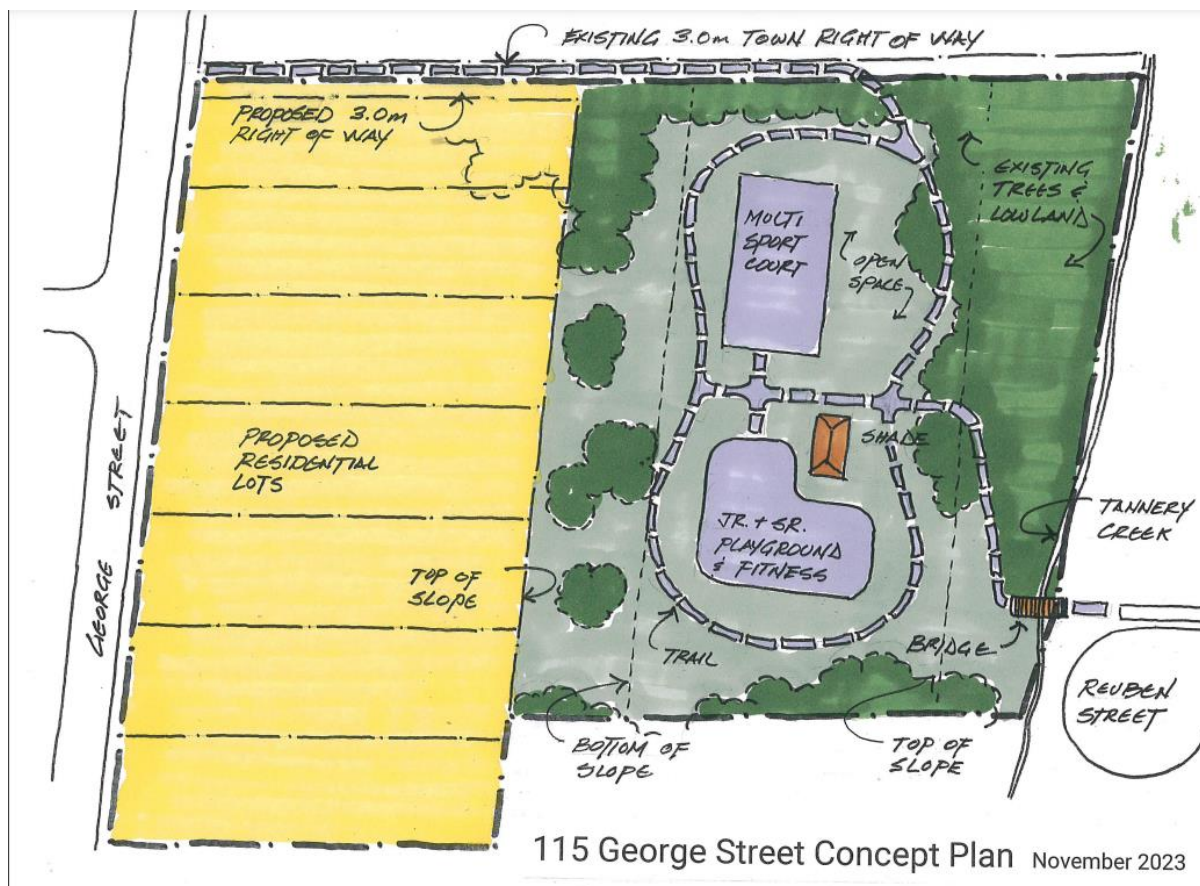
## **Analysis**

**The parkland design will be considered through a public consultation process.**

The newly acquired parkland will undergo a public consultation process to identify the community needs and amenity preferences for the new neighbourhood park. The Parks team will manage the public consultation and outreach through several channels including EngageAurora.ca, signage on the property, and a public information centre event to engage and seek feedback. Public engagement opportunities will commence once staff review feasibility of the originally proposed amenities for the site, which include junior and senior play structures, a shade shelter, and a multi-purpose court. Once preliminary concepts are finalized, staff will present the public with opportunities to review and comment on the proposals.

Staff recommend beginning the process of a Town-initiated amendment to the Zoning By-law..

The rezoning proposal for the subject lands at 115 George Street aims to optimize land usage for residential and recreational purposes. With approximately 130 metre (426 feet) of frontage along this portion of George Street, the area is suitable to be rezoned from Institutional to "R3 - Detached Third Density" zoning category. The R3 zoning has the potential to create seven to eight single detached residential lots, each with a lot frontage of 15 metre (50 feet) and a lot area of 460 square metres (4,951 square feet). This adjustment aligns the Official Plan policy for compatibility with the existing adjacent residential lots. Concurrently, the remaining area, previously designated as Institutional, is proposed to be rezoned to open space, safeguarding it for future community use as a neighborhood park. This proactive measure ensures that no further development encroaches upon this valuable green space, preserving it for the well-being and enjoyment of residents. Importantly, these proposed zoning adjustments operate within the framework of the existing Official Plan, eliminating the necessity for an Official Plan amendment while accommodating evolving community needs.



Once staff have completed the process set out in the *Planning Act*, a further report will be brought to Council recommending that a site-specific zoning by-law amendment be enacted for the subject property.

### Advisory Committee Review

Consultation will include discussions with the Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee, the Accessibility Advisory Committee, and the Environmental Advisory Committee.

### Legal Considerations

With the acquisition of the 115 George Street property, the Town is now in control of the property. The Town will be responsible for the property and the former school building located on the lands, including any associated liability and risks. The Town will also be required to carry insurance coverage appropriate for this property and any structure located on it, until such time as the building is demolished and cleared. If the property is cleared of any structures, the risk relating to liability and damages will be reduced.

If Council directs staff to proceed with the process to rezone the property, staff will follow the process set out in the *Planning Act*, which includes holding at least one public meeting to give the public an opportunity to make representations in respect of the proposed zoning by-law amendment.

### Financial Implications

The total estimated cost to demolish, remove the building, and complete the initial preparation of the property for future development is \$415,800 as summarized in Table 1. Future site preparation costs, if required, will be brought forward to Council for consideration when appropriate.

**Table 1**  
**Estimated Site Preparation & Servicing Costs**

Item	Amount
Building Demolition	378,000
Contingency (10 Percent)	37,800
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$415,800</b>

It is recommended that a new capital project with total budget authority \$415,800 be approved to be funded from the Proceeds from the Sale of Land reserve. Any proceeds from the re-sale of land would be contributed toward this same reserve.

## **Communications Considerations**

This report will be shared online to inform the public. Communications will also assist with the public consultation process to identify the community needs and preferences for the new neighbourhood park, through several channels including EngageAurora.ca, signage on the property, and public open house events to engage and seek feedback.

## **Climate Change Considerations**

The recommendations from this report will increase the Town's ability to adapt to a changing climate by removing, redeveloping, improving and/or rehabilitating an old building to a more efficient use; as well as by improving natural assets on the same property and protecting flood plain areas.

## **Link to Strategic Plan**

The acquisition of 115 George Street supports the Parks and Recreation Master Plan, the Trails Master Plan and the Corporate Strategic Plan under *Objective 4: Encouraging an active and healthy lifestyle* in supporting the long-term needs of recreation programs, services and operations to match the evolving needs of the growing and changing population.

## **Alternative(s) to the Recommendation**

1. That Council provide direction.

## **Conclusions**

The Town has completed the acquisition of 115 George Street from the York Region District School Board. The property was acquired with the intention of using it for a neighbourhood park. The property is now secured, and staff seek Council's direction on proceeding with the demolition, public consultation for the park design, and rezoning.

## **Attachments**

None.

## **Previous Reports**

Closed Session Reports

## **Pre-submission Review**

Agenda Management Team review on May 16, 2024

## **Approvals**

Approved by Marco Ramunno, Director, Planning and Development Services

Approved by Doug Nadorozny, Chief Administrative Officer