

Presentation to Plenary Facilities Planning Committee

Vancouver DPAC
May 15, 2019

Contents

1. Introduction
2. LRFP Recommendations
3. Board Motions
4. Conclusion
5. Questions?

Introduction

Thank you for allowing me to present on behalf of Vancouver DPAC.

We have a very simple message to deliver to the Board: do what is right to provide safe, quality education to our children.

For too long we've been constrained by capacity models that do not reflect the actual use of space in schools. Rooms that are used for educational and community purposes have been considered empty. The real needs of children are not factored in. And we constantly see undertakings like LRFPs as battles because they are focused on closures rather than on providing better education.

Introduction

On April 29, 2019, we sent an open letter to the Board expressing our belief that the central narrative of the LRFP (the “patchwork of schools” narrative) was pretty much dead because the draft LRFP does not reflect the spirit of the letter from Minister Fleming and the updated LRFP guidelines. As well, the specific clauses in the Capital Plan Instructions supporting that narrative have been removed.

This presentation is an opportunity to draw your attention back to our letter as well as to update our positions on the recommendations made in the LRFP and on the new motions brought forward by the Board.

Introduction

Since the LRFP timeline was first provided to DPAC in late January, we have highlighted both in direct communication with District staff and through social media the need for explicit direction from the Board, better consultation (we did take a step in the right direction on this), and alternatives to the restrictive constraints imposed by the Ministry of Education.

We believe that now is the time for the Board to adopt a leadership mindset and make the decision to look forward rather than backwards. We want the Board to take the positives in the LRFP (because there are some) and move forward with them, but to leave the overall model behind and to start fresh once more information is on the table.

LRFP Recommendations

This is a summary of DPAC's positions on the LRFP recommendations from our letter to the Board:

LRF Recommendations

1. That the District should develop an Administrative Procedure setting out guiding principles and detailed procedures for governance and stakeholder consultation for SMP projects.

DPAC is in favour of this recommendation.

We are already working with the VSB on a broader AP on consultation.

LRF Recommendations

2. That the District establish guidelines on preferred school size with the goal of determining appropriate ranges of schools' size to inform planning decisions.

DPAC is strongly in favour of this recommendation.

LRFP Recommendations

3. That the District should continue the investigation of consolidating Alternate Programs in a central location and initiate a process to identify, suitable options to co-locate District alternate programs and related services.

DPAC is *not* in favour of this recommendation.

LRFP Recommendations

4. That the District should continue to explore options that enable it to implement the Board approved recommendations of the French Program Review.

DPAC has concerns about this recommendation.

We believe that attempts to implement the recommendations of the French Program Review need to be aligned with *all* District priorities and presented transparently as such to school communities. Proper and effective guidelines for consultations also need to be put in place (see Recommendation 1).

LRFP Recommendations

5. That the District undertake an Enrolment Data Validation process to for all facility and education planning purposes. This process would consist of an annual validation study of short, medium, and long-range enrolment projections as well as updating student yield metrics for areas of the District with significant development and redevelopment proposed or underway.

DPAC is in favour of this recommendation.

LRF Recommendations

7. That the District continues to work with the City of Vancouver to construct Coal Harbour Elementary and develop a catchment and enrolment plan for the school.

DPAC is in favour of this recommendation.

LRFP Recommendations

8. That the District build on the initial work done on a Capital Asset Management Plan to develop a comprehensive strategic plan to guide the District in effectively managing the asset inventory in the future.

DPAC is *not* in favour of this recommendation.

We do not believe there is enough information to assent to this recommendation. “Effective” is a normative term and therefore would have to be defined by the guiding principles of the LRFP. We also believe that schools are more than just physical assets and hence that a standard capital asset management plan might be insufficient, hence the need for more information.

LRF Recommendations

9. That the Board of Education approve an annual budget allocation for the next three years to hire real estate consultants to negotiate financial arrangements with developers to generate capital fund revenue to support enhancing capital projects and the workforce housing initiative.

DPAC is *not* in favour of this recommendation.

The recommendation suggests that full business cases would have to be prepared before bringing in agents to negotiate the financial arrangements. Therefore this recommendation seems premature.

LRFP Recommendations

10. That the District updates the addition and expansion project requests in the 2020-2021 Five Year Capital Plan for Board of Education approval, including determining the need for elementary schools at Olympic Village, East Fraser Lands and Wesbrook at UBC, secondary school space at King George Secondary and the need for additional capacity in the North Hamber study area.

DPAC is in favour of this recommendation.

LRFP Recommendations

11. That the District continues to explore enrolment management options to balance enrolment with capacity in the Kitsilano study area, the North Hamber study area and the South Hamber study area and report to the Facilities Planning Committee on a quarterly basis

DPAC agrees with this recommendation.

LRFP Recommendations

13. That the District should conduct detailed analysis on the impact of reducing school capacity through the SMP ('right sizing') in relation to the goals and priorities of the Long Range Facilities Plan.

DPAC is strongly in favour of this recommendation.

We believe that this recommendation should be paired with Recommendation 2 (preferred school size) and used to inform this year's Capital Plan submission.

LRFP Recommendations

14. That the District decide if an seismically upgraded Sir Guy Carleton Elementary should be used as temporary accommodation for the SMP or as an enrolling school.

DPAC agrees with this recommendation.

LRFP Recommendations

15. That the District consider the implications of the School Consolidation Feasibility Analyses contained in Section 10 of this report to prioritize seismic upgrades for secondary schools.

DPAC strongly rejects this recommendation.

As indicated in other parts of this presentation, DPAC believes that the District needs to seize the opportunity to define a new, local set of capacity guidelines and to reject Section 10 of the LRFP in its entirety.

LRF Recommendations

16. That the District consider the implications of the School Consolidation Feasibility Analyses contained in Section 10 of this report to prioritize seismic upgrades for elementary schools.

DPAC strongly disagrees with this recommendation.

Same as Recommendations 15.

LRFP Recommendations

17. That the District consider the implications of the School Consolidation Feasibility Analyses contained in Section 10 of this report to inform revisions to the Temporary Accommodation Plan in the SMP.

DPAC strongly disagrees with this recommendation.

Same as Recommendation 15.

LRFP Recommendations

18. That the District investigate the implications of the new LRFP guidelines, arrange for community information sessions, and report to Committee and Board.

DPAC strongly agrees with this recommendation.

We see this as necessary preliminary work before completing an LRFP.

Board Motions

This is a summary of DPAC's positions on the motions related to the LRFP brought forward by the Board:

Board Motions

- A. That the Board seek clarification from the Minister of Education as to the implications of updated Ministry LRFP guidelines on funding requests for future capital requests (expansion/new builds) and on requests for seismic upgrades to current VBE schools.

DPAC is in favour of this motion.

We asked the Minister this question and did not receive a direct answer. Instead we were told that the District should take the opportunity to submit as many seismic projects as possible, and, in particular, projects for east side schools.

Board Motions

- B. That the Board engage with the Ministry of Education in a renegotiation of the Memorandum of Understanding for Seismic Mitigation Projects. As part of a renewed MOU the District would seek increased opportunities to engage the public in the process and to increase transparency.

DPAC is in favour of this motion.

Board Motions

- C. That the Board request to have a trustee serve as a non-voting member of the Vancouver Project Steering Committee.

DPAC does not have a definitive position on this motion.

We believe that the intent of this motion is positive, but the role of the trustee serving on this committee would need to be defined in Board Policy 3 and every effort to mitigate the bias of a single trustee would need to be taken.

Board Motions

- D. That the District continue to maximize opportunities for the provision of child care space within VBE facilities.

DPAC generally supports this motion.

However, we believe that a caveat is needed that prioritizes educational space -- including non-enrolling educational space, e.g., art and music rooms -- over child care space in the rare case that they conflict, e.g., Eric Hamber.

Board Motions

- E. That the District continue to collaborate with the City of Vancouver, University Endowment Lands and local First Nations on development and community plans.

DPAC generally supports this motion.

However, there are concerns that collaborations to date have not been effective. Hence a more detailed statement of what such collaborations would/should entail is needed along with a description of how such collaboration would be used to influence and support projects under the purview of each party.

Board Motions

- F. That the Board direct staff to develop a way to assess capacity utilization of VBE school facilities, with the intent to inform the 2020 LRFP.

DPAC is generally in favour of this motion.

But the point of this presentation is that a new model for defining capacity and determining capacity utilization should inform *this* LRFP and not wait until the next one even if means that this LRFP becomes the 2020 LRFP. In other words, plan and take the time to get it right *now* rather than putting a hybrid plan into effect that might require resources to unravel it in the next iteration.

Conclusion

We believe that there is a very real opportunity for school districts to challenge the status quo and define their own standards and metrics for how to best use their facilities to deliver quality education to our children. This opportunity is too important to squander by remaining encumbered by now outdated Ministry policies.

Our advice to the Board is this:

In the short term:

- ★ Approve any recommendations and/or motions that you feel moves the District in the right direction and/or puts more information on the table without committing to the general framework of the LRFP.

Conclusion

In the medium term:

- ★ Direct the the work outlined in **Recommendation 18** to be completed.
- ★ Articulate, as a Board and in consultation with District staff, stakeholder groups, parents, and the general public, your **vision for education** in Vancouver.
- ★ Complete the **student success model**.
- ★ Complete the **catchment review**.
- ★ Then **start the LRFP process over again** using these as guiding principles.

Questions?

We gladly welcome questions from the Committee