



General Gordon Elementary RENEWAL PLAN

OPEN HOUSE SUMMARY

On June 21st, 2011 the Vancouver Board of Education (VBE) and the City of Vancouver held a joint Community Open House for the General Gordon Renewal Plan. The purpose of the event was to share information about the process to date, provide background studies and concept development, present the School Board staff's preferred concept and gather feedback from the community.

Format: The Open House was held from 3:00 – 7:00pm in the school gym. The drop-in format gave attendees an opportunity to review over 30 display boards of information, ask questions of the consultants, VBE and City staff in attendance and complete a comment form.

Attendance: Over 179 people attended the Open House (based on 179 signed-in) with 132 comment forms completed and returned on the same evening. An additional five forms were returned manually in the week following the Open house and 28 responses were received through the online comment option.

The following report is a summary of the feedback obtained through the Open House comment form and online comment option. The results give a general overview of the preferences and comments shared online and in-person.

Open House Synopsis

Date: Tuesday, June 21, 2011
Time: 3:00pm – 7:00pm
Location: General Gordon Elementary School gymnasium

Notification:

The Open House was advertised and publicized in the following ways:

- **Mail Notice Invitation Postcard** – A 5x7 postcard was delivered to approximately 2,400 residential and commercial property addresses within a four-block radius of the school. The City of Vancouver produced mailing labels for this defined area (see Appendix A for the postcard, Appendix B for Notification Area).
- **Newspaper Ads** – The Open House notice was run in the Vancouver Courier on June 10th and 15th (see Appendix C)
- **VBE and Project Website** – A “save the date” notice was posted on the project website (www.cityspaces.ca/Gordon) several weeks prior to the event. Both the VBE website and project website were updated with information about the Open House, including the invitation notice and links to draft concept plans.
- **General Gordon School Advisory Committee (GSAC)** – Members of GSAC were provided a digital version of the Open House invitation to distribute to their constituent groups and encourage attendance.
- **General Gordon School** – The date, time, location and purpose of the Open House was published in several of the school’s newsletters in the weeks leading up to the Open House. A large banner was also provided to the school to put up on the fence for parents and neighbours to see.
- **Stakeholder Meetings** – the Project Team held meetings with the Parent Advisory Committee, the West Kits Residents Association and Upper Kits Residents Association, and the Staff and Teachers to update these groups on the planning and concept design process. The date of the Open House was also announced at these meetings.

Attendees:

Members of the consultant team, VBE staff, City of Vancouver staff and members of GSAC attended the Open House.

Consultants:

Mark Ehman – Architecture and Project Lead
 Andrea Chynoweth - Architecture
 Gwyn Symmons – Public Consultation and Facilitation
 Kate Lambert – Public Consultation and Facilitation
 Fadi Ghorayeb – Structural Engineering
 Jon Losee – Landscape Architecture
 Robert Lemon – Heritage Consultant
 John-Pierre Mahe – Life Cycle Assessment
 Sam Young – Transportation
 Floris van Weelderen - Transportation

Vancouver Board of Education:

Jim Meschino
Alex Grant
Robert Moore
Celene Fung
Anne Lee

City of Vancouver:

David Autiero
Pat St. Michell
Eric Mital

General Gordon School Advisory Committee:

All GSAC members attended the Open House. Representatives from the Parent Advisory Committee and Residents Association assembled outside the gym at the front door to the school in order to hand out pamphlets and speak to people headed into the Open House about their preference for Concept 1, which includes retention of most of the heritage façade.

Feedback:

Open House Comment Form

Attendees were encouraged to complete a comment form to provide their feedback on the preferred concept, share their views and provide some demographic information to the project team (see Appendix D for a copy of the comment form).

Over 179 people attended the Open House (estimate based on sign-in sheets), with 132 comment forms completed and returned on the same evening. An additional five forms were returned manually by fax, email or mail in the week following the open house for a total of 137. Feedback was also gathered through an online comment form. The online results are summarized at the end of this section.

Results of Open House Comment Forms:

The comment forms collected at the Open House and received in the week after the event were recorded using Zoomerang, a web-based survey and analysis tool. Comment forms were also read and sorted manually. The results are summarized here.

Table 1. Question 1. *What is your Relationship to General Gordon?**

Teacher/Staff	17	12%
Parent	35	26%
Neighbour	51	37%
Parent & Neighbour	25	18%
Other (as only response)	9	7%
Total Comment Forms	137	

** Note: More than one box could be checked e.g. some parents were also neighbours. Parent & Neighbour category was generated during analysis and was not an optional checkbox on the comment form (see Appendix D)*

Primary interests:

Results show that improving safety is a priority for a majority of respondents. School learning spaces, sustainability and useable outdoor space were also areas of importance to many. Heritage retention was a primary interest for 48% of attendees.

Table 2. Question 2. *What are your primary interests in the General Gordon renewal?**

Improving safety	94	69%
Improving learning spaces	77	56%
Create a more sustainable school	71	52%
Optimizing useable outdoor area	69	50%
Retaining heritage	66	48%
Improving community access	51	37%
Minimizing construction time	47	34%
Managing parking/traffic	37	27%
Minimizing need for portables	27	20%
Other	12	9%

** Note: More than one interest could be selected*

Preferred Concept 4

Among the respondents, 128 individuals offered an opinion on the Preferred Concept. Of those who answered the question, 39% were in agreement with Concept 4 and 59% disagreed with the Concept. Comments from those who favoured Concept 4 included: flexibility to accommodate new learning spaces, safety, ease of construction/phasing, affordability/least cost and viability. Of those who did not

prefer Concept 4, many cited the lack of heritage retention as the main reason. Other issues included the location on the site and the reduction in play area. Another key concern was the length of time children would remain in an unsafe building. In Concept 4 the school remains operational while the replacement school is under construction; in other concepts, the school population is moved into portables while the renewal plan is implemented.

Table 3. Question 3. *What is your opinion of Preferred Concept 4?**

Agree with Preferred Option 4	50	39%
Disagree with Option 4	76	59%
Don't know/No Opinion	2	2%

* Note: Percentage based on 128 responses

Alternate Preferences

Respondents who did *not agree with Concept 4* were asked to indicate which concept they preferred and why. Eighty-nine people answered this question, with 79% stating a preference for Concept 1. People who preferred Concept 1 frequently listed heritage retention as the main reason for their choice. Concept 5 was the next most popular choice, with 17% of respondents expressing a preference for this concept.

Based on the total number of responses (137), 51% of people who submitted a comment form stated a preference for Concept 1. Note: There are small discrepancies in how individuals responded to Questions 3, 5 and 6.

Table 4. Question 5. *If you disagree with Concept 4, which concept do you prefer?**

Prefer Option 1	70	79%
Prefer Option 2	4	4%
Prefer Option 3	0	0%
Prefer Option 5	15	17%

* Note: Percentage based on 89 responses – some respondents who “agree” with Concept 4 also selected an alternate preference.

Results by Group: Who preferred what?

Table 5 shows the results of Question 3, *What is your opinion of Preferred Concept 4?* and Question 6, *If you do not agree with Concept 4, which concept do you prefer?* by the respondents' relationship to the school.

Table 5 shows that 100% of the teachers/staff agree with Concept 4, parents were evenly split in their opinions of Concept 4, and the majority of neighbours disagreed with the Concept.

Approximately two thirds of respondents selected an alternate to the Preferred Concept. This includes individuals who indicated that they preferred Concept 4. The parents and neighbours were most likely to support Concept 1 as an alternate with Concept 5 as a distant second.

Table 5. Results by Groups

Group	Response to Concept 4			Alternate Preference as % of Each Group			
	Agree*	Disagree ^Δ	N/A [†]	1	2	3	5
Teacher/Staff	100%						18%
Parent	40%	40%	20%	43%	3%		11%
Neighbour	16%	80%	4%	67%	4%		14%
Parent & /Neighbour	24%	72%	4%	72%	4%		4%
Other	56%	33%	11%	33%			
Totals	36%	55%	8%	51%	3%		11%

* Combined Agree and Strongly Agree

Δ Combined Disagree and Strongly Disagree

† Combined No Opinion/Don't Know and No Indication (did not answer)

In a few cases, respondents did not fill out the forms according to the instructions – for example, a respondent may have stated “agree” with Preferred Concept 4 and also checked off a preference for one of the alternate concepts. In cases where the response was contradictory or wasn't completely clear, the consultants considered the comment form as a whole and assigned the form to the most appropriate preference. Table 6 shows the results of this manual categorization and provides a summary of total preferences based on the interpreted results. Note: Tables 1-5 above summarize the comment form results, but do not correct for multiple or contradictory selections. This explains the discrepancy between the results in the tables above.

Table 6. Open House Comment Form - Manual Analysis*

Agree with Preferred Option 4	48	35%
Prefer Option 1	68	50%
Prefer Option 2	3	2%
Prefer Option 3	0	0
Prefer Option 5	12	9%
No Opinion/No clear preference	6	4%

* Note: Percentages based on total number of comment forms returned (137).

Online Comment Form

Twenty-eight responses were received through the online comment option in the week following the Open House. Of the 28 responses received through the online form, 39% indicated that they attended the Open House and 61% did not attend the Open House. The Open House display boards were available on the website. People were asked to review the display material prior to completing the

comment form. A majority of online respondents (79%) disagreed with Concept 4. Of those who disagreed with Concept 4, 61% prefer Concept 1.

Table 7. Question 2. *What is your Relationship to General Gordon?**

Teacher/Staff	0	0%
Parent	6	21%
Neighbour	15	54%
Parent & Neighbour	4	14%
Other (only response)	3	11%

* Note: Multiple boxes could be checked e.g. some parents were also neighbours.

Table 8. Question 4. *What is your opinion of Preferred Concept 4?*

Agree with Preferred Option 4	5	18%
Disagree with Option 4	22	79%
Don't know/No Opinion	1	4%

Table 9. Question 6. *If you disagree with Concept 4, which concept do you prefer?*

Prefer Option 1	17	61%
Prefer Option 2	2	7%
Prefer Option 3	0	0%
Prefer Option 5	3	11%
N/A	6	21%

Key Comments:

The following summary identifies recurring themes and ideas expressed by respondents in the open-ended questions on the Open House and Online Comment forms:

Question 4. What do you like/dislike about Preferred Concept 4?**Likes:**

- Opportunity for flexibility in design of learning spaces.
- No portables/less time under construction/less disruption to children.
- Safety – safest option (in the opinion of some respondents).
- Least expensive.
- Main entry at ground level.
- Sustainability – long term resource efficiency.

Dislikes:

- No heritage retention.
- Location on the site – at the back of the site, too close to 8th Ave houses, building will shade play area.
- Sustainability – retention is seen as more environmentally sustainable.
- Safety – children have to stay in the unsafe school longer.
- Smaller size – the total area of Concept 4 is smaller than some of the other concepts.

Question 6. Why do you prefer the concept you've chosen [if an alternate preference was given]**Option 1:**

- Retains heritage character/features/value.
- Largest building area.
- Most outdoor space.
- Gets children out of unsafe building soon.

Option 2:

- Offers a compromise to retain some heritage features.
- Retains elements of existing open space.

Option 5:

- Better location for the school building.
- Prefer location of open space on the south side.
- Prefer a replacement school but on the current site.

The following summarizes the topics commonly mentioned in the responses to the open-ended questions:

Safety:

- Safety of the children.
- Timeframe for children to be moved out of the existing building – move into a replacement school or portables as soon as possible.

- There was a mix of perspectives about which concept would be “safest” – some people felt a replacement school would be more safe than a renewed school. There were several comments referring to a replacement school as a “safer” option.

Heritage:

- Retain heritage.
- Existing building doesn’t have significant heritage value for some.

Learning Spaces

- A replacement school offers the most flexibility to address seismic safety issues and create excellent learning environments.
- New learning environments can be accommodated within the existing heritage structure

Parking and traffic

- Parking and traffic on 7th Ave is an existing problem.
- Concern that access to parking and loading from 7th Ave would exacerbate congestion and safety issues related to parents dropping off children at the existing Ivy Montessori.
- Interest in eliminating on-site parking from all concepts – due to the impact on available play space and for sustainability reasons.
-

Useable Outdoor Area

- Amount of open space remaining in each concept.
- Amount of play space available during the implementation phases.
- Impact of parking on open space was also a concern.

Portables

- Some did not see the need for portables as a negative aspect of any of the concepts.
- Concepts with portables get children out of the unsafe building more quickly than Concept 4.
- Concern about the impact on teaching and learning of being in portables for an extended time.
- Concern about the lack of play areas during construction due to the area needed for portables.

Sustainability

- Retention as a more sustainable approach than replacement.
- Replacement as a more sustainable approach in the long-term



General Gordon Elementary
RENEWAL PLAN

A p p e n d i c e s



Imagine the possibilities...

You are invited to an Open House to learn more about the renewal of General Gordon Elementary School.

General Gordon School Renewal OPEN HOUSE

Tuesday, June 21, 2011 at 3 - 7 pm

**General Gordon Elementary School Gymnasium
2896 West 6th Avenue**

General Gordon School has been identified for seismic renewal. Join staff from the Vancouver Board of Education, the City of Vancouver and the project consultant team to review the project material, ask questions and share your views on the future plans for the school.


Information at the Open House will include:

- Overview of the project to date;
- Five concept options that have been analyzed;
- The preferred concept being considered.

For more information, please visit the project website:

www.cityspaces.ca/gordon OR

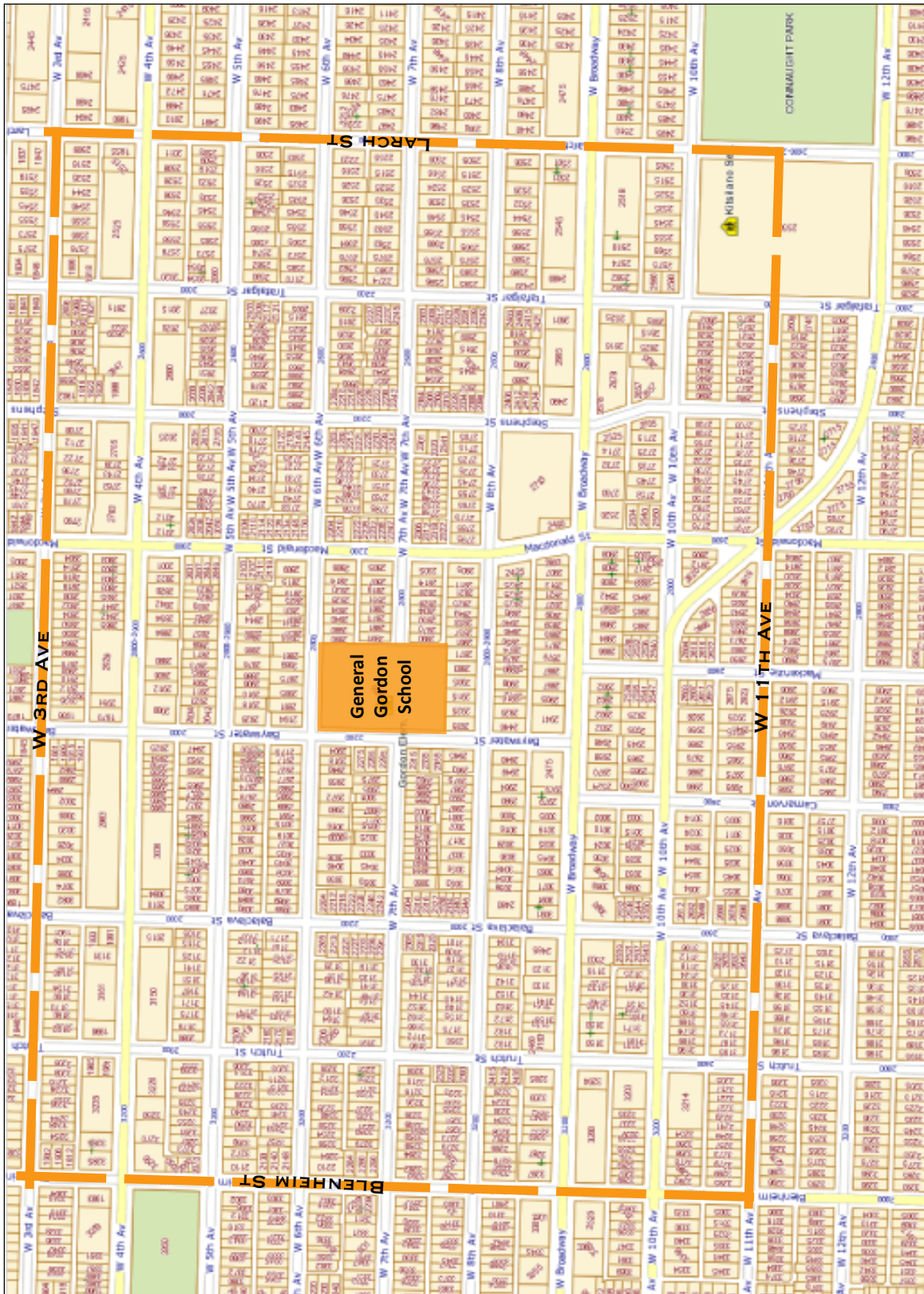
contact Kate Lambert at CitySpaces Consulting:
604.687.2281 | klambert@cityspaces.ca

 Vancouver School Board
www.vsb.bc.ca

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Appendix B

Open House Notification Area



Appendix C

Courier Advertisement published June 10th and 15th



Imagine the possibilities...

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Appendix D

Open House Comment Form
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5. If you **disagree** with Preferred Concept 4, please choose **ONE** of the other concepts presented tonight that you prefer.

- | | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Concept 1 | Concept 2 | Concept 3 | Concept 5 |
| Retain facade | Retain 1912 facade | Retain 1912 facade | Full replacement |
| New structure | New Structure | New Structure | on existing footprint |
| Lower basement slab | No basement | Retain basement | Two-storey school |

6. Why do you prefer the concept you've chosen above?

7. Do you have any other comments you would like to share about the renewal plans for General Gordon?

THANK YOU

for taking the time to share your views.

Name: _____

Address: _____

Please return your completed comment form TONIGHT in the box provided, or send it to CitySpaces, by email (klambert@cityspaces.ca) or fax (604.687.2241), no later than **Thursday, June 30th**.

For project resources, please visit:
www.cityspaces.ca/gordon