

Appendix I: Terms of Reference

TERMS OF REFERENCE VANCOUVER SCHOOL DISTRICT PUBLIC CONSULTATION PROCESS

January 2016



LONG
RANGE
FACILITIES
PLAN



INTRODUCTION

Vancouver School District is developing a long-range facilities plan (LRFP). The plan is intended as a dynamic, living document that will establish principles and outline objectives and strategies to guide and inform decision-making on the long-term management of District facilities. It should not be mistaken for an implementation plan. Implementation plans are developed following completion of the LRFP in order to put key strategies and objectives identified into action. The Long Range Facilities Plan will be reviewed and updated annually to track implementation progress.

In partnership with the public and its stakeholders, Vancouver School District and its elected trustees (Vancouver Board of Education {VBE}) are seeking to understand public values, priorities and ideas to inform facilities planning. The public consultation process will bring citizen and stakeholder knowledge and voices into the planning process.

This Terms of Reference document describes the scope and nature of the public consultation to inform, consult and involve citizens and stakeholders in the development of the LRFP. The terms outlined here articulate how we intend to engage citizens and stakeholders and how we will report out to district staff and decision-makers. The terms have been developed in collaboration with elected trustees, staff and stakeholders.

DEFINITIONS:

For the purposes of this document we define key terms as follows:

Decision makers: Elected trustees of the Vancouver Board of Education (VBE)

District Staff: Senior and district management and staff responsible for facilities planning

Citizens: Individual members of the public

Stakeholders: Organizations and associations that participate on VBE standing committees

Organizations/ Partners: Community organizations, businesses and potential partners

Public Consultation: The process of soliciting, summarizing, sharing and incorporating public input for the purposes of plan development.

WORKING PRINCIPLES FOR THE LRFP:

The District is seeking to deliver a Long Range Facilities Plan. The working principles for the plan are to deliver:

- Safe and sustainable schools;
- Facilities that support innovative, educational approaches, ultimately providing effective learning environments;
- Schools located where they can support school-aged populations now and in future; and

- Planning that takes into account economic, community and environmental benefits for students, families and all citizens of Vancouver.

PRINCIPLES FOR PUBLIC AND STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATION

All public consultation in support of the development of a Long Range Facilities Plan (LRFP) will be governed by the following principles:

1. CREATING SHARED UNDERSTANDING: INFORMATION SHARING

In order to have informed participation in our public consultation work, we must ensure citizens and stakeholders have a shared understanding of:

- The rationale for developing a Long Range Facilities Plan;
- Commitments to government that underpin the planning work and are driving timelines for public engagement. This means clarity about the Ministry of Education requirement that larger school districts target 95% capacity utilization that can be achieved over the long term of seismic upgrading;
- Optimal learning environments; and
- Research and analysis with respect to enrolment and demographic trends, facilities conditions, capacity utilization and seismic risk.

2. AN INCLUSIVE APPROACH: PROMOTING BROAD PARTICIPATION

We are committed to using tools that encourage participation by a broad cross-section of citizens and stakeholders. This commitment will include:

- Using plain language in materials;
- Providing opportunities to participate online;
- Using user-friendly visuals and info-graphics to explain technical information;
- Promoting public consultation activities broadly using social media, paid media, community networks, and street-level spaces on school grounds and throughout larger neighbourhood areas;
- Minimizing language and cultural barriers to participation;
- Going to where stakeholders are, which should include going to existing groups (community meetings, gatherings) and seeking input as well as hosting open-call events; and
- Seeking representative samples of public input as well as self-selecting samples from surveys.

We must “capture the public’s imagination” so that involvement strikes a chord with people’s values, criteria and ideas for schools in their city. This commitment means we will host:

- Creative, participatory exercises that offer opportunities to ask questions, interact with subject matter experts, and promote constructive and future-focused conversations;
- Conversations that seek to understand values as criteria for decision-making, asking what is vital, important and meaningful for participants; and
- Dialogues with an “engaging frame” that seek and share stories and images, as well as facts and data.

3. PROMOTION OF TWO-WAY COMMUNICATION

We are committed to sharing information with the public as well as listening and providing multiple opportunities for dialogue and public input. This commitment means we will:

- Offer opportunities in person, online and throughout our consultation to listen to the ideas, concerns and general input of citizens and stakeholders;
- Clearly summarize and share citizen and stakeholder input; and
- Be responsive to citizens seeking additional opportunities, outside of planned activities, to share input.

4. TRANSPARENCY AND CLARITY

We are committed to delivering all aspects of the project transparently, which means

- Sharing a clear decision-making framework, so the public understands how their input will inform VBE planning and decision-making;
- The public is kept informed as consultation progresses, including how input is considered and used; and
- Sharing a clear methodology for reporting on all forms of citizen and stakeholder input.

PROCESS FOR DEVELOPING THE CONSULTATION PLAN

The process for developing the detailed public consultation plan should be led by a committee including senior staff and elected trustees. The activities would include participating in the development of the plan and providing timely guidance on its implementation.

CONSULTATION TIMELINES

Public consultation activities will take place from February– May 2016 with a summary report and analysis on all findings delivered as soon as possible in early May 2016.

MEETING BEST PRACTICES IN CONSULTATION

Given our principles, we propose a methodology that aligns with best practices in public consultation: the International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) Core Values of Public Participation and the IAP2 Code of Ethics for Public Participation Practitioner. The IAP2 spectrum of engagement outlines the range of approaches possible. The consultation in support of the LRFP will use these standards as a baseline, and in particular:

Fair, Transparent and Legitimate. Where possible, stakeholders will have had the opportunity to influence the design of a consultation program. The public is made aware of opportunities to participate and materials are made available in a manner that encourages public understanding.

Identifying Topics and Decisions for Consultation. Consultation is only conducted when there are decisions that can benefit from public input, and input is used effectively to improve decisions.

Consultation Methods. A range of consultation methods are used to maximize opportunities for participation. Staff and consultants have the necessary skills to implement consultation programs.

Reporting. Consultation reports provide the public and decision makers with a rigorous analysis of input.

PROPOSED METHODOLOGY

The consultation process will employ the first three elements of the IAP2 spectrum: inform, consult, and involve. Guided by the principles outlined here, we will use a range of approaches that build trust and spark meaningful dialogue.

IAP2'S PUBLIC PARTICIPATION SPECTRUM

The IAP2 Federation has developed the Spectrum to help groups define the public's role in any public participation process. The IAP2 Spectrum is quickly becoming an international standard.

INCREASING IMPACT ON THE DECISION

	INFORM	CONSULT	INVOLVE	COLLABORATE	EMPOWER
PUBLIC PARTICIPATION GOAL	To provide the public with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problem, alternatives, opportunities and/or solutions.	To obtain public feedback on analysis, alternatives and/or decisions.	To work directly with the public throughout the process to ensure that public concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered.	To partner with the public in each aspect of the decision including the development of alternatives and the identification of the preferred solution.	To place final decision making in the hands of the public.
PROMISE TO THE PUBLIC	We will keep you informed.	We will keep you informed, listen to and acknowledge concerns and aspirations, and provide feedback on how public input influences the decision. We will seek your feedback on drafts and proposals.	We will work with you to ensure that your concerns and aspirations are directly reflected in the alternatives developed and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision.	We will work together with you to formulate solutions and incorporate your advice and recommendations into the decisions to the maximum extent possible.	We will implement what you decide.

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