



VANCOUVER and DISTRICT LABOUR COUNCIL



January 18, 2021

Carmen Cho, Chair
Vancouver Board of Education

Via Email: carmen.cho@vsb.bc.ca

Dear Ms. Cho,

I am writing today on behalf of the Vancouver and District Labour Council, representing approximately 60,000 unionized workers in the City of Vancouver and surrounding municipalities.

I write today to express our concern regarding the potential for the sale of public lands contemplated in the Vancouver School Board 2020 Long Range Facilities Plan (LRFP). I understand that this issue will be discussed at today's Facilities Planning Committee meeting, and then by the VSB Board on January 25.

Our Labour Council has long opposed the privatization of public assets, including land, for both reasons of principle and practicality. Clearly, land is a tremendously valuable investment, particularly in a municipality like the City of Vancouver. Even if the land in question is not currently used for schools, there is tremendous potential to put it to use for the public good.

For example, it could be redeveloped into much needed affordable housing, thereby helping to alleviate the current housing crisis faced by our city while also generating much needed income for the VSB.

While the sale of land may provide a short-term financial boost, redevelopment under public ownership has the potential to provide a social good while also offering an ongoing stream of much needed income.

However, once the land is sold, these opportunities are lost, regaining it for public use becomes nearly impossible and the cost of acquiring new land will only increase. Given the projected growth in the City of Vancouver, and ongoing increase in land values, this would be a short-sighted mistake.

Pg. 2/...

We are not alone in this view. Current and former Trustees, public figures, political parties, and others have expressed their opposition to the sale of VSB land. We have also learned that there was widespread opposition to the sale of public lands from the more than 4,000 individuals who participated in the LRFP consultation process.

We strongly encourage the VSB to support Trustee Jennifer Reddy's motion to not dispose of any VSB land by sale or transfer in fee simple. This will allow the VSB to ensure that its publicly owned land will benefit the City's residents, including its children and youth, for generations to come.

Yours Truly,



Stephen von Sychowski
President, VDLC

cc: Vancouver School Board Trustees
VDLC Executive Board