

March 10, 2021

ITEM 4.1

TO: Facilities Planning Committee

FROM: J. David Green, Secretary-Treasurer
John Dawson, Director of Educational Planning and Student Information
James de Hoop, Senior Manager of Planning

RE: **South Portion of Sir Sandford Fleming school site – consultation prior to the potential surplus declaration**

Reference to Strategic Plan:

Goal 4: Provide effective leadership, governance and stewardship

Objective: Effectively utilize school district resources and facilities

INTRODUCTION:

This report provides information on the consultation engagement process prior to considering a declaration of a portion of the site as surplus to educational needs, as per the Public Board motion passed on February 22, 2021:

The Board of Education approve proceeding with the initial consultation process, as described in Policy 20: Disposal of Land and Improvements, to consider the potential declaration of the southern portion of the Fleming school site as surplus to the educational needs of the school district.

Pursuant to Policy 20 staff are proceeding with the initial consultation process. The initial consultation process will seek input from representatives of the Indigenous community, the education community, local government, community organizations as well as the general public. The process will include consideration of future enrolment growth, consideration of alternative community use, fair consideration of community input, and adequate opportunity for the community to respond to the potential disposition of the southern portion of the site.

BACKGROUND:

Through a \$19.6 million investment of the Seismic Mitigation Program, the original Sir Sandford Fleming Elementary School built in 1912, was replaced with a building built to the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Gold standard, providing a safe and healthy environment for students, staff and community members while reducing annual operating and maintenance expenses significantly. The replacement school also includes a childcare centre of 69-spaces through a partnership of multiple entities. The VSB provided a grant in the form of the disposal of airspace at a nominal lease rate. The City of Vancouver provided \$6.3 million, while the Province contributed \$500,000 through the Ministry

of Children and Family Development. The new Fleming school required the reconfiguration of the entire school site during the design and construction process. This has created an opportunity for a portion of the site to become available for re-purposing subject to Board and Ministerial approval.

As part of the ongoing determination of best use of the District's facility assets and land, an option for the re-purposing or disposition of the southern portion of the school site at Sir Sandford Elementary School is under evaluation. Preliminary research supports that the site has good potential to achieve community benefit while generating needed capital revenue to address Board commitments. Internal research has confirmed the school district's ownership of the Fleming site. A subdivision enquiry to the City has affirmed that there are no barriers (utility infrastructure, transportation access, etc.) to the creation of a separate parcel of land through a subdivision.

ANALYSIS

Policy 20: Disposal of Land or Improvements

In accordance with Policy 20: Disposal of Land or Improvements, an initial consultation process regarding the potential disposal of the property is to occur before consideration by the Board about the declaring the site as surplus to future educational needs of the school district. If the Board passes a resolution to declare the site as surplus, additional public input and consultation will also occur through the disposal process. Disposal options are permitted by the School Act and Ministerial Regulations and would include a lease of 10 years or longer, or a sale or transfer in fee simple.

Location of the New School

The new, replacement school is situated on the northern segment of the school site, maintaining the farthest distance from the busy intersection of Knight Street and East 49th Avenue. The gravel playfield and staff parking will be located on the south of the new school building, leaving the southern portion of the site unused and difficult for staff supervision.

The minor subdivision of the southern portion of the site would help improve child safety at the site, while helping to minimize noise and air pollution by providing a barrier from a busy arterial street, especially along East 49th Avenue. A landscaping buffer could be introduced between the playfield/ staff parking, and the potential future development at the southern portion of the site.

Figure 1: Minor site subdivision of the southern portion of the Fleming site (left) indicating Commercial Zoning in RED, and overview (right) outlining the new school location at the northern portion of the site.



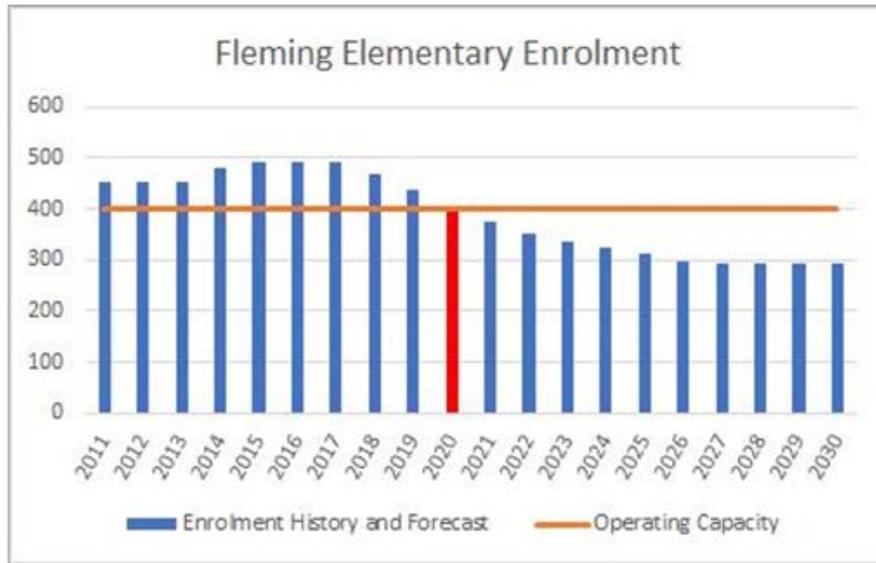
Future Enrolment Growth

Fleming has 18 classrooms with an operating capacity of 398. In the current school year, there are a total of 402 students organized into 17 divisions.

Enrolment at Fleming has been declining since 2017. Fleming is considered to be a full school, which means that out of catchment enrolment is restricted to maximize the number of catchment students that can be accommodated at the school. Enrolment at Fleming is forecast to continue declining in coming years which aligns with other demographic indicators for the catchment. The birth trend in the Fleming catchment has been negative for many years. The migration trend of school aged youth is forecast to be neutral to slightly positive with net changes of fewer than 5 students per year in the 5-12 year age group. The overall youth population in the Fleming catchment has been declining for many years with further decline forecast.

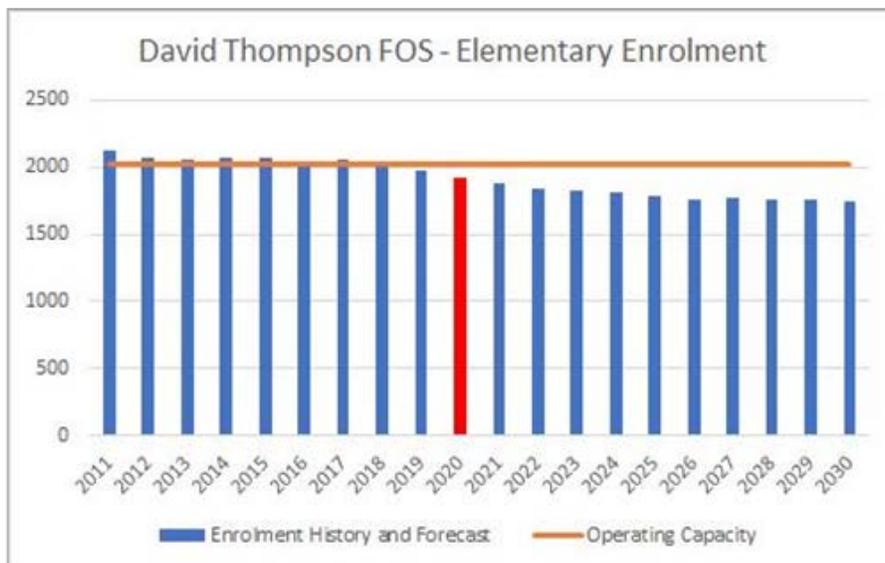
A significant change in demographics or increase in residential development patterns resulting in affordable housing attractive to families would be required to stabilize the current downward enrolment trajectory.

Figure 2: Fleming Elementary Enrolment



The Fleming elementary school is part of the David Thompson family of schools which also includes Douglas, Douglas Annex, Oppenheimer, Tecumseh, and Tecumseh Annex. The total operating capacity for the David Thompson Family of Schools is 2021 students. Figure 3 below indicates that elementary school enrolments in the David Thompson Family of Schools are declining, with a forecast decline of 179 elementary students by 2030 and a surplus capacity of 278 spaces. Fleming and Tecumseh are forecast to experience declining enrolment for the future while other elementary schools in the area are forecast to remain relatively stable.

Figure 3: David Thompson Family of Schools Elementary Enrolment



There is sufficient capacity at Fleming and within the David Thompson Family of Schools to accommodate forecast catchment enrolment demand. There is sufficient surplus capacity to accommodate enrolment demand that exceeds current projections. The design of the new Fleming school does not contemplate any future expansion – the building will not be expanded outside of its current footprint in future years.

Engagement Process to Gather Stakeholder and Community Feedback

An integral component of the consultation process, regarding consideration of the south portion of the Fleming site to be declared surplus and available for re-purposing, is to receive input from stakeholders and members of the community. The engagement process will have three phases:

1. Online information sessions
2. Feedback survey
3. Report to Facilities Planning Committee

Online Information Sessions

There will be two online information sessions offered on the same evening. The first session will be open to stakeholders, and the second session will open to the broader public. Representatives of the Indigenous community, local government, and community organizations will be invited to attend. These events will be livestreamed on the Teams platform. Information about the online information sessions will be advertised through the District and Fleming school website, social media, and email notification to representatives on the Facilities Planning Committee.

The information sessions will include a staff presentation of information summarizing key elements of the potential disposition as well as considerations of future enrolment growth and alternate use of the site. During and following the presentation, questions may be submitted by participants. Questions will be responded to during the live information sessions and follow-up information will be posted to the VSB website.

The first online session will provide information and seek input from VSB stakeholder representatives. The second online session will provide information and seek input from members of the school community, general public and local representatives noted above.

Feedback Survey

An online survey will be open for two weeks following the online information session to provide an opportunity for further feedback particularly participants in the online information sessions, and people who could not attend the online sessions.

Report to Facilities Planning Committee

A consultation report with a recommendation will be provided to the Facilities Planning for review at the meeting scheduled for May 5, 2021. The report will document details about the information presented

during the online information sessions, a themed summary of questions and answers from the online information sessions, and an analysis of feedback gathered through the survey.

Disposition Process

The implementation of Board Policy 20 has two phases:

Phase 1- Consideration of Declaration of the Southern Portion of the Fleming site as surplus to the future educational needs of the School District.

It is important to highlight that final approval of a disposition will be subject to the satisfactory outcomes of several steps prior to further recommendations to the Board. The steps and proposed timeline for Phase 1 are shown in the diagram below.



If the Board passes a resolution declaring the Southern Portion of the Fleming Site surplus to the needs of the school district and authorizes staff to proceed with the disposition process, then phase two of the process would begin.

Phase 2 – Site Disposition Process

The estimated timeframe for the site disposition process set out below is 3 to 6 months.



The implementation of any disposition, as approved by the Board, will also be the subject of periodic information updates at the Facilities Planning Committee, which provides further opportunities for employee groups, school-based and district-wide PAC, neighbours, and other public information sharing and feedback.

RECOMMENDATION(S):

This report is for information only.