

STAFF REPORT

THE CORPORATION OF THE TOWN OF COBOURG



Report to:	Mayor and Council Members	Priority:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> High <input type="checkbox"/> Low
Submitted by:	Brian Geerts; Director, Community Services bgeerts@cobourg.ca Anne Taylor Scott, MCIP RPP Director, Planning & Development ataylorcott@cobourg.ca	Meeting Type:	Open Session <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Closed Session <input type="checkbox"/>
Meeting Date:	April 3, 2023		
Report No.:	Community Services-154-23		

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RECOMMENDATION:

THAT Council receive this report for information purposes,

FURTHER THAT Council direct staff to proceed with one of the following options as the preferred land use for the developable portion of 117 Durham St, Cobourg being either:

Option A: Parkland and open space in its entirety.

OR

Option B. A balanced mix of parkland, market and affordable residential units (meeting the Town of Cobourg definition) with direction to staff to commission studies necessary to determine the development limit (funded by proceeds of eventual sale of the land); and to proceed with a formal Request for Proposal process for the disposal of the developable lands, and

FURTHER THAT Council approve the operation of 117 Durham St as a temporary recreational and athletic facility for the spring and summer 2023 season while long-term plans for the property are determined.

Not available.

2. PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

This report provides an update to Council following the acquisition of the declared surplus land from the Kawartha Pine Ride District School Board through their formal disposition process.

The general use of the subject property, 117 Durham St, was previously considered within two major policy documents of the Town: The Downtown Cobourg Master Plan and the Parks Master Plan. The development of both plans included considerable public consultation.

If the property is developed, the corresponding development application will be subject to prescribed consultation/engagement in accordance with the *Planning Act* therefore it is not necessary to comply with the Town's Community Engagement Guideline as development applications are exempt.

3. PURPOSE

The purpose of this staff report is to report back as committed in the first quarter of 2023 regarding a land use and disposition strategy for 117 Durham Street, being those lands north of the beach and boardwalk area. The most recent report on this topic was discussed at Committee of the Whole on September 26, 2022 in Report 067-22:

Please find below a link to previous staff report:

[Town of Cobourg Purchase of 117 Durham Street Cobourg from the Kawartha Pine Ridge District School Board \(KPRDSB\) \(escribemeetings.com\)](https://www.escribemeetings.com/Meeting/Details/117-Durham-Street-Cobourg-from-the-Kawartha-Pine-Ridge-District-School-Board-(KPRDSB))

After further review on the existing policy direction through the Downtown Master Plan and the Parks Master Plan, the Community Services Division together with the Planning and Development Division wish to obtain direction on the development plan going forward.

4. ORIGIN AND LEGISLATION

The Town of Cobourg received on November 9, 2021, a notice from Kawartha Pine Ridge District School Board (KPRDSB) to the Town of Cobourg that the Board had officially declared the property as surplus by the Board and declared its intention to dispose of the property. The property was appraised, and following the school board's

disposition process the Town eventually purchased the property for \$2 million. The purchase closed on December 15, 2022.

Considering the future use of the land, Staff refer to the following major policy documents that guide recommendations:

- Official Plan
- Zoning By-law
- Downtown Cobourg Master Plan (2016)
- Parks Master Plan (2013)

This report will provide an overview of the policy direction from these guidance documents as it relates to the provision of parkland and residential development.

5. BACKGROUND

Key policies of the Official Plan, Zoning By-law, Downtown Cobourg Master Plan (2016) and the Parks Master Plan (2013) sections have been selected to provide background and context.

Official Plan & Zoning By-law

The vision of the Town of Cobourg Official Plan is to create a regional centre for Northumberland County and establish a position as a strong, liveable, and healthy community providing a full range of opportunities to live, work, play and shop within the town.

The Official Plan contains policy direction to protect and enhance the integration of the natural environmental features in the area and encourages a linked greenlands system. At the same time the Official Plan To provide for a choice with respect to secure, adequate and affordable housing including a full range of housing options.

The majority of the subject lands are currently designated the subject lands as “Major Institutional” while the shoreline area is designated as “Environmental Constraint Area”.

The current zoning of the site is Open Space, with Environmental Constraint along the shoreline.

The Town is the location of a number of major institutional uses such as supportive housing facilities and schools. Alternative uses of these sites, including residential uses, are permitted should the existing use be closed. The Major Institutional designation permits hospitals, schools, park and recreation uses. The Official Plan provides extensive criteria for future development proposals as the residential redevelopment of the subject lands would be subject to the Unique Site policies (Section 3.2.2) of the Official Plan.

Should the lands remain as parkland, the existing Official Plan and Zoning By-law would continue to apply and no amendments would be necessary at this time.

Residential redevelopment of the subject lands would require development applications under the *Planning Act* – including but not limited to: A proposed Draft Plan of Subdivision/Condominium, a Zoning By-law Amendment and Site Plan approval. The full extent of applications would be determined at the pre-consultation stage.

In summary the Official Plan designation would support either the parkland or intensification through residential development.

Residential redevelopment would require a full range of *Planning Act* approvals, including a rezoning, while parkland could continue as of right in the Open Space zone.

Parks Master Plan , 2013

The following sections of the Parks Master Plan (2013) relate to parkland, the greenlands system, its development, and uses:

The Parks Master Plan is guided by seven key goals for developing the parks system:

Goal #1: Character: Develop the parks system as an icon and defining feature of Cobourg.

Goal #2: Connectivity: Create an integrated and connected network of park and public open spaces

Goal #3: Diversity: Develop the parks system to provide a wide range of gathering, recreation, education, and cultural experiences.

Goal #4: Environment: Preserve, protect, and enhance the natural environment of Cobourg

Goal #5: Accessibility: Ensure residents have complete access to all parks and equal opportunity to participate in the parks system.

Goal #6 Management: Supply and deliver parks, facilities, and services to the public in an efficient/effective manner

• **Connections:** The park system is united with connections that link together all parts of the community with green corridors and nodes. Cobourg's park system connections are identified in a detailed systems plan that includes a network of parks, trails, and open spaces.

• **Activities:** The park system has a variety of activities that serve to meet the needs of the community. Cobourg's park system activities are varied through the development of a new park classification system that includes six different park types: nature, athletic, leisure, connector, cultural, and landmark parks.

• **Experiences:** The park system provides experiences that are memorable and unique to the community. Cobourg's park system experiences are developed through an interpretive program that is specifically based on the Town's physical, environmental, historic and cultural qualities.

• **The Waterfront: The defining element in Cobourg's park system is its waterfront.**

As such, the waterfront is specifically addressed in the Parks Master Plan with waterfront-specific goals and a Design Concept. The concept defines the waterfront as a series of "places" which combine to create a diversity of unique experiences. The Design Concept spatially organizes the waterfront to improve its function, elevate its identity and enhance it as a destination. Expanding on this concept is a Connectivity Plan that identifies opportunities to physically link these places and experiences together. The plan focuses on improving linkages in an east/west direction across the waterfront and strengthening the bond between downtown and the waterfront in a north/south direction. Finally, the Waterfront Master Plan illustrates the features that bring the Design Concept and Connectivity Plan to life. It provides a big picture view of the proposed improvements and how they work together to achieve the waterfront goals.

The Town of Cobourg understands the worth of parks and has continued to expand and improve the community by focusing on parks and their role in maintaining a high quality of life for residents and visitors. In 2000 the Town completed a parks and recreation master plan that expanded facilities to address community need. Moving forward with this plan, the Town implemented recommendations and capital improvements to provide these critical services. The plan met with so much success, that in 2012 the Town began to ask, what next? Initiating the 2013 Parks Master Plan, Cobourg looked beyond the development of recreation facilities to improving and creating a comprehensive park system that enhances recreational potential, identity and health of the community.

Figure 1 below shows the acquisition of the subject lands shown in Red and noted with the number "6".

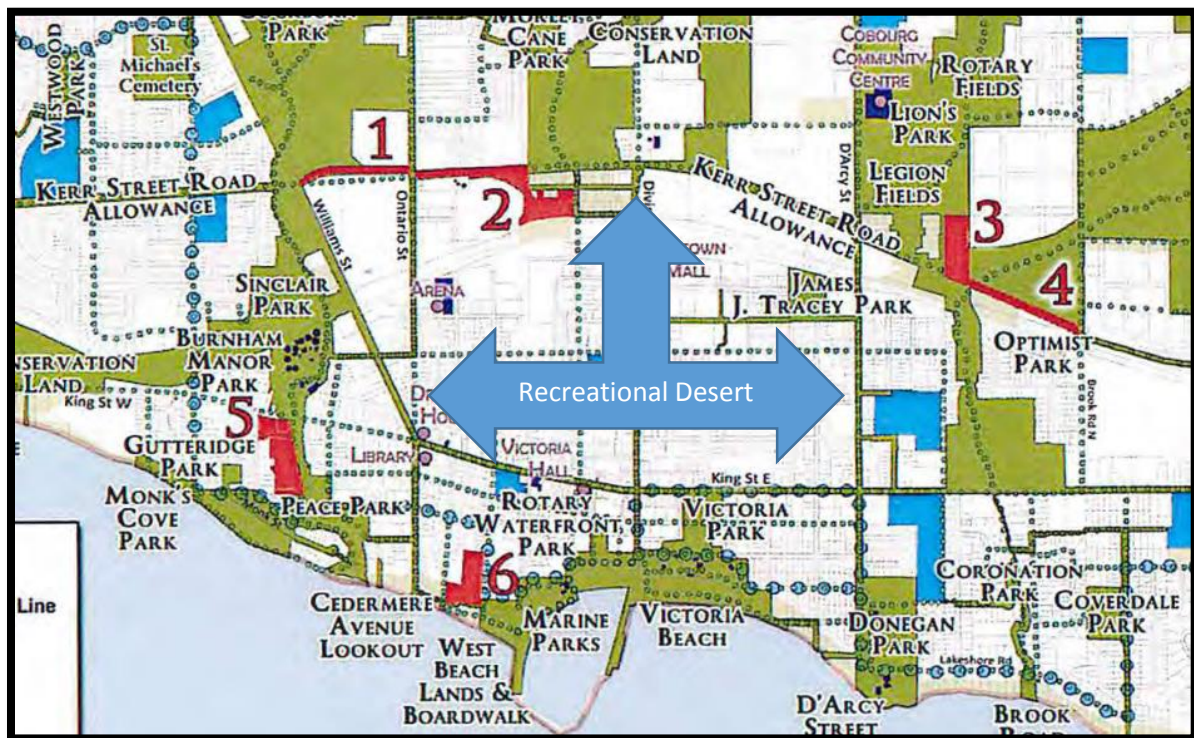


Figure 1: Central Cobourg, indicating recreational desert area based on historic development practices.

Downtown Master Plan, 2016

The following sections of the Downtown Cobourg Master Plan (2016) relate to development priorities, land use, civic projects, public realm, and principles:

Downtown Cobourg has been one of the key focus areas in the evolution of the town. A number of civic projects such as the Waterfront redevelopment, the Marina, Rotary Waterfront Park, Victoria Square, road infrastructure and general downtown beautification provide the underpinnings for a high-quality public realm and healthy community. These projects have attracted a number of high quality residential developments and building improvements. However, there is more work to be done in achieving the full potential of Downtown Cobourg.

The following Principles are identified to apply to Downtown Cobourg:

An attractive and friendly environment.

Promote active lifestyles, recreation, and cycling.

Reinforce the downtown as a cultural destination.

Create a 'Cobourg' identity through high quality urban design and planning.

Enhance and promote the unique characteristics of the special character areas in the Downtown.

Reinforce a cohesive palette of urban design materials, paving, and wayfinding.

Encourage intensification that provides a range of uses that fits with the existing context and heritage character.

Improve physical and visual connections to the East end businesses.

Provide more programming in parks and open spaces.

Encourage a four-season destination

The Demonstration Plan (See Figure 2) provides a long-term development concept for Downtown Cobourg and is intended as a guide to help direct development based on the Vision.



Figure 2: Downtown Master Plan depicting 117 Durham St waterfront public realm/nature park, north section residential - #19 on map above

The following excerpt of the Downtown Master Plan describes what was contemplated for the area, known as the “West Waterfront Neighbourhood Character Area”:

The West Waterfront Neighbourhood Character area includes a number of key elements, including the Legion Village, the **Cobourg District Collegiate Institute West sports fields**, the Ecology Garden, Nature Park, Cobourg Marina, and recent condominium and townhouse development. These developments are a positive addition to the Waterfront community and provide a diversity of housing and new residents in the Downtown. Future development of compatible townhouse and garden style low-rise apartments are envisioned for this area. New development will be supported by public open spaces, courtyards, and pedestrian paths to help create a safe and comfortable public realm, a green residential environment, and enhanced connectivity with the Waterfront. In addition to the directions provided in this Plan, detailed planning and consultation with residents should be undertaken to determine the future servicing, transportation, and public realm improvements required to serve this area.

Key Private Realm Directions:

- Permit limited infill development of the Legion Village site with compatible residential typologies, enhanced open spaces and other amenities.

- Redesign the southern area of the lands as an urban village set around ample green space and provide pedestrian paths to connect with the Waterfront and Nature Park.
- Redevelop the Cobourg District Collegiate Institute West sports field site with a range of high quality townhouse and condominium typologies.
- All development should be set close to the street and provide a consistent setback and landscaped frontage.
- Parking and servicing shall be located to the rear of the building. For new apartments, parking should be integrated within the building.
- There should be a diversity of housing options provided, including low-rise townhouses, low-rise condominium, and rental apartments of different sizes.

The Downtown Master Plan notes the property should receive “Special Study” and public consultation. The Master Plan also provides conceptual plans showing how the waterfront, Ecology Garden, and Nature Park can be unified and integrated with potential development.

6. ANALYSIS

The Downtown Master Plan and the Parks Master Plan offer partially conflicting direction on the future use and/or development of 117 Durham. The Parks Master Plan identifies the land for acquisition as parkland, while the Downtown Master Plan targets the lands for a mix of residential unit typologies, with a small area planned for parkland.

Staff’s analysis below will provide rationale for maintaining the lands as parkland as per the Parks Master Plan, and will also lay out a path forward for residential redevelopment in line with the Downtown Master Plan.

The Rationale for Additional Parkland

Official Plan – Level of Service

The Official Plan Parkland categories do not closely align with the parkland categorization system of the Parks Master Plan. The system of classification the Town has been using for parkland design has followed the Parks Master Plan since 2013. Durham St is a critical connection to Cobourg’s waterfront. As the waterfront access

serves the entire community, it falls within the **District Park** category.

TABLE 2				
PARKLAND HIERARCHY				
CRITERIA	VILLAGE SQUARE	LOCAL PARK	DISTRICT PARK	PARK
Area/ Population	0.25 ha/1,250 population (0.8 ac/1,250 population)	1 ha/1,250 population (2.47 ac/1,250 population)	1 ha/1,250 population (2.47 acre/1,250 population)	0.75 ha/1,250 population (1.85 acre/1,250 population)
Minimum Size	N.A.	1.2 ha (3 acres)	4 ha (10 acres) or greater	Variable to be determined on a site specific basis
Optimum Size	0.4 ha (0.9 acres)	2 ha (5 acres)	4 ha (10 acres) or greater	N.A.
Location/ Design	i) minimum 40 metres (130 ft) continuous road frontage ii) central to a neighbour- hood or sub- neighbourhood or high density development and/or adjacent to other open space lands	i) minimum 60 m (196 ft.) continuous road frontage; ii)adjacent to a collector road; iii) adjacent to an elementary school site, where practical iv) adjacent to other open space lands where practical.	i) minimum 100 m (328 ft.) continuous road frontage; ii)Adjacent to a collector or arterial road; iii) adjacent to an elementary or secondary school site; iv) adjacent to other open space lands	Criteria for Local and District Parks will apply.
Service Area	400 metres (1,300 feet)	0.4 to 0.8 km radius (0.2 to 0.5 mile) depending on population density	1.6 to 2.4 km radius (1.0 to 1.5 mile) depending on population density	

Figure 3: Table 2 from the Official Plan, highlighting the District Park criteria

Parks Master Plan - Level of Service

To determine how many parks and facilities the Town needs, it is necessary to identify how many currently exist and how this number compares to other areas and standards. The total supply of town parkland in Cobourg is 79 hectares, as per the 2013 Parks Master Plan. In assessing whether or not this amount is sufficient for the population served, one tool that communities use is level of service (LOS). The level of service is

the amount of parkland provided for a given population size, generally 1,000 persons. The parkland in Cobourg provides a level of service that is 4.3 hectares per 1,000 population.

Town	2011 Population	Hectares (Ha) of Parkland	Ha/1,000 Population
Amherstburg	21,556	106	5
Collingwood	19,241	102	5.3
Midland	16,572	97	5.9
Orilla	30,586	180	5.9
Owen Sound	21,688	144	6.6
		AVERAGE	5.7
Cobourg	18,519	91 (including the Conservation Area)	4.8
		79 (Town)	4.3

The current (2023) classified parkland inventory is as follows. Page 27 of the Parks Master Plan gives a full outline of all park types and the inventory of each and identifies the desired level of service. Landmark Parks that serve the Region are targeted to increase from 0.4ha/1000 people to 0.6ha/1000.

- Athletic – 86.4 acres
- Connector – 37.4 acres
- Cultural – 31.7 acres
- **Landmark – 17.1 acres (6.92 hectares)**
- Leisure – 42.7 acres
- Nature – 125 acres
- Portal – 2.5 acres

Type	Service Area	Service Radius	ha/1,000	Public Gathering	Size
Nature	Town	2 - 3 km	Increase to 2.20 ha/1,000 (from 1.7)	30	N/A
Athletic	Region	3 - 4 km	Maintain Extg 1.4 ha/1,000	200+	10-30 ha
Leisure	Neighbourhood	400 metre (5 minute walk)	Increase to 1.20 ha/1,000 (from 0.7)	20 - 40	0.25 ha - minimum
Connector	Town	400 metre (5 minute walk)	N/A	N/A	N/A
Cultural	Town	2 - 3 km	Maintain Extg 0.6 ha/1,000	100+	Varies
Landmark	Region	3 - 4 km	Increase to 0.6 ha/1,000 (from 0.4)	500+	5 ha - minimum
Portal	Neighbourhood	N/A	N/A	4+	N/A

As per the Level of Service information above, and using the 2021 census data of 20,500 population, the Town currently has a Landmark Park level of service of **0.33** ha/1000 people. This is slightly over ½ of the recommended service level for the current population.

To fulfill the future needs of the community, a priority property acquisition list was determined through the 2013 Parks Master Plan.

Parks Master Plan Acquisitions List:

Area	Location	Purpose	Approximate Size
1	Kerr Street Allowance between William and Ontario Streets	• Implement Open Space System - Kerr Street Trail	1.25 ha
2	Portion of rail lands between Ontario and George Streets north of tracks; 85 Buchanan Street	• Promote multi-modal use of Via Station • Link to Kerr Street Trail *NOTE: Requires easement for pedestrian bridge over tracks	2.65 ha
3	640 Cottesmore Avenue, one parcel south to Kerr Street allowance	• Creates improved access to Legion Park • Link to Kerr Street Trail *NOTE: Potential for dog park	1.51 ha
4	Kerr Street allowance from Cottesmore Avenue to Brook Road N.	• Implement Open Space System - Kerr Street Trail	1.25 ha
5	Parcels south of King Street, west of Cobourg Creek to Tremaine Street; including 399 & 415 King Street; 180 & 122 Tremaine Street	• Implement Open Space System - Cobourg Creek Trail *NOTE: may subdivide street frontage properties	2.62 ha
6	117 Durham Street (football field) and 100 Bagot Street	• Implement Open Space System • Link to West Beach	2.0 ha

Of the 6 priority sites identified for acquisition in the Parks Master Plan, only the Durham Street site contributes to active recreation and Landmark park class. All other opportunities support natural open spaces and transportation links. Some sections of

the acquisition list may be impacted by future road expansion, leading to a reduction in parkland. The town had the foresight in 2013 to identify 117 Durham St as a priority property acquisition.

Sports field inventory and considerations:

Expansion plans through Cobourg East subdivision developments include a gain of 1.5 standard rectangular fields to the east of the current CCC campus, but CCC Campus Plan includes loss of 1 premium field. The Town is expecting significant population growth, but has no growth plans to support sport on rectangular fields.

In addition, the new Elevated Water Tank at the CCC campus in 2023 removes 2 micro soccer fields in 2023, leaving the **long-term growth plan at net 0 rectangular fields**. As the community population builds to 25,000 over the next several years, there is a need for 1-2 more multi-use rectangular fields (soccer, rugby, football, etc).

Looking ahead over the long-term, the future population growth of Cobourg is expected to include both expansion and intensification, and the downtown and central Cobourg are currently a recreational desert due to historical parkland dedication practices during Cobourg's early development. Current and future residents of central Cobourg must use the downtown and waterfront areas for recreation, or travel to the perimeter of the Town.

Another tool to evaluate the supply of parks and recreation facilities are standards such as those from the Ontario Ministry of Culture and Recreation, and the National Recreation and Parks Association (NRPA), an American organization. These standards are intended to provide a guide for the number of facilities required based upon population. The limitation to these standards is that they do not take into account the local trends, preferences and practices of a given community, therefore they must be used in connection with a local analysis of the realities of the individual community. The table at right compares the number of existing facilities in Cobourg to these standards. Deficiencies are highlighted in blue and the corresponding standard is highlighted in green. Comparison to both standards shows the need for additional baseball diamonds, a football field, volleyball courts, basketball courts, and a track. Additionally, in comparison to standards from the Ministry of Culture and Recreation show that there is also a need for outdoor ice rinks, and splash pads. With respect to tennis courts, Cobourg exceeds the Ministry of Culture and Recreation's standards but is deficient as per the NRPA standards.

Type of Facility	Cobourg	Ministry of Culture & Recreation		NRPA	
	Number Existing Facilities	Number of Facilities Recommended per Population	Needed for 25,000 Population	Number of Facilities Recommended per Population	Needed for 25,000 Population
Baseball Diamond	2	1 per 5,000	5	1 per 5,000	5
Softball Diamond	17	1 per 5,000	5	1 per 5,000	5
Soccer Field	9	1 per 20,000	1	1 per 10,000	2
Soccer Field (Jr)	5	1 per 5,000	5	1 per 10,000	2
Ice Arena (Hockey)	3	N/A	N/A	1 per 100,000	0
Football	0	1 per 20,000	1	1 per 20,000	1
Outdoor Pool	1	1 per 20,000	1	1 per 20,000	1
Tennis	6	1 per 5,000	5	1 court per 2,000	12
Volleyball	1	1 per 5,000	5	1 per 5,000	5
Trail Systems	1	1 per region	0	1 per region	0
Basketball	2	1 per 5,000	5	1 per 5,000	5
Track	0	1 per 20,000	1	1 per 20,000	1
Boat Launch	1	1 per region	0	N/A	N/A
Ice Rink (Outdoor)	1	1 per 5,000	5	N/A	N/A
Lawn Bowling	1	1 per 25,000	1	N/A	N/A
Splash Pad	1	1 per 5,000	5	N/A	N/A

Deficiency
 Corresponding Deficiency Standard

Figure 4: Parks and Recreation Facility list and standards as per 2013 Parks Master plan

The Rationale for Residential Development

Housing supply and affordability is being labelled as a crisis nationally, provincially and also within the Town of Cobourg itself.

While the impetus behind the acquisition of 117 Durham Street lands was to secure the beach and boardwalk area, the vacant, developable land to the north just over approximately 3 acres provides an opportunity for the Town to dispose of lands for residential development in an effort to address supply and affordability.

As 117 Durham St is a waterfront property, precise hazard evaluation and boundary mapping must be updated for Environmental Constraint and waterfront flood risk hazards to evaluate the development potential for housing. Current Official Plan mapping depicts the general alignment of hazard limits but is not specific enough to rely on for development limit boundaries. If the entire property were to remain as parkland, this assessment would not be necessary.

Should lands not proceed as parkland, Staff would proceed to discuss partnership opportunities with the County of Northumberland on making lands available for a county-owned and operated housing project on the subject lands.

Should the County of Northumberland not have an interest in all or part of the lands Staff would proceed to issue a Request for Proposal for the balance of the developable

lands. The RFP will explicitly seek proposals that include elements of housing affordability. Housing affordability, sustainability and accessibility would be key criteria assessed during the evaluation of the proposals.

Staff request authorization to commission any necessary studies to determine the developable limit – including but not limited to an Environmental Impact Study and Hazard Assessment – the cost of which is to be covered by any proceeds of the development.

It is important to note the recommendations contained in this report provide only preliminary direction to staff and that any disposition of municipally-owned land would require eventual approval by Council.

7. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS/BUDGET IMPACTS

From a financial perspective, the Town's goals need to be determined in order to perform a cost/benefit analysis. The southern-most portion of the property is subject to flooding and water hazard. It is undevelopable and will be preserved as public realm. The northern 1/2-2/3 of the property could be used as parkland, developed, or a mix of both.

All Parkland Option:

Considering a 50-100 year horizon, the Town will see exponential growth and intensification. In the downtown and core areas, there is very little greenspace that is not already public realm. To support future growth, it is important to consider acquisition opportunities such as 117 Durham to add to the parkland inventory. The alternative of buying developed land and converting it back to greenspace or other public realm will be more expensive than using existing greenspace. Parkland Cash-in-Lieu funding is currently collected for this general purpose from urban development; the current Parkland Cash-in-Lieu reserve balance is \$227,629.56

Other funding sources to offset the purchase can be considered as well, such as transitioning away from the rental of lands for the Town dog park to an owned facility such as 117 Durham St. The funding currently directed to lease industrial land could be directed to the purchase and operation of Town-owned land. As an athletic field, rental fees would be collected to off-set operational expenses.

Residential Development Option:

Based on preliminary estimates there appears to be just over 3 acres that could be developable – subject to further study to determine the development limits. Residential redevelopment provides a significant opportunity to recuperate the costs incurred by the Town's purchase of the school board lands in the amount of \$2,000,000.00.

At Council's direction there could be a partnership with the County or another organization to donate lands for residential purposes however any lands donated would reduce any opportunity to sell lands and generate revenues.

8. CONCLUSION

The purpose of this staff report is to report back to Council as committed in the first quarter on options for 117 Durham St, following up to the original staff report 067-22. The Parks Master Plan and the Downtown Cobourg Master Plan offer somewhat conflicting visions of the site. Direction is required from Council to determine a focus for the site and determine the next steps. Should the site remain parkland, little is required to operate the site for public benefit linked to the Landmark Park system at the waterfront.

For future residential development, Staff would engage the County of Northumberland on potential partnership opportunities. Should the County not express an interest, a formal Request for Proposal process to identify interested developers should be followed. Further study is required to determine environmental constraints, servicing considerations, parkland requirements, and transportation requirements. As these items are investigated, the community would benefit from access and use of the facility for the 2023 summer season.

To conclude, the recommendations contained in this report provide only preliminary direction to staff and that any disposition of municipally-owned land would require further staff reporting in open session and eventual approval by Council.

Report Approval Details

Document Title:	117 Durham St Property Strategy - Community Services-154-23.docx
Attachments:	
Final Approval Date:	Mar 24, 2023

This report and all of its attachments were approved and signed as outlined below:

Brent Larmer, Municipal Clerk / Director of Legislative Services - Mar 24, 2023 - 3:43 PM

Tracey Vaughan, Chief Administrative Officer - Mar 24, 2023 - 3:55 PM