

Consolidated City Centre School Implications

ISSUE

In June of 2021, the Board of Trustees of the Saskatoon Public School Division (School Division) decided that a new school consolidating Pleasant Hill, King George and Princess Alexandra schools will be built on the present site of Princess Alexandra, at 210 Avenue H South. The purpose of this report is to outline the implications of this decision for the City of Saskatoon (City).

BACKGROUND

The School Division received approval from the Province of Saskatchewan for its Consolidated City Centre School Project (City Centre Project) in March of 2020. The project was approved as a consolidation of Princess Alexandra, King George and Pleasant Hill elementary schools into one new school on the Princess Alexandra School site.

At its May 17, 2020 meeting, the Governance and Priorities Committee received an information report on the City Centre Recreation Facility. This report outlined Administration's plan to renew conversations with the School Division in being a potential partner and consider the option of integrating a planned renewal of White Buffalo Youth Lodge (WBYL), as the City Centre Recreation Facility, as part of the planned school consolidation project. Administration confirmed they will continue working with the School Division and the WBYL Partnership to advance the concept and will report back to City Council in due course.

At its February 2, 2021 meeting, the Standing Policy Committee on Planning, Development and Community Services was presented with a letter from the School Division requesting the City's permission to investigate the potential of Optimist Park as a location for the City Centre Project.

Administration, with support from Saskatoon Land, in response to direction given by City Council also provided the School Division with a list of other properties, both privately owned and City owned, as alternatives to Optimist Park that could be considered as a site for the future consolidated school. This included vacant land, brownfield, as well as current properties that could be considered for future redevelopment. The School Division conducted a review of these properties to determine their viability as school locations. The School Division rejected these sites based on their project criteria and decided to focus on the Optimist Park and Princess Alexandra sites as their two options.

At its May 11, 2021 meeting, the School Division made the motion to approach the City with a formal request to consider Optimist Park as a location for the new consolidated school. However, prior to making the request to City Council, at its June 2, 2021 meeting, the School Division rescinded that motion from May 11, 2021:

“to consider Optimist Park as an alternative location for the City Centre School Project.”

The School Division has decided to proceed with their original plan to develop the new consolidated school on the current Princess Alexandra site.

DISCUSSION/ANALYSIS

A new consolidated City Centre School will be built on the present site of Princess Alexandra school, at 210 Avenue H South. The new school is anticipated to open in the fall of 2024. Both the School Division and Saskatoon Tribal Council (STC) envision a new facility for WBYL that could be integrated or adjacent to the new school.

The decision to build a new consolidated school at the present site of Princess Alexandra School has the following implications for the School Division that will involve the City:

Servicing and Regulatory

Regulatory implications that will require further investigation and either Administrative or City Council approval include land use and zoning considerations, site servicing (including water, sewer, storm sewer) and transportation assessments. City decision points will be determined as per standard protocols, based on development and permitting application(s) as submitted by the School Division.

School Site Re-Use

Bylaw 9700, The Official Community Plan, Bylaw 2020 (OCP) and Bylaw 8770, Zoning Bylaw, 2009 (Zoning Bylaw), provide options and direction to potentially mitigate the loss of neighbourhood elementary schools. The OCP has policies which relate to school facilities to encourage the adaptive reuse of a school building and site for recreational, residential, educational or other community-oriented use, subject to provisions of the existing zoning district, after appropriate consultation with relevant community groups and local residents.

Pleasant Hill School in particular, is designated as a Community Facility in the OCP. Section 3.1.2 (o) of the OCP states:

“appropriate consideration should be given to the continued use of a Community Facility as a focal point of the community in the event its current use is proposed to be discontinued.”

As the property owner, the School Division has authority to determine future use of their properties, however the City, through the OCP policy, encourages discussion of the future use to occur with the community.

Heritage

Pleasant Hill and King George Schools are considered Castle Schools. While neither is a formally designated Municipal Heritage Property, both schools are on the City's Heritage Register. The Heritage Register is a listing of heritage resources deemed to be of significant heritage value or interest. King George School is also included on Bylaw 6770 - Demolition Permit Bylaw, which directs that Council can deny a permit for demolition for no more than 60 days in order to consider designation as a Municipal

Heritage Property. As future use of these schools is determined, heritage considerations will be identified and monitored.

Community Access

Saskatoon's neighbourhood elementary schools and associated outdoor spaces serve as neighbourhood community centres and as such, are the foundation of the City's community development model; one that encourages residents to work together for the benefit of their neighbourhood.

While the City's Joint Use Agreement with the School Division will provide the three community associations with access to the new consolidated school, coordination will be required as three schools become one. Administration will investigate alternative approaches to developing and/or providing access to indoor and outdoor community spaces, including community rinks in King George and Pleasant Hill.

White Buffalo Youth Lodge

Administration will continue to work with the partners in the WBYL, STC, Central Urban Métis Federation Inc and the Saskatchewan Health Authority, to advance the concept of a renewed WBYL at or near its current location on 20th Street. A city centre leisure centre remains an unfunded major capital project.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications at this time.

OTHER IMPLICATIONS

There are no privacy, legal, social or environmental implications identified at this time.

NEXT STEPS

Regular communication with the School Division will be maintained to ensure Administration is apprised of key developments and milestones as their project unfolds. Administration will respond to servicing and regulatory inquiries and applications from the School Division as they arise.

Administration will work closely with the Pleasant Hill, King George and Riversdale Community Associations to identify constraints and opportunities regarding shared access to the two remaining elementary schools in the area: St. Mary's Wellness and Education Centre at 327 Avenue N South and the new city centre school at 210 Avenue H South. The status of Pleasant Hill and King George schools will also be monitored for continued community access after they have been decommissioned as elementary schools and as the School Division determines the future for these facilities as they are being considered for redevelopment. Administration will also continue to engage with the School Division on the future of the green space which is adjacent to these two schools and the City's interest in the preservation of these spaces for continued community use.

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Administration will continue to work with the STC, Central Urban Métis Federation Inc and the Saskatchewan Health Authority to advance the concept of a renewed WBYL at or near its current location on 20th Street West.

REPORT APPROVAL

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