

# Master's Report

## The Reuse of Surplus School Sites in Ottawa, Ontario: An Examination of Community Interests and Public Participation in the Acquisition, Planning and Conversion of Surplus School Sites

Jessica Button

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School of Urban and Regional Planning  
Queen's University at Kingston  
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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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The education demands of Canadian neighbourhoods are changing. As a result, schools are closing. While much has been written on adaptive reuse as it relates to industrial or heritage sites, relatively little has been written specifically in the context of former school sites. This report contributes to the existing literature by identifying trends in the use of former school sites in Ottawa, and making recommendations to improve the reuse process. An inventory of Ottawa Carleton District School Board (OCDSB) surplus school sites was created. This inventory was separated into four categories; elementary schools constructed prior to 1940; elementary schools constructed after 1940; secondary schools constructed prior to 1940; and, secondary schools constructed after 1940.

The most prevalent trend in the use of former school sites occurred among elementary schools built prior to 1940. Others, with a few exceptions, continue to be used for educational purposes. All schools constructed post 1940, which were sold by the OCDSB, were purchased during the initial 90 day period by other Ottawa school boards. As a result these sites never reached the general market and were unavailable to developers.

Surplus high school sites are much larger in size and value compared to elementary schools. As a result, when purchased by a private developer, these sites need to be purchased by a large firm eager to yield maximum financial returns off of the land. In instances where these sites were kept by school boards, they were used for continuing education because of the specialized facilities they provided.

The selected case studies included Crichton Street Public School, Overbrook Public School, Ottawa Technical High School, and Laurentian High School. Four prominent themes



Schools and their community are tied together in several ways, physical and social. These recommendations can improve the process of disposing of and redeveloping surplus school sites by considering the needs of the OCDSB, the City of Ottawa and the local communities.