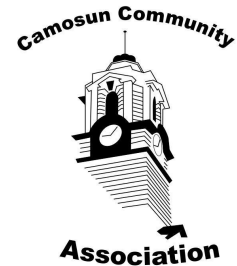


January 12, 2022

Honourable Jennifer Whiteside
Minister of Education
PO Box 9045, STN PROV GOVT
Victoria, BC V8W 9E2



Dear Minister Whiteside:

Re: Proposed Disposal of public lands adjacent to and including Bowker Creek

On behalf of the *Friends of Bowker Creek Society* and *Camosun Community Association*, we wish to draw your attention to the Greater Victoria School District's (SD61) proposed disposal of 1.9 acres of public land including part of Bowker Creek (also known as "Thaywun") within the District of Saanich (Attachment 1).

As summarized in our November 24, 2021 letter to SD61 (previously copied to you and attached again for reference), we have serious concerns with SD61's proposal and the credibility of its public process. We understand that any disposal of school lands requires your approval, except those involving another school district or an independent school.

We request that you and your staff encourage SD61 to engage in a meaningful and transparent process that respects provincial education policies and fully involves and genuinely considers community interests.

In making this request we would like to emphasize the following concerns:

- **School District 61 appears to be ignoring Ministry of Education Land Disposal policies.**

We note that the [Ministry of Education's School Building Closure and Disposal Policies](#) require that: "*Boards of education must engage in broad consultation and enhanced planning regarding underutilized buildings and other property owned by boards prior to property disposition.*" We also note the requirement that: "*Boards of education must consider potential needs for alternative community use*" and "*must consult with local government, community organizations and the public on alternative community uses.*" As community organizations we have yet to be engaged nor have we received a response to our November 24, 2021 letter.

[Minister's M193/08 Order](#) stipulates that the Minister "*must approve of disposal before SD61 enters into an agreement to sell.*" Your own [Ministry guidance document](#) is very clear on the interpretation of the Order:

Questions and Answers

Disposal of Land or Improvements Order (M193/08) • School Building Closure and Disposal Policy

12. Is a board of education able to enter into an agreement-to-sell prior to receiving Ministerial approval?

No. Ministerial approval is required before entering into any such agreements for the sale, exchange or lease of 10 years or more of school property, except where the purchaser is another board of education or an independent school authority.

Please note that SD61 negotiated and signed a *Purchase and Sale Agreement* in September 2021, prior to any ministerial approval, and absent of any discussion of alternative community uses with local governments, community organizations or the public. This appears to be contrary to your Ministry policies,

disrespects the principles of administrative fairness and may constrain you as a decision maker. This also undermines what our educational system stands for and profoundly damages public trust in our institutions.

- **SD61 did not consider the collaborative efforts or recommendations of the Bowker Creek Initiative or its partners.**

The property includes over 180 metres of valuable, publicly-owned Bowker Creek, an urban watercourse that flows through Saanich, Victoria and Oak Bay. Please be aware that restoring the creek and watershed have been the long-standing focus of the [Bowker Creek Initiative](#)—a unique collaborative of local government, community groups, and institutions established in 2004. The watershed has been the subject of over 25 years of cooperation and investment including completion of the following detailed assessments and plans:

- [2000 Bowker Creek Watershed Assessment](#)
- [2003 Bowker Creek Watershed Management Plan](#)
- [2007 Bowker Creek Watershed Proper Functioning Condition Assessment](#)
- [2007 Bowker Creek Master Drainage Plan](#)
- [2011 Bowker Creek Blueprint: A 100-Year Action Plan to Restore Bowker Creek](#)
- [2020 Bowker Creek Daylighting Feasibility Study](#)

All of the above documents reference the Lansdowne South property, and SD61 specifically endorsed the [Bowker Creek Blueprint](#) vision in 2018. Yet none was considered when SD61 signed its *Purchase and Sale Agreement* in September 2021. The proposal to sell and develop this unique feature undermines the long-standing community efforts to restore the creek and maintain this public asset.

- **Current and future educational and community values have not been adequately considered.**

The disposal and development of this public asset precludes the opportunity to relocate the stream channel along the southwest boundary, as is recommended in the [2011 Bowker Creek Blueprint](#) and [2020 Daylighting Feasibility Study](#). The recommendations also provide for enhanced experiential learning opportunities similar to what has been achieved downstream at [Oak Bay High School](#) including opportunities with First Nations to engage in eco-cultural science education like the [Living Lab Project](#).

We also note that Lansdowne School Teaching staff unanimously supported a motion to protect the future of Bowker Creek for students and the community (Attachment 2). Yet none of these interests were considered when SD61 entered into a *Purchase and Sale Agreement* in September 2021.

- **The property has important flood mitigation and climate change adaptation benefits.**

As described in our November 24, 2021 letter, the Bowker Creek watershed including the 1.9-acre parcel are subject to periodic flooding which is projected to increase in the future because of climate change. Hundreds of thousands of dollars (including significant provincial funding) and thousands of hours of staff and volunteer resources have been invested in the Bowker Creek Initiative's [Bowker Creek Blueprint](#) to help address this issue. The associated [2007 Bowker Creek Master Drainage Plan](#) along with the [2020 Bowker Creek Daylighting Feasibility Study](#) specifically recommend combining creek restoration and a Stormwater Management Facility to alleviate flooding, erosion, school safety concerns and property damage downstream in Saanich and Oak Bay.

Disposing this public asset for land development undermines these technical recommendations and investments, as well as the principles and goals of the Province's [Climate Preparedness and Adaptation Strategy](#) and the BC's [Living Water Smart Plan](#) (Attachment 3)—both increasingly important given the unprecedented flooding that occurred in BC last November.

- **SD61's rationale for disposal is based on questionable logic and unreliable enrolment projections.**

SD61's rationale for disposing of the property is based largely on the notion of excessive "acres per student"—that Lansdowne School has "surplus" greenspace that should be sold. Yet provincial Land Disposal policy indicates that "*only in exceptional circumstances should a board consider permanently disposing of school property*". We do not find the circumstances "*exceptional*"; on the contrary we find it short-sighted to sell an *exceptional* and rare section of Bowker Creek and the adjacent public land.

We also note the property is located less than 500 metres from Hillside Centre and the Shelbourne Corridor, and only 400 metres from the Jubilee Hospital precinct, both identified as 'Regional Growth Nodes' in the CRD's updated [2018 Regional Growth Strategy](#) as well as in Saanich and Victoria Official Community Plans. These strategies along with recent findings of the Province's [Expert Panel on the Future of Housing Supply and Affordability](#) project strong population growth and densification in the Capital Region over the next 20 years (Attachment 4).

- **Minister's Mandate Letter and the urgency of preparing for climate impacts.**

We note the emphasis in your [current Mandate Letter](#) on climate change mitigation and adaptation including "*protecting our air, land and water and supporting communities to prepare for climate impacts*". We also note the emphasis on "*giving students safe, accessible playgrounds*". Selling this public asset further constrains the watercourse and works against these objectives and the [Premier's direction](#) that "*the scale of the climate emergency demands that we act with even greater urgency than ever before*" and his call to building "*a stronger, more resilient B.C. for everyone*".

In closing, we do not believe that SD61's hasty disposal process is consistent with provincial education, climate and water policies. It also undermines community efforts to restore Bowker Creek, create an incredible teaching and experiential resource and enrich the local community. **We urge you to encourage SD61 to engage in a meaningful and transparent process that respects provincial education policies and fully involves and genuinely considers community interests.**

We would be pleased to further discuss our concerns with you or your staff.

Respectfully yours,



Soren Henrich
Chair, Friends of Bowker Creek Society



Lisa Timmons
President, Camosun Community Association

ATTACHMENTS

- Attachment 1 – Location Map
- Attachment 2 – Lansdowne teachers resolution
- Attachment 3 – Provincial climate and water policies
- Attachment 4 – Housing supply and population projections

cc: Chair Ryan Painter and Board of Trustees, Greater Victoria School District #61
Honourable George Heyman, Minister of Environment and Climate Change Strategy
Honourable Murray Rankin, MLA, Oak Bay-Gordon Head
Honourable Rob Fleming, MLA, Victoria-Hillside

Chief Ronald Sam and Council, Songhees Nation
Mayor and Council, District of Saanich
Mayor and Council, City of Victoria
Mayor and Council, District of Oak Bay
Chris Brown, Assistant Deputy Minister, Resource Management Division, Ministry of Education
John Woycheshin, Regional Director, Capital Projects, Programs & Finance Unit
Harley Machielse, Director of Engineering, District of Saanich
Sharon Hvozdanski, Director of Planning, District of Saanich
Lindsey McCrank, Coordinator, Bowker Creek Watershed Renewal Initiative
Community Associations within the Bowker Creek Watershed
Angela Carmichael, Chair, Victoria Confederation of Parent Advisory Councils
Kevin Harter, Chief Executive Officer, Victoria Hospice Society

Attachment 1: Location map



Resolution from Lansdowne Middle School Teaching Staff re: Bowker Creek

WHEREAS the proposed sale of the School District property directly across Bowker Creek from the Lansdowne South campus has the potential to lead to development that could affect the health, planned rehabilitation and restoration of Bowker Creek; and

WHEREAS Bowker Creek (“Thaywun” in Lekwungen) is one of the very few urban streams in Greater Victoria, and represents an incredible teaching and experiential resource to both enrich the education of Lansdowne Middle School students and those of other area schools, and increase their understanding of and connection to the natural environment literally in their backyards;

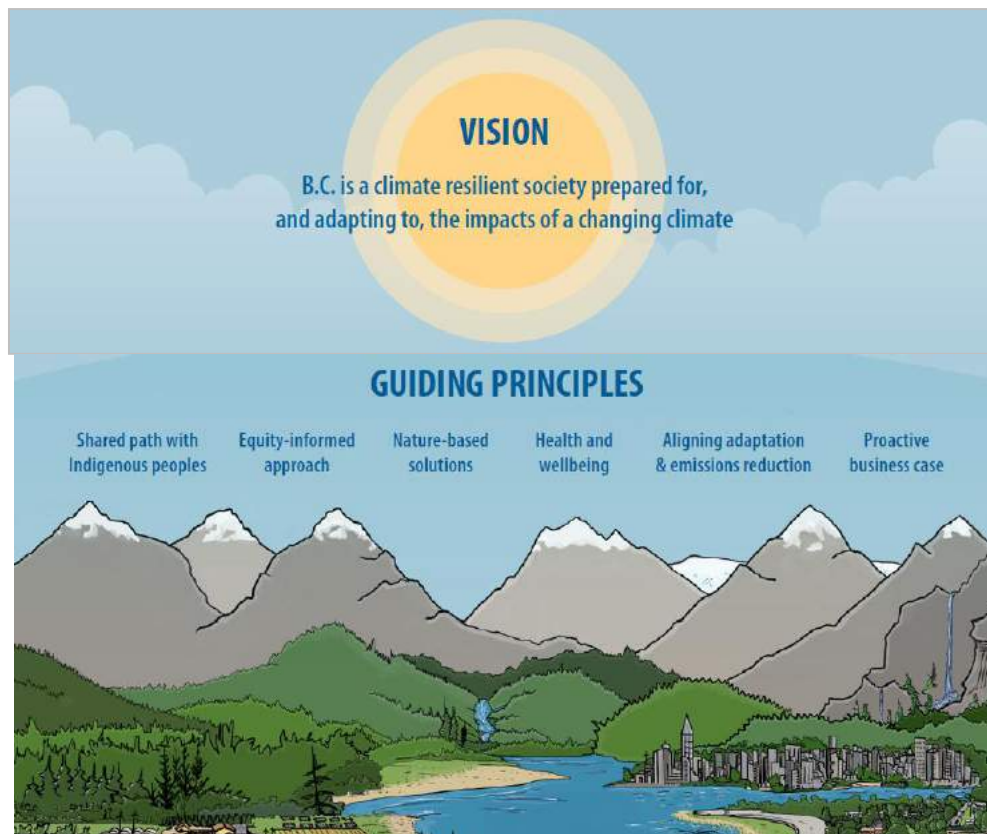
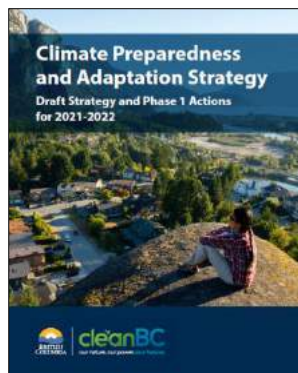
BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED that the teaching staff of Lansdowne Middle School requests the opportunity for the teachers, students and staff of our school to have meaningful input into the conditions to be placed on the sale of the aforementioned property in order to protect the future of that portion of Bowker Creek that flows along the Lansdowne South school grounds for our students and community.

Motion passed unanimously by Lansdowne Middle School Teaching Staff.

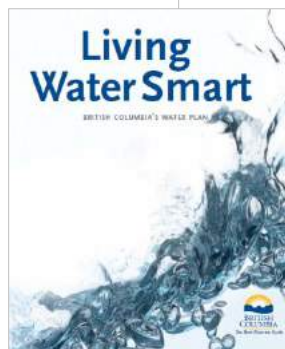
December 13, 2021

ATTACHMENT 3: Provincial climate preparedness and water strategies

BC Climate Preparedness and Adaptation Strategy (2021)



BC's Living Water Smart Plan (2008)



rivers need room to meander



Flood Seasons will always be characteristic of our province's climate and geography. High waters are essential to a healthy ecosystem; they help rebuild soils, maintain wildlife habitat, and restore groundwater supplies.

To help communities respond to floods, government continues to support the development of Emergency Management Plans.

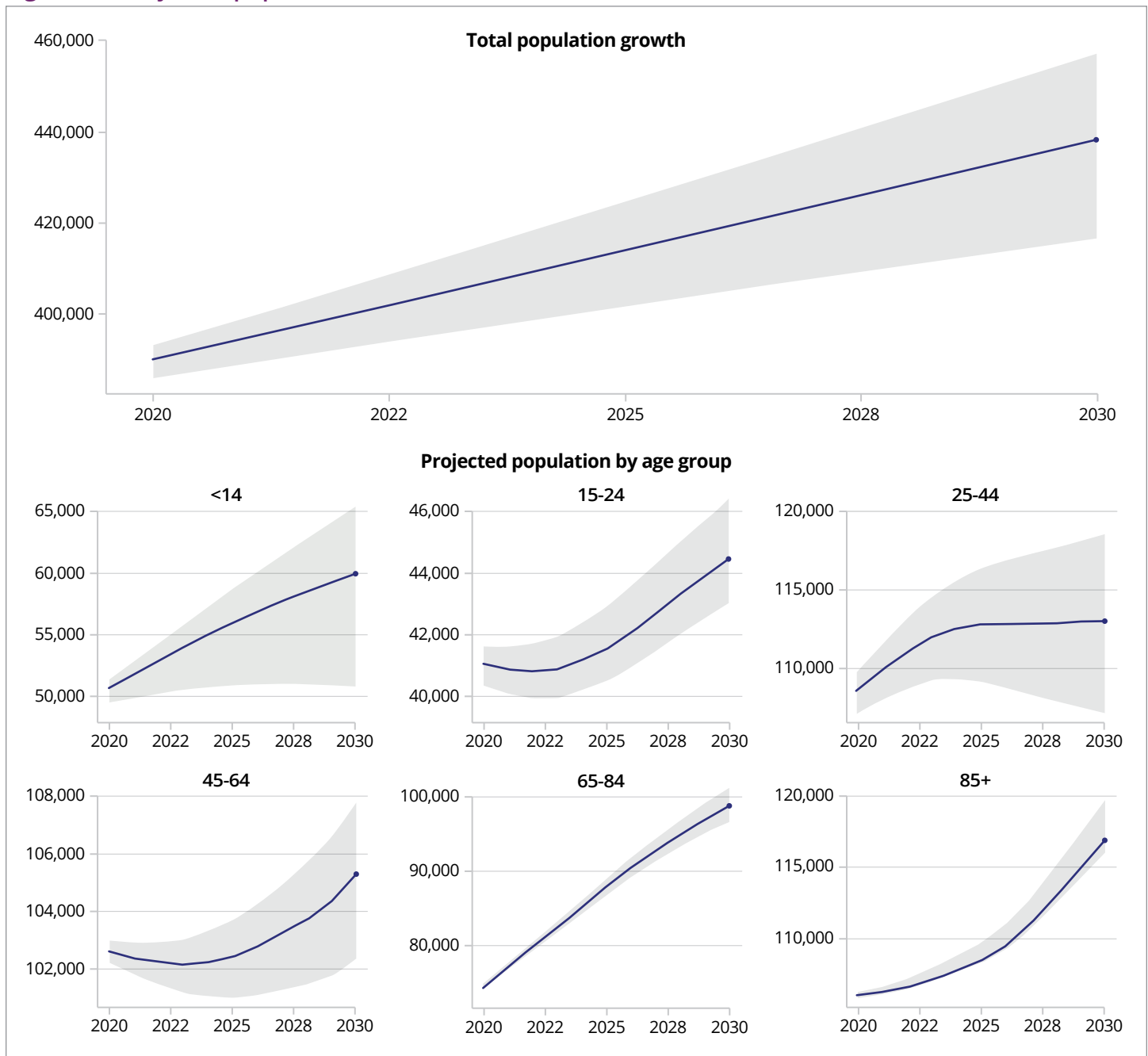
Living Water Smart concentrates on reducing human and property damage during floods.

Concentrating on floodplain management and structural flood protection will decrease spending on emergency response and reduce damage in the long term. New design standards for buildings in flood-prone areas and flood protection infrastructure will be developed that reflect increasing flood risk. Effective ways of helping communities better manage the risk of more frequent floods include:

- avoiding building in flood prone areas,
- allowing room for rivers to meander,
- improving flood protection infrastructure, and
- adopting flood proofing measures.

Victoria CMA

Figure 29: Projected population, Victoria CMA



Source: StatCan, CMHC

Like the Vancouver CMA, the Victoria CMA's population has increased steadily since 2011, posting growth of 16% overall. As in Metro Vancouver, population growth was also mainly observed in the 20 to 35 and 55 and over age groups. Growth has stemmed solely from in-migration (both international and domestic). At 12%, the Victoria CMA's population growth

to 2030 is projected to be lower than the Vancouver CMA's, according to Statistics Canada's baseline scenario. By 2030, the Victoria CMA's population is predicted to approach 440,000 people. The 65+ age group will post the strongest growth rate, and make up 26% of this region's population by 2030.

November 24th, 2021

Chair Ryan Painter and Board of Education
Greater Victoria School District No. 61
556 Boleskine Road
Victoria, BC V8Z 1E8



Dear Chair Painter and Board Trustees:

Re: Proposed Land Disposal at Lansdowne South (former Richmond School)

The *Friends of Bowker Creek Society* (FOBCS) and *Camosun Community Association* (CCA) understand that School District 61 (SD61) has entered into a *Purchase and Sale Agreement* involving 1.9 acres of public land immediately west of, and including Bowker Creek. Members of our Society and Association attended the District's November 3, 2021 [online "Question/Answer" Session](#) and were disappointed by the complete absence of meaningful dialogue.

Many questions from the public went unanswered or were answered incorrectly and the Question/Answer session was abruptly cut off because of SD61 time limitations. There was no mention of Bowker Creek anywhere on your consultation website. We find this especially troubling given that SD61 specifically endorsed the [2011 Bowker Creek Blueprint: A 100-Year Vision](#) and has been fully aware of and involved in the [Bowker Creek Initiative](#) (BCI) for many years.

Bowker Creek is a key form-maker of the site, yet basic information about the creek, the [2003 Bowker Creek Watershed Management Plan](#), the [2007 Bowker Creek Master Drainage](#), the [2011 Bowker Creek Blueprint](#), the [2020 Bowker Creek Daylighting Study](#), or Saanich's [Streamside Development Permit Area](#) were ignored or avoided in your staff presentation.

We request that you delay your decision to sell this property, slow down this process and genuinely engage with the community and other Bowker Creek Initiative (BCI) partners on the future of this property.

In addition we also have the following concerns and questions:

- **SD61 endorsed the Bowker Creek Blueprint in March 2018**
SD61 participated in the development of the [2003 Bowker Creek Watershed Management Plan](#), endorsed the [2011 Bowker Creek Blueprint: A 100-Year Vision](#) in March 2018 and has been aware of the BCI and community's interest in this property for well over a decade. Why were the FOBCS, CCA and other BCI partners not consulted before SD61 entered into a Purchase and Sale Agreement?
- **Bowker Creek is central to the property and community**
The Lansdowne South (former Richmond School) property includes over 120 metres of valuable unculverted Bowker Creek channel and is one of the largest undeveloped open spaces along Bowker Creek. This reach currently enjoys public ownership on both banks – a very rare feature. Disposing of the property serves to further fragment ownership of the stream bed and riparian areas and unnecessarily complicate future restoration opportunities. How have these factors been considered in your decision to enter into a Purchase and Sale Agreement?

- **Flooding and the broad public benefits of flood mitigation**

The property has been subject to flooding in the past and the BCI's [2007 Bowker Creek Master Drainage Plan](#) projects flooding will continue in the future, particularly in the face of climate change (Attachment 1). In addition, the [2020 Bowker Creek Daylighting Feasibility Study](#) and the [2011 Bowker Creek Blueprint](#) identify the parcel as a candidate area for a Stormwater Management Facility to alleviate flooding, erosion, safety concerns and property damage downstream. At the November 3 Question/Answer session, senior staff seemed completely unaware of these issues. How did SD61 consider this information when negotiating its Purchase and Sale Agreement? Given the importance of this property to flood mitigation, has SD61 consulted with local governments including the downstream municipalities of Oak Bay and Victoria?

- **Current and future educational values**

Reconfiguring and restoring the creek as recommended in the 2011 Bowker Creek Blueprint and 2020 Daylighting Study can contribute to enhanced student learning similar to what has been achieved at Oak Bay High School. The recommendations also provide the ability to configure safe and functional sports facilities for students by relocating the stream channel along the southwest boundary (Attachment 2). In addition, a restoration partnership has the potential to not only attract hundreds of thousands of dollars in grants for climate adaptation work but also presents opportunities with First Nations to engage in ecocultural science education like the [Living Lab Project](#). Subdividing the property at the creek will constrain future opportunities for restoration and creek realignment that could substantially enrich the learning environment SD61, while integrating basic sports facilities, stormwater detention and community greenways. How have future educational values and facilities at the school been considered? How has the teaching staff at Lansdowne Middle School been involved in these decisions?

- **Community planning considerations**

According to local government community plans, the immediate neighbourhoods in both Saanich and Victoria do not meet community Open Space Standards and the current deficiency is being further exacerbated by SD61's recent land disposal at Lansdowne North. In addition, Saanich's 1998 [Shelbourne Local Area Plan](#) has identified the area as "Proposed Park" (Attachment 3). How did you engage with Saanich and Victoria prior to entering into a Purchase and Sale Agreement and how were community plans considered? Why were the FOBCS and area community associations not consulted?

- **Climate Change Emergency**

A central focus of the 2011 Bowker Creek Blueprint, the 2007 Master Drainage Plan and the 2020 Daylighting Feasibility Study is climate change adaptation to address flooding, erosion, property damage and safety. The record-breaking rainfalls and flooding experienced last week in southern BC underscores the critical importance of public agency collaboration in achieving climate change goals. The proposed Stormwater Management Facility recommended for the site in the 2020 Daylighting Feasibility Study is a direct response to these broad public interests and provincial priorities. We note that [SD61 declared a Climate Emergency in 2019](#) (Attachment 4), committed to developing a Climate Action Plan and acknowledged that "*The children are the future, and we should be doing everything we can to ensure they have one to look forward to*". Did SD61 consider its climate change commitments and provincial climate adaptation goals when it negotiated its Purchase and Sale Agreement?

- **Regional greenway opportunities**

The property currently includes a 7-metre-wide statutory Right-of-Way in favour of Saanich to the east of Bowker Creek for the purposes of pedestrian and non-motorized vehicle access. This was not acknowledged during SD61's November 3, 2021 Question/Answer session. If SD61 disposes of the property to the west of the creek, how does it propose to configure this publicly-accessible Right-of-Way and accommodate and integrate the minimum 10-metre-wide Streamside Protection and Enhancement Area (SPEA), with school and community activities on the remaining property?

- **Previous attempts to dispose the property**

You should be aware that SD61 previously attempted to sell the entire Richmond School property in January 2007 on the basis that the land *"was surplus to its projected future needs"*. The proposal generated several hundred pages of community input, a public survey and two community workshops. The local community clearly expressed its desire that the land be retained for future school and community use. How did this input inform your current consultation efforts and how did it factor into negotiations of the Purchase and Sale Agreement? We note that contrary to previous projections, the school is no longer "surplus to future needs" as previously stated.

- **Ministry of Education Land Disposal Policies**

We note that the [Ministry of Education's School Building Closure and Disposal Policies](#) require that *"Boards of education must consider potential needs for alternative community use"* and *"must consult with local government, community organizations and the public on alternative community uses"*. We also note the requirement for *"Broad Consultation"* and the [Minister's M193/08 Order](#) that the Minister *"must approve of disposal before SD61 enters into an agreement to sell."* We note that the Board indicates in its [Consultation Policy](#) that it *"values attitudes and practices that encourage integrity, respect and trust in all relationships."* Why is School District 61 fast-tracking this process and marginalizing the participation of community interests? Once again, a 45-min online Question/Answer session is completely inadequate.

- **School enrolment projections**

SD61 Staff's rationale for disposing of the property is based largely on the short-sighted notion of excessive "acres per student". We note the property is located less than 500 metres from Hillside Centre and the Shelbourne Corridor, and only 400 metres from the Jubilee Hospital precinct, both identified as 'Regional Growth Nodes' in the CRD's updated [2018 Regional Growth Strategy](#) (Attachment 5) and in Saanich and Victoria Official Community Plans. How have increasing density and infill been considered in SD61's projections? We again point out that SD61's efforts in 2007 to sell the property were based on a similar "surplus-to-future-needs" assessment. How can the public be confident in SD61's projections given that SD61's previous projections have clearly proven to be incorrect?

- **Previous public investments**

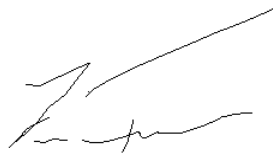
Hundreds of thousands of dollars of public funding and thousands of hours of staff and volunteer time has been invested over the past 20 years to improve management of Bowker Creek. For example, SD61 has directly benefited through a \$738,000 federal grant leveraged by the BCI for [creek restoration at Oak Bay High School](#), resulting in improved safety and an outstanding educational feature. All these investments have required the cooperation, commitment and leadership of elected officials, public agency staff and volunteers. How were these previous investments and long-standing relationships considered in SD61's decision to enter into a Purchase and Sale Agreement?

In closing, **we urge you to slow down this process and engage in a meaningful and transparent process that fully involves and genuinely considers community interests.** We acknowledge the fiscal pressures that you currently face and would like to work with you, local and senior governments, and other community partners to explore potential options that optimize overall public benefits of this site. We also request an opportunity to meet and engage in open dialogue with Board Trustees and staff to exchange perspectives on the future of this important property.

Respectfully yours,



Soren Henrich
Chair, Friends of Bowker Creek Society



Lisa Timmons
President, Camosun Community Association

APPENDICES:

- Attachment 1 - Flooding extent map of SD61 Richmond School property
- Attachment 2 - Concept plans for restoration of Bowker Creek at Richmond School
- Attachment 3 - Shelbourne Local Area Plan (page 27), District of Saanich
- Attachment 4 - Board of Education Climate Action Declaration
- Attachment 5 - CRD Growth Nodes, Regional Growth Strategy (2018)

cc:

School District 61

Deb Whitten, Interim Superintendent, Greater Victoria School District
Carter Giesbrecht, Principal, Lansdowne Middle School, Greater Victoria School District
Alissa Moore, Vice Principal, Lansdowne Middle School South, Greater Victoria School District

Local government

Mayor and Council, District of Saanich
Mayor and Council, City of Victoria
Mayor and Council District of Oak Bay
Glenn Harris, Senior Manager, Environmental Protection, Capital Regional District
Harley Machielse, Director of Engineering, District of Saanich
Philip Bellefontaine, Director of Engineering and Public Works, City of Victoria
Dan Horan, Director of Engineering and Public Works, District of Oak Bay

Province of BC

Honourable Jennifer Whiteside, Minister of Education
Honourable Murray Rankin, MLA, Oak Bay Gordon Head
Honourable Rob Fleming, MLA, Victoria-Swan Lake

First Nations

Chief Ronald Sam and Council, Songhees Nation

Bowker Creek Initiative

Jennifer Tyler, Chair, Bowker Creek Initiative
Lindsey McCrank, Coordinator, Bowker Creek Initiative

Victoria Hospice Society

Kevin Harter, Chief Executive Officer, Victoria Hospice Society

Other

Angela Carmichael, Chair, Victoria Confederation of Parent Advisory Councils

Winona Waldron, President, Greater Victoria Teachers Association

Community Associations in the Bowker Creek Watershed

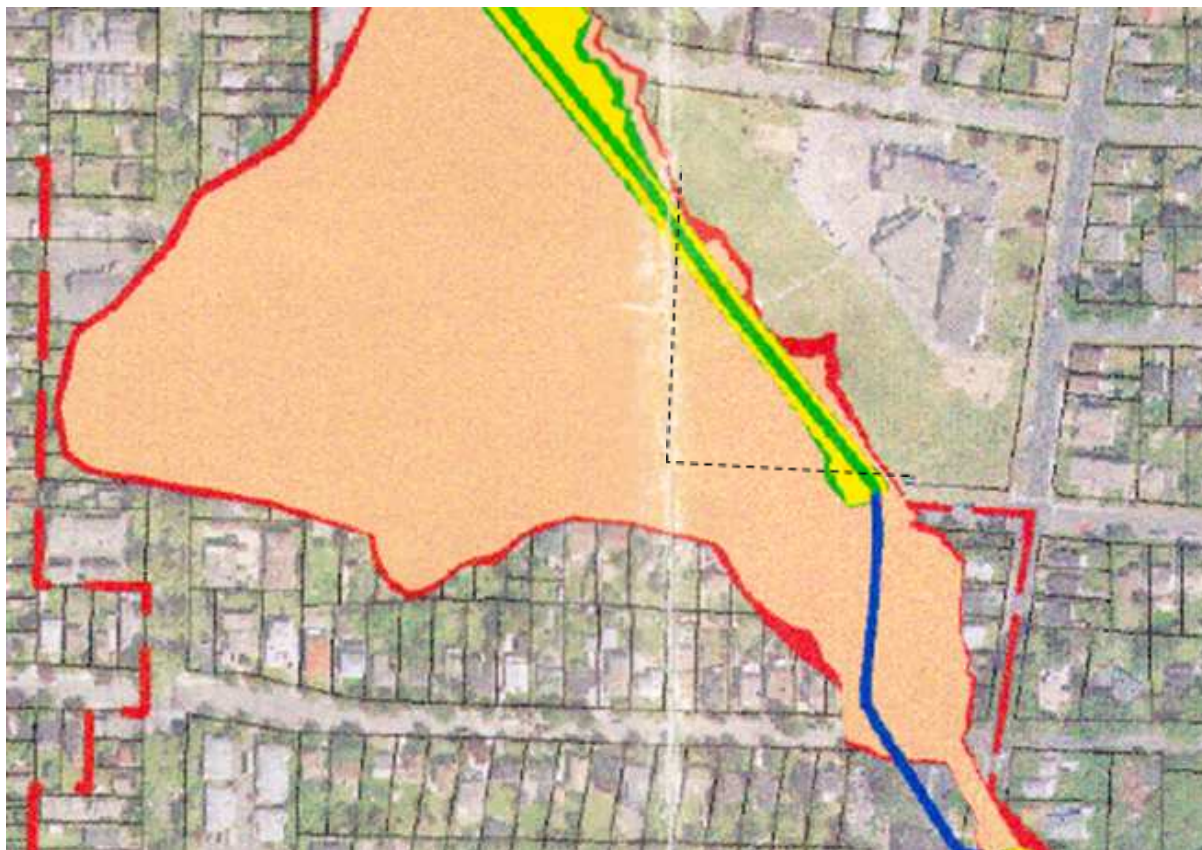
ATTACHMENT 1: Flooding extent map of SD61 Richmond School property

(Information excerpted from [Bowker Creek Master Drainage Plan – Final Report, Kerr Wood Leidal Associates Ltd. 2007](#))

DESCRIPTION

Scenario 1: This scenario reflects existing land-use conditions and existing hydraulics.

Newton Storm Drain and Upstream Channel – The storm drain from Newton to Richmond does not have adequate capacity for the 100-year storm event and overland flow occurs. Furthermore, the properties near Pearl are relatively low and as a result of limited storm drain and channel capacity flooding occurs.



RICHMOND ELEMENTARY

Widen this open channel section to have a base width of 4.0 m and side slopes of 1.5 to 1.0. Potentially, the triangular piece of property to the west of the existing creek alignment could be used to meander the creek through this section.”

ATTACHMENT 2: Concept plans for restoration of Bowker Creek at Richmond School



Source: 2020 Bowker Creek Daylighting Feasibility Study

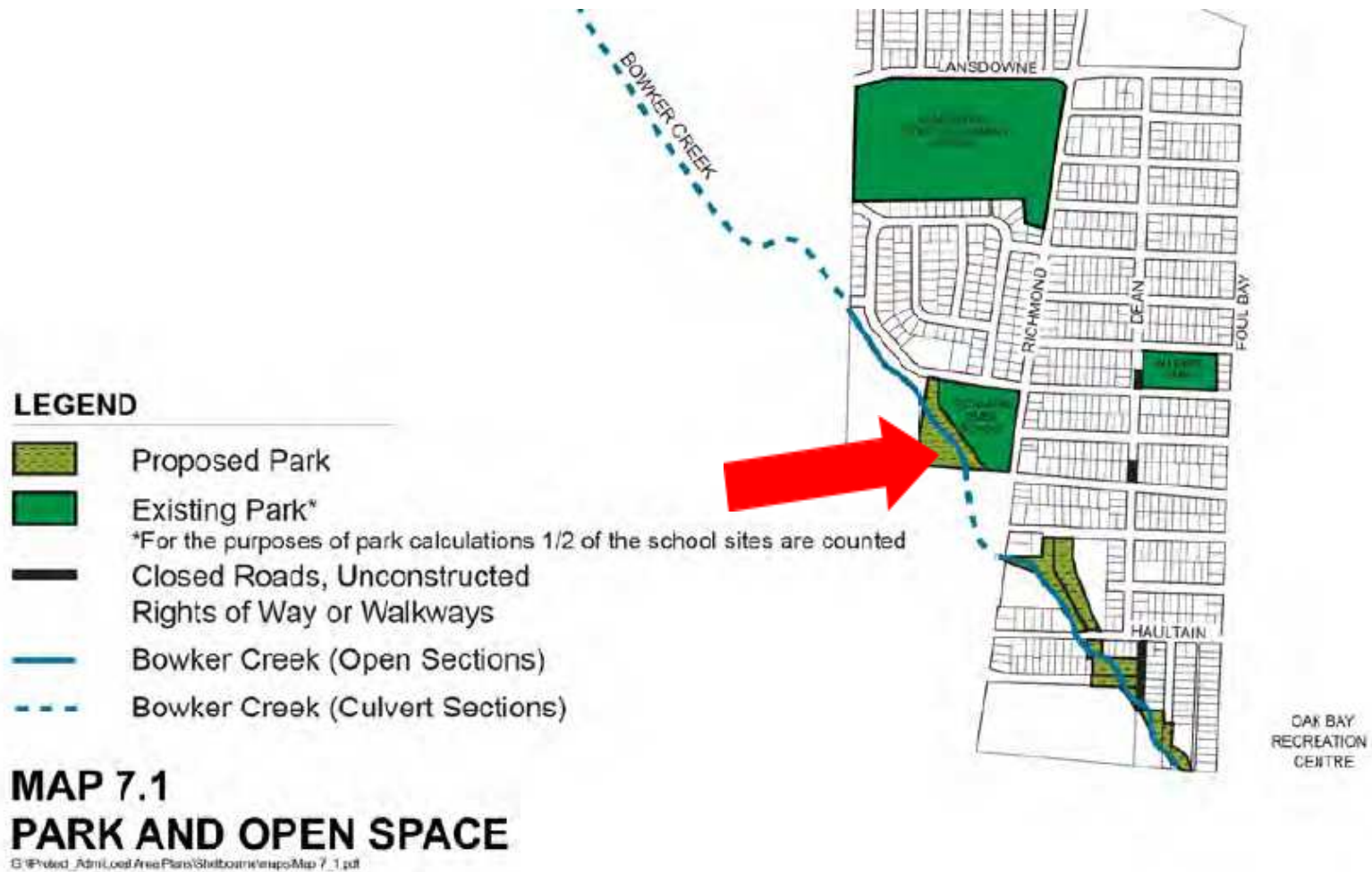
Key concepts and benefits

- Move the creek channel west
- Create safe, sloping creek banks
- Enhanced education - outdoor classroom
- More flexible for current and future school uses
- Better able to configure sports facilities (e.g., playing field)
- Native vegetation, habitat restoration and biodiversity
- Create Stormwater Management Facility to mitigate flooding
- Community Greenway for Active Transportation and Safe Routes to School route



Source: 2011 Bowker Creek Blueprint: A 100-Year Vision to Restore the Bowker Creek Watershed

ATTACHMENT 3: Shelbourne Local Area Plan (page 27), District of Saanich (1998)



ATTACHMENT 4: Board of Education Climate Emergency Declaration



Board of Education

School District No. 61 (Greater Victoria)
556 Boleskine Road, Victoria, BC V8Z 1E8
Phone (250) 475-4106 Fax (250) 475-4112

Chair: Jordan Watters Vice-Chair: Ann Whiteaker
Trustees: Nicole Duncan, Tom Ferris, Angie Hentze,
Elaine Leonard, Diane McNally, Ryan Painter, Rob Paynter

A Message from the Greater Victoria School Board Chair:

Young people around the globe are calling on all levels of governments to take decisive action on climate change. This should not surprise us, after all, it is their future that hangs in the balance.

Public education is tasked with preparing children for their future, and in so doing we must consider what future awaits them. The Greater Victoria School District declared a Climate Emergency this past June. We recognize that the breakdown of the stable climate and sea level under which human life has developed constitutes an emergency, and we are developing a Climate Action Plan that establishes targets and strategies in alignment with the United Nation's Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change's call to limit warming to 1.5 degrees.

Our Board of Education is urging other school districts to take similar steps and we are calling on the provincial government to support these efforts with resources. We need leadership at all levels to be working on solutions commensurate with the seriousness of the problem.

Despite the scientific consensus that our climate is rapidly changing due to human activities, there continues to be both a lack of understanding of the phenomena and its potential impacts. The science is complex, and many people face barriers to engaging with the facts. Dread and grief permeate discussions, and while it is tempting to look away we must instead be spurred to action.

Public education has an important role to play in supporting climate literacy in our communities. We need all citizens to have a basic understanding of the relationship between human life and Earth's climate system including the role climate plays in human and environmental health as well as social and economic stability.

While climate change is not always explicit as a core concept in BC's redesigned curriculum, teachers across all disciplines and grade levels are taking the initiative to build environmental education into their lessons. From daily weather logs in kindergarten

The Greater Victoria School District wishes to recognize and acknowledge the Esquimalt and Songhees Nations, on whose traditional territories, we live, we learn, and we do our work.

One *Learning* Community



classrooms, to middle school stream-keepers and poets, all the way through to complex computer modeling of climate systems in specialized high

school courses – there is a focus on ensuring students understand the scientific principles of climate and have the opportunity to explore what climate means for their world and their future.

Communities who understand climate science will be better prepared to respond and adapt to the challenges ahead. And we must be clear—there are challenges ahead.

In the face of these challenges, youth in Victoria, like youth across the country, are both frustrated and confused by the lack of urgency they see from the adults around them. This week's youth-led Climate Strike is evidence of their impatience.

Life, as we know it on Earth, is changing and as the window for action closes, the grown-ups seem to be carrying on as if its business as usual. The Climate Strike is a global effort by young people around the world to snap us out of our inaction.

Led by 16-year-old Swedish climate activist Greta Thunberg who is capturing headlines around the world, youth are finding their voice on this issue. Locally we have many bright and passionate young activists stepping up to organize and inspire their peers.

With the support of their parents and teachers, these remarkable young people are leading the way. They demand emergency action to avoid climate breakdown. They demand an end to the age of fossil fuels. They demand respect for Indigenous rights.

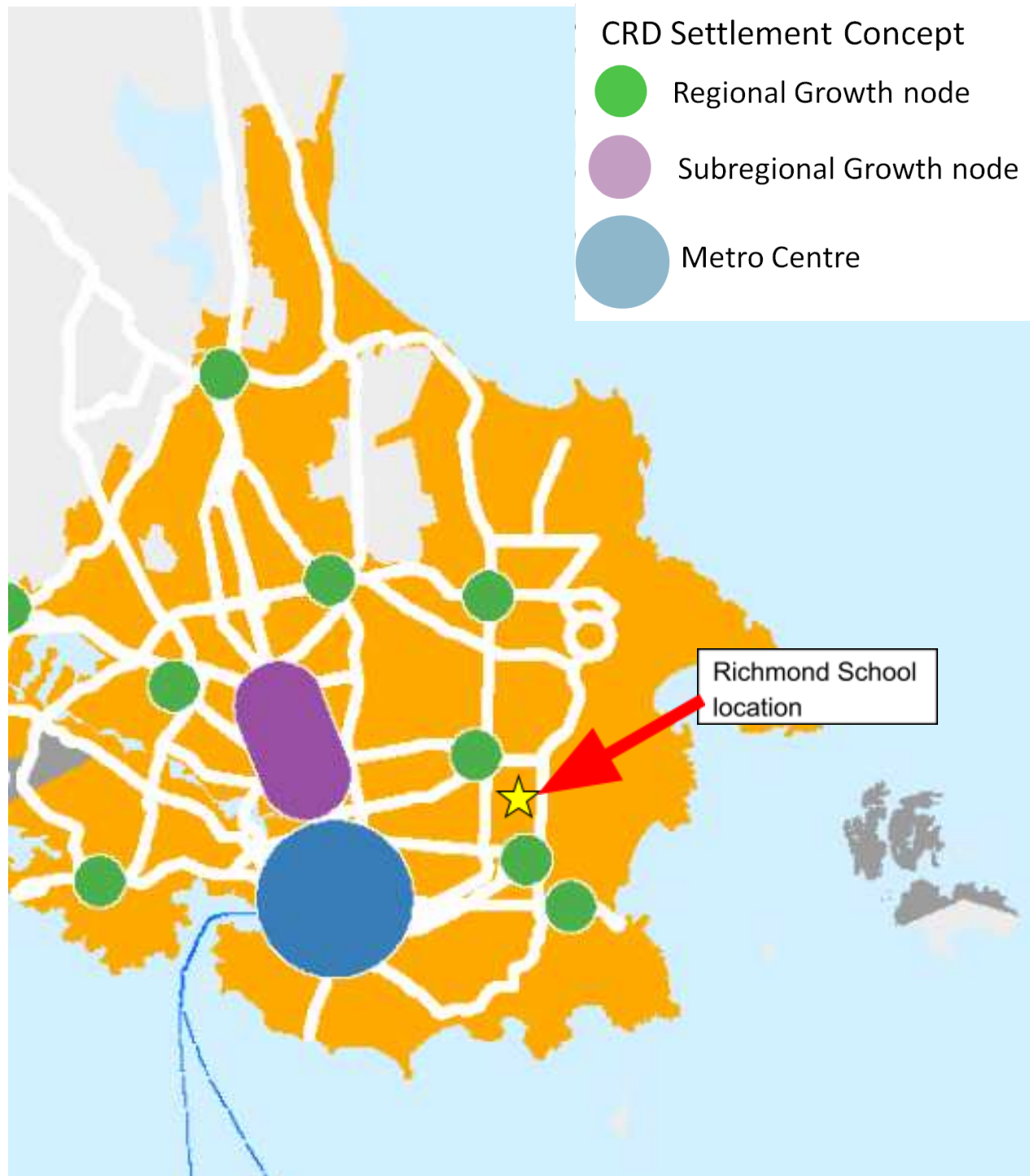
We would be foolish to dismiss these demands. The children are the future, and we should be doing everything we can to ensure they have one to look forward to.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jordan Watters', with a stylized, cursive script.

Jordan Watters
Chair, Board of Education

ATTACHMENT 5: CRD Growth Nodes, Regional Growth Strategy (2018)



Richmond School is situated within a rapidly densifying part of Greater Victoria and located ~400-500 metres from the Hillside Centre Growth Node and Jubilee precinct Growth Node.