

DATE: December 3, 2013
TO: Board of Trustees
FROM: Darrel Robertson, Superintendent of Schools
SUBJECT: Capital Planning Methodology (Response to Request for Information #001)
ORIGINATOR: David Fraser, Executive Director, Corporate Services
RESOURCE STAFF: Josephine Duquette, Jenifer Elliott, Roland Labbe, Lorne Parker
REFERENCE: November 5, 2013 Board Meeting (Trustee Ip)

ISSUE

The following information was requested: Provide a brief report outlining the capital planning methodology and rationale that is used in identifying and prioritizing the selection of Terwillegar Heights and Blackmud Creek as new school sites. Also the processes that have been used and/or will be using to engage community perspectives.

BACKGROUND

Alberta Education requires every school district in Alberta to annually approve and submit a Three-Year Capital Plan. The District's capital plan identifies district priorities for both modernizations and new school construction. Predominantly, the requests for new construction projects are located within the new suburban areas that are experiencing high population growth and have an inability to provide local accommodation to students moving in.

District staff propose priorities for new construction based on a comprehensive review of all land development plans, policies and data for the City of Edmonton, and analysis of pre-school and student residency data in suburban areas, including:

- the number of 0-4 year olds living in new suburban areas (based on most recent municipal census data);
- the number of EPSB students currently residing in new suburban areas;
- the percentage of neighbourhood build out (future growth potential);
- available student capacity in new suburban areas;
- ability of nearby schools to accommodate current and projected growth in new areas; and
- average travel time by yellow bus to a designated receiving school.

These criteria take into consideration both current demand and projected future growth in the new suburban areas.

CURRENT SITUATION

In the District Three-Year Capital Plan 2014-2017 (a copy can be accessed at: http://epsb.ca/board/april23_2013/04232013.pdf), 15 new construction priorities (14 schools and one addition) have been identified in suburban areas. The District's ability to provide local accommodation has been significantly challenged, especially in the southwest. A school in the MacTaggart neighbourhood will help to alleviate some of the enrolment pressures faced at existing schools in the Terwillegar Heights and Riverbend areas. A school in Blackmud Creek

will increase the District's capacity to offer local accommodation to current students residing in the north portion of the Heritage Valley area. Though many of the new construction priorities recognize the need to address future growth, the sites in Blackmud Creek and MacTaggart will allow the District to address immediate demand that has been realized in suburban neighbourhoods.

Since funding was announced for these two sites on May 2, 2013, district staff have been working closely with the City of Edmonton, Alberta Education and Alberta Infrastructure on building design options, site development and programming details. Community engagement is an important element of this planning process. The Planning department has established a section on our website that contains information regarding the two approved school construction projects (<http://planning.epsb.ca/capital-planning/current-projects>). The webpage has been established to inform the broader community and will be continually updated. We have included basic information about the schools (e.g. grade configuration, capacity, location) as well as an FAQ section to address additional common questions. We have shared design/construction timelines, demographic information, general school opening processes (e.g. naming, attendance area development) and an up-to-date draft site plan. The link to the website was shared with community league contacts to ensure those living in the area would be informed of any information and answer possible questions.

In the case of the Blackmud Creek site, concerns were expressed by the community league in regards to traffic and potential safety issues. Several conversations have occurred between the Blackmud Creek Community League and district staff to ensure these concerns are addressed to every extent possible. City of Edmonton departments such as Transportation and Parks have been included in these conversations where their expertise has been of assistance. This direct communication with the community league will continue to ensure the school site will operate in a manner that is safe and functional despite some access limitations. Also, a rezoning application for this site will be submitted by the City of Edmonton prior to construction. Once this occurs, neighbouring properties will be notified and given a formal opportunity to comment and provide input.

Though a date has yet to be determined, public meetings for both schools will be held to share key information with community members. There will be an opportunity for the public to provide input during the school naming process as well. Information on how to submit a name suggestion will be posted on the District website, Facebook page and on Twitter. This process will commence in 2014. A short-list of names will be recommended to the Board of Trustees who will make the final decision on the name for each school.

KEY POINTS

- An analysis of various data sources allow district staff to prioritize new construction projects for the District capital plan.
- The District recognizes there is a growing demand for local accommodation in suburban areas of the City by having included 15 new construction projects in the District Three-Year Capital Plan 2014-2017.
- Though only two projects have received provincial funding at this time, demand for the remaining prioritized projects remains critical.
- New construction priorities are based primarily on serving the needs of families and students that are populating the developing neighbourhoods. Schools in Blackmud Creek

and MacTaggart will provide local accommodation in suburban areas where large numbers of families already live.

- The public will be kept informed through the District Planning website where relevant information will be posted and updated.
- Further opportunities for community engagement will present themselves as these projects move forward.

ATTACHMENTS & APPENDICES

N/A

JE:gm