

Questions and Answers

What is a Long Range Facilities Plan?

The Long Range Facilities Plan (LRFP) is a provincial mechanism for districts to demonstrate they are managing their facilities in an effective, economic and efficient way in support of their educational goals. The LRFP places the need for capital projects in a district-wide context and becomes the basis for submission of capital project requests by the district and for investment decisions by the Ministry of Education.

The LRFP is intended to be a Broad Visioning document much like an Official Community Plan to:

- Support educational direction
- Manage existing facilities
- Allow school facilities to play larger role in the community
- Identify potential changes to programs
- Identify other uses for facilities such as childcare; before and after care; community uses

Ministry of Education guidelines emphasize the need for robust community, especially Indigenous consultation.

A LRFP should take into consideration:

- educational and operational program requirements and trends
- current and 10 to 15 year projections in enrolments, and community demographics
- operating capacities, utilization and condition of existing facilities, including temporary accommodation and/or rental facilities
- current and anticipated changes in land use
- future trends or anticipated new initiatives, including both those of the school district and the government; and transportation of students

The LRFP is a “living document”, updated on a regular basis to reflect trends and changes as they occur in our District, and serves as a road map to help guide our operational and capital planning.

Project Scope and Methodology

The intent of a Long Range Facilities Plan is to provide a strategic framework and direction for the district's annual review of its Five-Year Capital Plan and proposed capital projects.

As noted in the Ministry of Education's Capital Plan Instructions, *a comprehensive Long Range Facilities Plan (LRFP) should guide all board of education decisions regarding capital asset management and capital plan submissions, both in terms of facility operations and educational programming.* The content of each LRFP developed by boards is fully expected to vary, as they will be dependent on the unique circumstances of individual school districts currently and in the future.

The LRFP for a school district would most commonly use at least a 10-year planning horizon. However, a longer period may be considered where local government is actively pursuing extended land use planning and lengthier residential development growth strategies, which may directly influence the growth of student enrolment in different areas of the school district. Conversely, the potential contraction of communities and changing demographics in neighbourhoods, leading to subsequent decline in student enrolment, may also need to be considered under the LRFP.

As all capital project requests should be supported by a current LRFP, the Ministry may request school districts to provide appropriate sections of the LRFP to inform its review of individual requested projects. Of primary consideration is that any school for which a capital project is being proposed has been identified in the LRFP as being necessary for the Board's continuous provision of education programming for students in the school district.

The development of this Long Range Facilities Plan includes: student enrolment forecast, capacity and utilization analysis; facility condition assessment analysis; seismically mitigation analysis; a review of educational changes that impact facilities; facilities renewal; and recommendations.

Establishing educational and operational objectives as a strategic framework enables the district to list, evaluate, and prioritize facilities needs and potential capital projects in a systemic decision making framework. Educational and operational objectives are drawn from and aligned with the Board of Education Strategic Plan and the Superintendent's Operational Plan.

Why are we exploring an LRFP now?

The most recent LRFP, that was completed in 2015 and updated in 2017, does not address many of the current opportunities and challenges faced by the District at present or in the future, and is in need of significant revision. The previous LRFP plans were based on the premise of needing to address declining enrolment and a deteriorating overall financial position due to the loss of funding associated with less students. NLPS is now on a much stronger financial footing and experiencing enrolment growth after 13 years of enrolment decline.

There have also been two significant changes since these plans were approved that have resulted in the need for significant revision. The changes to the building code have resulted in huge changes to our seismic remediation program (from 3 to 32 schools requiring seismic upgrading due to recent building code changes), and the recent Supreme Court ruling resulted in the opening of over 70 classrooms in the school district.

What are the shortcomings of our current school facilities?

The average age of NLPS facilities is 54 years. Many of the building systems, equipment and finishes are in need of renewal, upgrade or replacement. The total deferred maintenance in the district (based on the Facilities Condition Index Costing Model) is \$128,924,483.00. In addition, 32 of our schools require seismic upgrades to mitigate the potentially damaging effects of a major earthquake.

Who is involved in the planning process?

The Board will be involved throughout the LRFP process and will provide direction and final approval to senior management on the LRFP. Partners, such as the District's Indigenous partner groups, the Nanaimo Ladysmith Teachers' Association, the Canadian Union of Public Employees, the District Parent Advisory Council, the City of Nanaimo, Town of Ladysmith, the District of Lantzville, along with parents and the broader school community, will be kept apprised of the progress of the LRFP development, will be asked to attend stakeholder meetings, and will be asked for feedback on the draft plan through the LRFP engagement process.

What is the timeline for the LRFP?

The LRFP engagement process is set to **begin the week of November 4, 2019**, with the launch of the District Long Range Facilities Plan website and survey. Open houses, meetings with key stakeholders, and other online engagement will follow. The goal is to have received all feedback in early 2020 to allow for district staff to consider the LRFP in future capital planning and budget processes for the 2020-21 school year.

How will the LRFP affect programs in the district?

The LRFP reviews the various educational programs offered in the school district, their program locations as well as possible future programs that are known at this time. It is possible that recommendations could result in the relocation of existing programs or identifying strategic direction for programs in the future.

When will the LRFP be implemented?

It is anticipated that, once the LRFP is approved by the Board of Education, it will be implemented immediately, i.e. following through on recommendations such as changes to the district's capital program, etc. The review may not result in an immediate impact to existing programs in the district. Recommendations in the LRFP will focus on longer term strategies that will require further consultation and planning with key stakeholders.

Where will the District get the money to make the facility changes and improvements outlined in the LRFP?

The Province of BC, through the Ministry of Education, provides capital funding to school districts through a number of programs:

- Annual Facility Grant (combined operating and capital funding mechanism to school districts in recognition of the need for cyclical renewal and replacement of critical facility components over and above regular maintenance to extend the life of these capital assets and prevent any premature deterioration – received annually)
- Capital Plan (submitted by the Board annually to Ministry for approval of major projects):
 - Seismic Mitigation Program (SMP)
 - School Expansion Program (EXP)
 - School Replacement Program (REP)
 - Building Envelope Program (BEP)
 - School Enhancement Program (SEP)
 - Carbon Neutral Capital Program (CNCP)
 - Playground Equipment Program (PEP)
 - Other new funding programs that may be announced

In addition, the Board of Education may use restricted local capital funds to augment provincial funding for major capital projects.

How can I be informed and involved in the LRFP process?

The best way to be informed and involved in the LRFP process is to check the website.

The website will be updated on a regular basis with draft LRFP documents, backgrounders, frequently asked questions, important dates and opportunities to provide input including surveys and open houses. Updates about the process will also be posted on our District website, Facebook and Twitter accounts.