



Briefing Note – Nonprofit Access to Priority Purchase of Publicly Owned Lands For Sale

Community hubs may be located in schools that are retained by the school board or possibly assumed by a municipality. If, however, schools are to be placed for sale they ought to first be offered to members of the nonprofit community. A mechanism already exists for this to happen so that public lands have the best chance to remain in the public domain as public assets.

ONN 2015 Pre-Budget Submission: Ensure nonprofits have access to purchase publicly owned lands prior to sale on the open market. While government ownership should be maintained, in the short term, public lands suitable for community hubs are sometimes sold rather than co-developed in partnership with nonprofit organizations.

Government should require that all local school boards and other administrators of publicly owned lands list properties for sale on a public asset registry, which nonprofits would have access to before these properties were placed on the open market.

The opportunity of ONN's Nonprofit Lands Registry

ONN has an agreement with the Ministry of Infrastructure and Infrastructure for eligible nonprofits to access the Realty Disposal Publication Website, managed by Infrastructure Ontario. Click here to view the current [lands registry portal on ONN's website](#).

The expansion of this registry to include all surplus publicly owned lands will mean that only eligible organizations with a serious interest in purchasing property will be provided access to the Realty Disposal Publication website before it is placed on the open market.

This access to surplus property will be restricted to not-for-profit organizations providing public benefit. If an eligible not-for-profit organization is going to partner with another organization, the partner must also be registered, which would exclude partnerships with for-profit entities.

ONN has instituted a registration process to facilitate access, ensure the registry's integrity, and meet the terms and conditions in its undertaking with the Ministry of Infrastructure and Infrastructure Ontario.

To be placed on the registry, an applicant must:

- a) Be a registered, incorporated charity in good standing with the Canada Revenue Agency; or
- b) Be incorporated as a not-for-profit organization without share capital under federal or provincial not-for-profit, corporate or cooperative legislation;

AND all of the following:

- c) Be a registered member of the Ontario Nonprofit Network; and
- d) Have a mandate/mission that is dedicated to providing a public benefit good or service to individuals and/or communities in the Province of Ontario; and
- e) Provide the public benefit to a faction of the public/community beyond a narrowly defined or closed membership group, such as private clubs or industry associations; and

- f) Be accepted by its community as a community asset and/or resource (evidence of government funding, financial donations or investment from local community and/or provision of community programming for a nominal fee); and
- g) Have a constraint in its bylaws that prohibits distribution of assets to members on dissolution (provides for gifting residual assets to public benefit organization).
- h) e) Eligible not-for-profit corporations will also need to be able to demonstrate financial and organizational capacity to submit an offer to purchase surplus real estate at market value.