



TOWN OF
HALTON HILLS
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REPORT

TO: Mayor Lawlor and Members of Council

FROM: Damian Szybalski, Commissioner of Community Services; and
Romaine Scott, Manager of Legal & Real Estate Services

DATE: May 28, 2025

REPORT NO.: PD-2025-040

SUBJECT: Disposition of Hornby Community Centre – 13526 Steeles Ave.

RECOMMENDATION:

THAT Report No. PD-2025-040, dated May 28, 2025 regarding the disposition of the Hornby Community Centre property located at 13526 Steeles Avenue, be received

AND FURTHER THAT Council declare the Hornby Community Centre lands located at 13526 Steeles Avenue and described as Part Lot 15, Concession 7 TNS, as in 263597 & 263598, except Part 12, 20R-7235 & Part 2 & 3, 20R-18899 (the “Property”), as surplus to the Town’s needs, for the purposes of disposing the Property, as set out in this Report;

AND FURTHER THAT Council passes a by-law to authorize the Mayor and Clerk to execute the Agreement of Purchase and Sale and all other legal documents required to sell and transfer the Property as shown in Appendix “1” to the adjacent landowner.

KEY POINTS:

The following are key points for consideration with respect to this report:

- Staff recommends that this Report be considered for immediate action (IA) so that the Agreement and Purchase and Sale can be signed by the Town to allow staff to proceed with the demolition process and therefore meet the timeline scheduled for the closing of the transaction.
- The Property was originally the site the Hornby Methodist Church and is now known as the Hornby Community Centre. Despite being long recognized as a significant cultural resource to the community, it became vacant in 2014, and the

church building has fallen into disrepair. The Property has since been considered surplus to the Town's needs.

- Over the past 10 years, staff have conducted various studies and assessments to find feasible ways to make the Property once again useful to the public. Staff have exhausted all the options, including considering repairs and restorations that would be very costly to the Town.
- Council has over the past 10 years reviewed and considered multiple staff reports and has directed staff to pursue negotiations with the adjacent property owner in an effort to have the Property incorporated into the proposed development on the adjacent site.
- Council has now directed staff to accept the offer and terms contained in the Agreement of Purchase and Sale to sell the Property to the adjacent property owner. One of the conditions in the Agreement is that the Town will be responsible for the basic demolition of the church building before the Property is transferred.
- There have been consultations with Heritage Halton Hills during this process. Best efforts will be made to retrieve and preserve any items of historic or heritage significance before the building is demolished.
- Appraisal of the land was conducted, and staff is satisfied that the Property is being sold at fair market value, and that the public has been sufficiently notified in accordance with the Town's Disposition of Land By-law 2007-0109.
- Per earlier Council direction, the sale proceeds will be allocated to maximize community benefits while also addressing urgent capital needs;
- This Report is part of the administrative process for the disposition of Town lands. It respectfully recommends that Council pass a by-law to authorize the Mayor and Clerk to sign the Agreement of Purchase and Sale and the other legal documents to allow the Town to sell the Property to the owner of the adjacent site.

BACKGROUND AND DISCUSSION:

The Property known as the Hornby Community Centre is located at 13526 Steeles Avenue and encompasses 0.7 acres (0.28 ha). See Appendix "1" attached to this Report. The existing church building was originally constructed in 1856 as the Hornby Methodist Church and therefore has deep historic roots in the Hornby Community. The final service of Hornby United Church was held in November 1968 after which the congregation amalgamated with the Ashgrove United Church to become Hillcrest United Church. The Hornby Cooperative Nursery School started operating on the site shortly after the Property was transferred to the Town in 1974. The Nursery School ceased operations in October 2014 and the building has been vacant since that time.

Although the church building has long been identified as an important cultural heritage resource to the community, only basic building maintenance has been performed since

it became vacant and those were mainly for the purposes of health and safety and for keeping the Town's options open for any potential re-use or relocation of the building. Unfortunately, overtime the building has fallen into disrepair and has been the target of frequent trespassing and vandalism. This posed concerns for public safety and significant risks of liability to the Town. Despite best efforts, a feasible solution to conserve the former church building through adaptive re-use has not been identified and further maintenance would be very costly.

In 2017 Council directed staff to negotiate with the adjacent property owner with the possibility of integrating the Property into the commercial development proposed on the adjacent site. After extensive discussions with the adjacent property owner and consultations with several staff from various Town departments, a proposal through an Agreement of Purchase and Sale was presented to Council in camera on May 26, 2025, for consideration and approval.

After Council's careful consideration of the options presented by staff, including the offer of a fair price and the flexible terms in the Agreement of Purchase and Sale, staff were directed to proceed with demolishing the building and selling the Property to the adjacent landowner.

Per Council direction, among other items, the sale proceeds will be allocated to:

- Capital Replacement Reserve;
- Heritage material salvage;
- Demolition and site works;
- Critical facility maintenance and repair projects that are currently unfunded but have been identified as priority State of Good Repair projects in order to lower the risk of service interruptions.
- Heritage commemorative installation to commemorate the Hornby Community Centre and the broader historic Hornby community through a high-profile installation in Hornby Park, aligned with the planned Hornby Park Revitalization project.
- Heritage contribution to support the Town's cultural heritage resources by enhancing the Heritage Property Grant program and heritage designation plaques.

The above allocation approach:

- Maximizes alignment with Council's Strategic Plan priorities;
- Contributes to Town reserve balances;
- Advances the works necessary to close on the sales transaction;
- Enhances support for the conservation of the Town's significant cultural heritage resources; and
- Invests in urgently needed facility capital projects.

Once the one-time contribution from the sale is used, where applicable, to maintain service levels, it will be necessary for Council to consider integrating an ongoing funding source in the base budget (e.g. Heritage Property Grant Program).

As part of the next steps, staff will make the necessary arrangements for the demolition permit and contract the appropriate professionals to have the church building demolished. All the heritage components will be removed and preserved before the building is demolished.

If possible, given some unexpected delays, staff anticipates that the work will be completed to facilitate the closing of the transaction and the transfer of the Property sometime in the fall.

STRATEGIC PLAN ALIGNMENT:

While this report is administrative in nature, it does identify a thriving economy as one of the Town's Strategic priorities.

RELATIONSHIP TO CLIMATE CHANGE:

This report is administrative in nature and does not directly impact or address climate change and the Town's Net Zero target.

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT:

Public Engagement was not needed as this report is administrative in nature.

Heritage Halton Hills was previously informed of the proposed disposition of the Property and had no concerns with the approach that was outlined by staff, including the efforts to preserve the heritage elements before the building is demolished.

Public notice of the passing of the by-law to authorize the sale and transfer of the Property has been posted on the Town's website in accordance with the Town's Public Notice By-law 2024-0048.

As applicable, as part of the next steps, Heritage Halton Hills, the Hornby community and other stakeholders will be engaged.

INTERNAL CONSULTATION:

Town staff from Community Services (Facilities; Parks, Community Development and Environment; Cultural Services), Planning and Development (Heritage; Development Review; Policy; Legal & Real Estate Services); Corporate Services (Finance; Purchasing, Risk & Insurance) and Transportation and Public Works have been

consulted related to the disposition of the Hornby Community Centre. Heritage Halton Hills has also been consulted regarding the removal of the existing church building.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

This report will be funded through an existing approved budget source.

The net proceeds from the sale of the property will be transferred to the Town's Capital Replacement Reserve and be allocated to specific projects. This will maximize community benefits, commemorate key historic elements including heritage grants, manage risks and prioritize health and safety, reinvest in critical Town assets and facilities, and help to reduce capital funding needs for priority projects that currently have no funding source.

Reviewed and approved by,

John Linhardt, Commissioner of Planning & Development

Chris Mills, Chief Administrative Officer