

Note: This document was first published as an email to the Blueridge Public Lands Taskforce. It was extracted and lightly reformatted for this new archive.



Thank you for attending the Public Forum on Monday April 4th [2016].

The Blueridge Community Association wanted to have this meeting due to concerns about the future of the land when and if Blueridge Elementary School closes. When DNV Mayor Richard Walton attended our Blueridge Community Association meeting in September, 2014, he told us very clearly that it would be wise for our community to be prepared in case of the closure of a local school.

It may have taken a while, but on April 4th we held a very well attended meeting (about 65-70 residents) who heard School Trustee, Barry Forward, present the facts regarding the closure of Blueridge School (whenever it may be). It became an interesting discussion involving two other school trustees (Jessica Stanley and Cyndi Gerlach) who also attended. The community has now been informed and we are ready to take this one step further.

Overwhelmingly, what we heard from attendees is that the community really cares about the local schools!

Future for Schools in the Seymour Area



Here is the [presentation](#) that Barry Forward delivered at the meeting. Four main [FACTS](#) [link no longer valid] were presented:

1. Blueridge will close
 2. Seymour Heights will be replaced
 3. Nothing will occur until the Provincial Government provides money for the Seymour Heights re-build
 4. No decisions have been made about the future use of the land that Blueridge School sits on
-



In addition to the FACTS, the following points came up at the meeting:

- People in this neighbourhood care about the future of the school and the land. It is important for the community to be proactive and prepared. It is still true that "the squeaky wheel gets the grease".
- Current enrolment at Blueridge is 353 students. Official school capacity is 350 students. After declining for some years, the school population has been increasing recently, with 2.5 Kindergarten classes this year.
- Anecdotally, there is an influx of families into the neighbourhood as older residents sell up, and we experience an increase in density via secondary suites. New townhome/condo developments at Seylynn and Maplewood will increase the number of school-age children in the Seymour area.
- The [MOE \[link no longer valid\]](#) (Ministry of Education) is not in favour of small schools. To quote NVSD Superintendent [John Lewis \[link no longer valid\]](#) from 2010.

"While small schools are attractive from an educational and community perspective, the small neighbourhood school model that was formerly a cornerstone of the community is no longer sustainable due to the Ministry of Education funding allocation system based upon student enrolment," he said. "The consolidation of schools into a single, larger elementary school will achieve

significant long-term operational savings while significantly reducing long-term capital costs."

- Two schools in the Seymour area have been closed [Maplewood, 2004 & Plymouth, 2010]. Both are under long-term leases to independent schools.
- Replacement of Seymour Heights School is at the top of the [NVSD Capital Plan](#), but the [MOE \[link no longer valid\]](#) is putting a priority on Seismic upgrading, which would mean that Argyle and Handsworth are the 'first' priority.
- The School Board has identified the future need for a school on the site of Blueridge as LOW.
- The 2.80 hectares of land is zoned as "public assembly". The DNV would have to change the zoning if the land was to be used for other purposes.
- School land sales have been used to fund re-builds at other school properties [Keith-Lynn, Monterey] and to finance debt [Ridgeway Annex].

What's Next?

A lot of information came out at the meeting, we need time to determine where to go from here. The School Closure by-law was signed off in 2010, but the situation may be different now due to various factors. In the meantime you can:

- Join the Blueridge Public Lands [Taskforce \[link no longer relevant\]](#)
- Sign up to receive [updates \[link no longer valid\]](#) about the Blueridge Public Lands Process (if you received this email, we already have you on the list)
- Inform your friends and neighbours
- Attend [School District Meetings](#)
- Read more about the [2010 School Closure \[link no longer valid\]](#) [decision \[link no longer valid\]](#) and the School District's [Facilities Plan \[link no longer valid\]](#)
- [Vote](#) in municipal and provincial elections. School Board decisions are made by elected School Trustees. School Boards receive their mandate and funding from the Provincial Government. Voter turnout for Municipal Elections (includes School Trustees) is in the low 20% range.
- Send comments and feedback to info@blueridgeca.org.