



NEWS RELEASE

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SD68 Board Receives NDSS Site Study

A report by an outside consultant recommends that Nanaimo Ladysmith Public Schools establish community-based task forces as it plans the redevelopment of the Nanaimo District Secondary School site as part of the school district's 10-Year Enhanced Facilities for Learning Plan.

The 16-hectare site, which is bounded by Third Street, Wakesiah Avenue and Fourth Street, includes the NDSS building and fields, the District Administration Centre and Operations Centre, the Rotary Bowl and Serausmen Stadium. The property is owned by the school district, except for the land on which the Nanaimo Aquatic Centre is situated.

Simon Richards, of Cornerstone Architecture and Planning Group, notes that the site is the district's largest single parcel land asset and the location of one of its largest schools. Also, it is a particularly strategic location, adjacent to Vancouver Island University and the City of Nanaimo sports complex.

The school district's 10-Year Enhanced Facilities for Learning Plan sets out a goal of rebuilding NDSS somewhere on the site and moving Woodlands Secondary students to the school. The district has also undertaken an Asset Management Plan, which identifies properties owned by the district that should be retained or could be sold to realize funding for construction projects.

Cornerstone was hired by the district to study the NDSS site and make recommendations for the best use of the entire property, in keeping with the district's goals.

The report recommends that:

- The district work with the City of Nanaimo and Vancouver Island University as it plans the redevelopment of the site
- A public information and engagement program be carried out as part of the planning process
- The district plan for a new 1,900-student school on the site
- The District Operations Centre be moved to a new site but the District Administration Centre does not necessarily have to be moved
- As it plans the redevelopment, the district work with the City of Nanaimo, with the district advocating the redevelopment of Rotary Bowl on the site as a priority, in a form that meets wide community needs; while noting that this will have an impact on current uses.

The report is available on the school district website www.sd68.bc.ca.

NDSS Site Development Potential Study Background

The executive summary of the report outlines the objectives of the study. The report says, “To advance long-term objectives/strategies, it became clear that the development potential for the NDSS site needed to be examined in a comprehensive manner, and that in order to determine SD68’s best development approach, an overall guiding plan was required that would;

- Identify the final capacity and program requirements for NDSS in the context of school consolidation
- Identify the optimum development approach for the NDSS
- Identify the requirements and long-term site development option for the two SD68 District facilities on site (District Administration Centre and District Operations Centre)
- Consider the relationships and optimum long-term site development option for the community facilities co-located on site, specifically Rotary Bowl and Serauxmen Stadium
- Identify the potential for disposition of lands in accordance with the Asset Management Plan
- Take into account Vancouver Island University’s long range plans as well as other context factors
- Undertake a process that consulted/collaborated with the City of Nanaimo and VIU as partners in realizing the final outcome.”

The recommendations of the study, which have been endorsed by the SD68 Board of Education, are:

1. NDSS Site and School Development Strategy

Provisionally adopt one specific preferred option (Option 4A in the report) as the basis for the redevelopment strategy for the NDSS Site. The components of this strategy include:

- Plan for a 1900 capacity school
- Plan for a two phase replacement process, where the first phase can accommodate sufficient additional enrollment to permit the planned closing of Woodland Secondary School
- Plan the renewed NDSS to realize the full potential of the partnership with VIU
- Plan to relocate the District Operations Centre to another SD68-owned site in the second phase
- Plan to replace the District Administration Centre at an indeterminate future time, keeping the current facility in the short to medium term so as not to dissipate the priority focus for NDSS renewal
- In collaboration with the City, promote the redevelopment of community sports facilities on site, with the clear priority for an artificial turf field (stadium)
- Plan appropriate site areas for market land disposition/development

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2. Integrated Asset Management Plan – SD68 Project Business Plan

- Incorporate the Asset Management Plan (AMP) into the SD68 NDSS Project Business Plan and implement its recommended strategies.

3. Instigate a Concerted Next Steps Process Executed through Three Task Forces

- SD68 Task Force – Articulating the Secondary School Renewal Learning Model
- SD68-VIU Task Force – Defining a Model and Campus Configuration for Seamless Secondary to Post-Secondary Transition
- SD68-City of Nanaimo-VIU – Identifying the Optimal Configuration of Facilities within the Sports Corridor

4. Ministry Connection

- While communication has been maintained with the Ministry, a major initiative is essential to present the NDSS plan proposal and to work toward a mutually supportable implementation strategy. The NDSS development proposal incorporates phasing and flexibility that is conducive to reaching agreement. The proposal will be greatly strengthened with the aligned participation of VIU, support from the City, and with demonstrable reflection of government policy regarding job skills education and training.

5. Community information and Engagement

- A community information and engagement program will be an integral part of the next steps as the project proceeds.

The report is available at www.sd68.bc.ca,