

May 2, 2007

Ridgeway Renovation Options – School District Powerpoint Presentation

**The School Board desires to find an affordable solution that meets school and community needs.**

- **No decision has been made on a replacement or renovation option.**

The school board has not at this time made any decision on whether or not to conduct heritage restoration of Ridgeway Elementary School. Both the Board and the City have completed several engineering and architectural studies. Although a number of options and alternatives for the school have been evaluated and costed out, the School Board has not taken any specific position. Our preference is not to demolish the building – but rather to find a solution that is acceptable to the community and is affordable.

- **School District acknowledges historical significance of Ridgeway School to the community.**

The School Board is aware of the significance of Ridgeway's historical presence in the community. Within the past six weeks the school district has received many letters and e-mails supporting the heritage preservation of the building and the grounds. This clearly is one of the most loved buildings in North Vancouver.

From the School Board's point of view, the issue regarding Ridgeway is not so much one of agreeing that it would be nice to preserve the heritage quality of the school, but whether a means of paying the premium for heritage restoration can be found in a reasonable time frame.

- **Existing building is near the end of its useful life. For health and safety of building occupants there is a need to select a renewal option now.**

The existing building continues to deteriorate, and deferring a decision to carry out upgrades to an unknown future date is not recommended due to the condition of the building.

- **Before the School Board can commit to any of the heritage upgrade options, the Board requires certainty that:**

Before the Board can commit to any of the heritage upgrade options we need to have certainty that:

- the upgrade includes a thorough and complete renewal of building systems.
- the option selected is within the funding envelope.
- Additional funding for heritage renovation is guaranteed to be available within a reasonable time frame and does not put the School District at risk.

**Physical Issues regarding the existing building – requirement for a long-term solution:**

- **Ministry of Education requires, at minimum, a 50 to 60 year building life expectancy.**

If we are going to restore the old building for re-use it is essential that the upgrades be done without compromising the quality and durability of the building for educational purposes. The Ministry of Education and the school district contemplate a 50 to 60 year building life expectancy. Further infusion of major capital funds from the Ministry within this life expectancy period cannot be anticipated.

- **Project needs to be more comprehensive than simply a “seismic upgrade”.**

Ridgeway is ranked in the “high” category for North Vancouver schools requiring seismic upgrade. Despite this, the current capital project is not simply a seismic upgrade. Numerous system deficiencies have been identified on the existing building and need to be corrected in a comprehensive fashion. Deficiencies span from below the ground, where there are collapsed drain lines, to the roof structure, which needs to be rebuilt. As well, the building is not handicapped accessible in its current form, and it does not conform to the building code.

Downs/Archambault Architects will describe in detail the problems with the existing building.

- **A piecemeal approach to restoration cannot be contemplated.**

While no current building deficiency on its own is to be considered a life safety issue, the sheer magnitude of the problem, dictates a comprehensive approach to building upgrade. A piecemeal approach to restoration cannot be contemplated due to increased cost and increased disruption and inconvenience to building occupants.

## **Timing of Project:**

- **In 2004 the Ministry of Education approved a Renovation/Replacement project.** Much time has elapsed since the 2004 approval by the Ministry of Education of the Renovation/Replacement project. Due to the deteriorated condition of the building it is necessary to quickly determine the appropriate upgrade option for Ridgeway School and get on with it.
- **12 options were created and costed. The least expensive option is to build a new school and demolish the existing school. Ministry policy dictates the lowest cost option is used to determine the “funding base”.**

### Work that has been done...

- In the summer of 2005 the school district completed phase 1 of the feasibility study with the assistance of Downs/Archambault Architects. The study produced 12 options ranging from complete restoration of all components of the existing building to constructing a brand new school and demolishing the existing building. All 12 options were costed. The least expensive option was to build a new school and demolish the existing school. The Ministry indicated that they would be prepared to fund the project only to the level of the least expensive option. This is consistent with their capital funding policies. The least expensive option determines “the funding base”.
- In the fall of 2005 the City of North Vancouver commissioned Iredale and Associates Architects to conduct an independent study of a renovation option of Ridgeway School. This study was completed in the fall of 2006.
- **Ministry of Education has set March 2008 as the earliest possible date for “Project Agreement”.**
  - In January 2007, after consultation with the school district, the Ministry moved the earliest date of Project Agreement approval forward to March of 2008. This allowed more time to complete the consultation required to deal with the complex heritage issues.
  - On February 2007 the school district briefed Ridgeway teachers and the PAC on the status of the project. Subsequent to this meeting a coalition of parents, teachers, alumni, and members of the community formed a the Ridgeway Heritage Committee.
  - Between March and now, the School District, the Heritage Committee, the CNV, and Downs/Archambault have met to collaboratively explore the heritage options and plan for tonight’s meeting.

- **10 to 12 months of further design work must be completed prior to entering into Project Agreement with the Ministry of Education.**

Work that needs to be done...

- The school district would prefer that one of the heritage restoration options to be presented tonight can be undertaken, but we need guaranteed funding within a reasonable time frame. The architect estimates that the completion of the second phase of the feasibility study and development of working drawings will require approximately 10 to 12 months. The architect cannot start detailed design until we have certainty about the ultimate option.

## **Funding for Heritage Restoration:**

- **We need to determine without delay if \$4 to 7 million of secure funding can be found to augment the “funding base” for a heritage option.**

Maintaining the heritage status of the building will be an extreme challenge for the School District. The Provincial Government has been clear that they will not fund beyond the the base option. That means the School District will have to find up to \$7 million of secure funding for any of the heritage options. The City of North Vancouver has already indicated they are only interested in "cost neutral" solutions. The Heritage Branch of the Provincial Government has stated that the most they can contribute is “tens of thousands of dollars” for heritage consultation.

The school district has in excess of \$210 million of identifiable capital needs. These needs are due mainly to an aging building infrastructure. The school district is under significant pressure from the Province to use proceeds from land sale to fund educational capital priorities.

Educational capital priorities have a direct benefit to the health, safety, and educational needs of students. An example of local funding of an educational capital priority is the Board’s contribution of \$6.8 million contribution to Sutherland Secondary to ensure its replacement.

- **The School District is under pressure from the Ministry of Education to fund a portion of its educational Capital priorities. The Ministry does not consider heritage restoration an educational Capital priority.**

Heritage upgrades to schools are not considered educational capital priorities. The premium cost to carry out a heritage upgrade of Ridgeway School will cost between \$4 and \$7 million.

- **The School District has met with the City of North Vancouver to review creative funding options to pay for heritage restoration**

The school district met with City staff to consider other creative funding options.

Potential ways to raise sufficient funds to carry out a heritage upgrade to Ridgeway are:

- Rezoning School District properties to a higher density than could be reasonably anticipated in the Official Community Plan
  - Initiating a municipal referendum to raise money (allowed under Schools Act)
  - Developing a portion of the Ridgeway School site for housing
- **The Board will consider such funding options if additional money is guaranteed when required and does not put the School District at risk.**

The Board will only consider undertaking a heritage option if additional money is guaranteed when required, and it does not put the School District at risk.