

# Appendix A-1

## 2016 Public Consultation Report



# LONG RANGE FACILITIES PLAN

**Public Consultation Report**

May 13, 2016

**PUBLIC ASSEMBLY**

# CONTENTS

<b>INTRODUCTION</b> .....	3
<b>APPROACH AND METHODOLOGY</b> .....	5
<b>KEY THEMES</b> .....	11
<b>GENERAL FINDINGS - TRADE OFFS</b> .....	16
<b>VSB SURVEY FINDINGS - SUMMARY</b> .....	17
<b>IN CLOSING</b> .....	24



## INTRODUCTION

Meaningful land-use planning involves citizens, in particular those whose lives and communities are most affected by decisions on large scale projects. Vancouver School Board (VSB) committed to a robust and open process whereby citizens, stakeholders, partners and community leaders could offer input into the development of a Long Range Facilities Plan (LRFP).

Involving citizens does not remove decisions from the hands of identified subject matter experts and elected representatives. Instead, it provides the public with genuine opportunities for input. More opportunities to seek input can improve transparency and leave both decision-makers and the public with improved technical and planning literacy and a deeper understanding of the issues, ongoing concerns and priorities surrounding major projects.

The LRFP is a 14-year land-use strategy that will guide ongoing decision-making for VSB's school facilities in areas such as seismic upgrades, school closures, replacement schools and new schools across the city. In order to ensure public voice can help shape this planning framework, the consultation team of staff and consultants engaged the public in a varied discussion on an interim plan that was developed and submitted to the provincial Ministry of Education in January 2016.

At times it was challenging to engage citizens in future-focused planning with unknowable outcomes and target dates possibly years in the future. It is often easier for citizens to see their interests in play and engage when faced with immediate challenges or opportunities, like the consultation on this year's budget. Yet the VSB consultation team was able to achieve more than 2500 touchpoints over a 10-week period, which gave an overarching picture of public values, priorities, concerns and challenges.

Beginning in early February 2016, the consultation team commenced planning for consultation and engagement on the interim LRFP. The team was tasked with developing a set of tools that could explain some of the plan’s more complex planning concepts – predictive tools and formulas, capacity utilization of enrolling classrooms and the proposed decision-making processes for closure and seismic planning – in a way that was accessible to non-planners, architects and other specialists.

The consultation communication tools – an LRFP microsite, social media channels, digital and print ads, discussion guides, as well as highly-visual infographics, were developed in order to expand citizen literacy and improve the quality of engagement. A series of workshops, a survey and various stakeholder meetings were designed to test acceptability of some of the key targets and approaches in the plan and to listen for support and challenges.

In short: we were asked to test a draft plan that had emerged through a municipal and technical process and then to subsequently gather public input and report back. This document describes the approach for analyzing and reporting on the feedback provided by all participants the LRFP public consultation process from February – May 2016. It describes the process for planning and carrying out engagement activities and for reviewing and analyzing data generated through that process, in order to inform decisions by VSB staff and elected trustees.

***The following report summarizes the following activities:***

- Approach and Methodology
- Key Findings
- Key Activities
- Challenges and Opportunities
- Themes and Public Priorities
- Appendices and Resources

**Online survey**

1646 completed

**Six Workshops**

225

**Kingsgate Mall**

350

**Stakeholder Meetings**

175

**6 Pop-Up meetings**

115

**TOTAL TOUCHPOINTS:**

2,511



# APPROACH AND METHODOLOGY

## Terms of Reference

The foundation for the consultation was the development of terms of reference (TOR) in collaboration with staff, elected trustees and a group of stakeholders who regularly help steward facilities planning (Committee II). This TOR was intended to govern, set parameters and give focus to how we would involve the public and identified stakeholders in our planning and decision-making. (Please see Appendix 1 for the full document) It set guiding principles and measures for successful public engagement.

## Principles Guiding the Plan

1. Safe and sustainable schools;
2. Facilities that support innovative, educational approaches, ultimately providing effective learning environments;
3. Schools located where they can support school-aged populations now and in the future;
4. Planning that takes into account economic, community and environmental benefits for students, families and all citizens of Vancouver;
5. Improved facility conditions.



## Methodology

The VSB, governed by its terms of reference, developed and implemented a consultation process that followed best practices in the field. These standards/ approaches include International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) values and ethics, deliberative democracy principles, as well as community development and accepted dialogue strategies and practices. We sought respectful, information-driven conversations that allowed ample space to highlight and gather the experiences and knowledge of participants.

We believe that durable solutions combine the knowledge of those who use the system alongside those with technical and planning expertise. To that end we developed a set of activities that would allow the team to gather a broad picture of public values and priorities, coupled with a deeper dive into community perspectives. This ethos also governed the types of outreach activities that were offered: a mix of workshops, open houses, pop up engagements in public spaces, smaller stakeholder conversations, and online engagement including a survey. (See Appendix 5 for the full list of activities)

### Online Surveys

A survey was developed to test values, priorities, and key trade-offs in the interim LRFP. The design allowed for extensive open ended questions to allow participants to voice the full range of their perspectives. A representative survey was conducted mirroring the open link survey to support and verify findings.

## Format of Face-to-Face Engagement

### Workshops

90 minute workshops provided participants with detailed materials, briefings on high-level elements of the plan, an opportunity to ask questions of staff in plenary, facilitated dialogues with VSB and consultation staff on their input into seismic planning, school closures and repurposing schools. Feedback was gathered through notes and feedback forms.

### Open Houses

Open houses provided participants with a chance to learn more through detailed boards and through conversation with VSB staff working in key areas related to the interim plan (planning team, demographic analysis, management team). Participants were encouraged to fill out a feedback form or to take the survey onsite or at their convenience.

### Stakeholder Meetings

Stakeholder meetings were held with groups by request or convened by the team because of their relevance, specialized knowledge or possible barriers to participation in the broader sessions. These sessions were typically 90 minutes and allowed the team to brief the participants and gather their input. Feedback was harvested through forms or notes by the facilitators.

### Pop-Up Engagement

In high traffic public areas, the team would set up opportunities to talk to members of the public, offer resources and to solicit feedback either through the online survey or a feedback form. This was also an opportunity to encourage members of the public to attend workshops and open houses.

Guided by our terms of reference, we sought to reach both those citizens who identify most clearly as members of school communities – parents, students and allied staff – as well as the broader community of concerned and attuned citizens. This goal informed some of our activities. For instance, open house and workshop sessions were offered in community centres and other central community spaces rather than in schools to underline our invitation to a wide-ranging audience. We also reached out to groups like Business Improvement Associations/ Areas (BIAs) and Residents Associations across the city. Heritage organizations were invited to the workshops and open houses, as well as being invited to participate in a new VSB roundtable. We realized a distribution of participants from across the city, verified by postal code and 32% of participants identified as residents. The majority, over 70% identified as parents or guardians. As discussed, we commissioned a public opinion survey that reached a representative demographic sample of Vancouverites. (Appendix 3)

However, we were also aware that parents and students would need to be able to participate via a range of media and allowing for varying levels of time commitment. Our activities and formats meant that participants could drop in to events, ask questions, fill out a form, or stay for a longer, more in-depth facilitated workshop session. Most respondents used our online survey with 55% response rate.







## Diversity and Inclusion

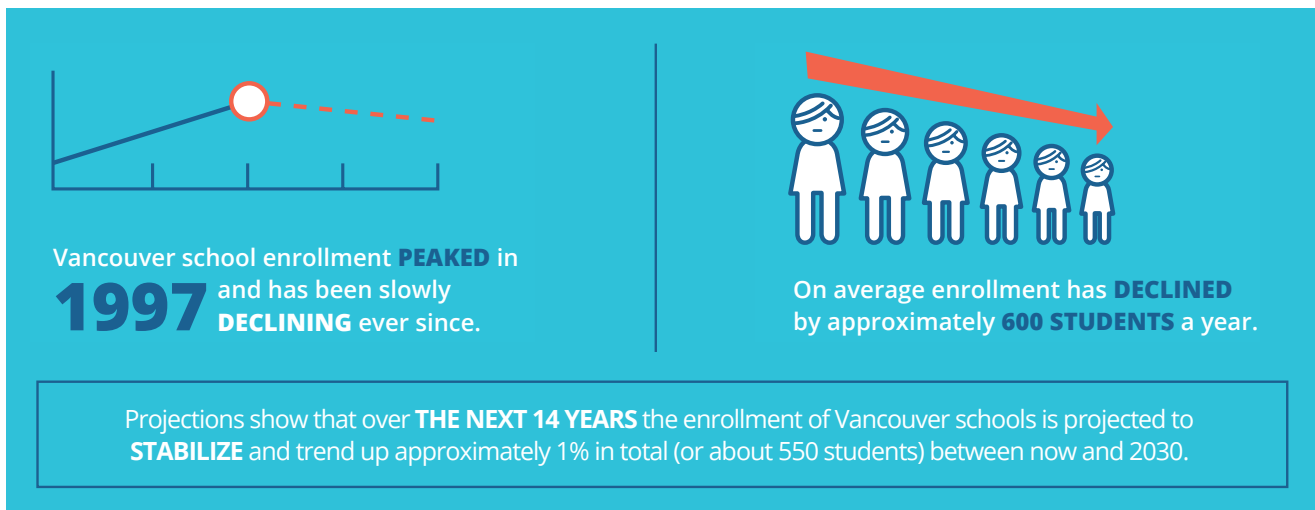
In order to ensure the process was inclusive of a broad range of ages, backgrounds, and levels of knowledge, the team took concrete steps in the provision and development of inclusive consultation activities. First, we ensured the survey was translated into traditional Chinese and promoted broadly in the media and among Chinese speaking communities in the city. Fifty-four surveys were completed in traditional Chinese. We also ensured that there was language facilitation available at most sessions in Cantonese, Mandarin and Punjabi. We also worked with community developers to convene a number of smaller stakeholder conversations in Tagalog, Punjabi, and with Aboriginal families and service providers. Second, as discussed in the previous section, while parents and students are key public audiences, we attempted to broaden our outreach to include citizens who may not have children in the system but are interested in urbanism, heritage, neighbourhood planning, business sectors and public realm. And finally, we committed to social media as a way to access younger digital native audiences who may have less comfort with in-person consultation events.

## Expanded Literacy and Knowledge of Key Concepts

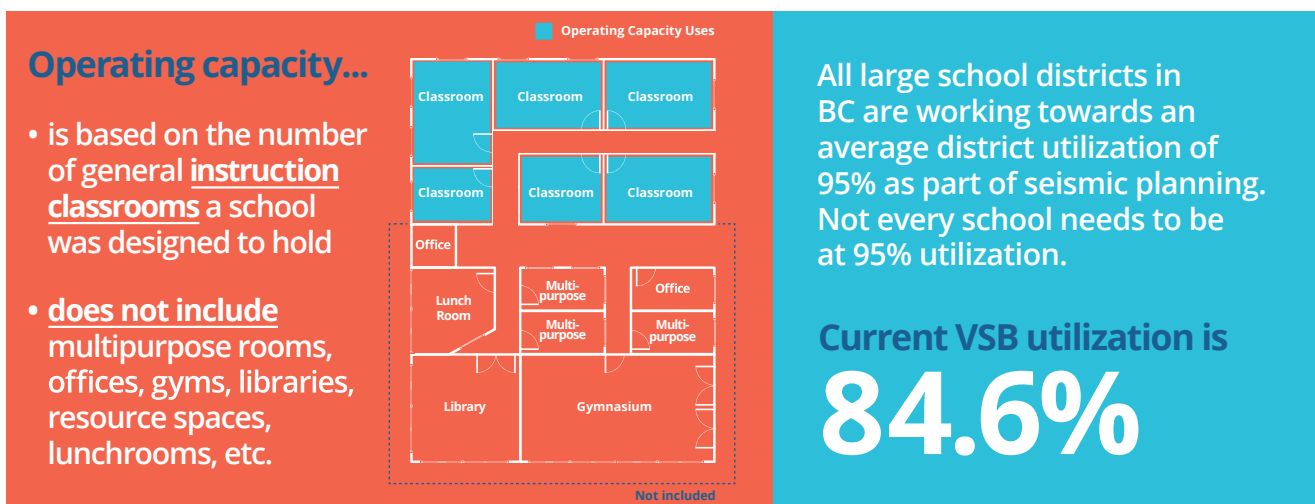
In order to expand literacy of key concepts, we developed knowledge translation tools including infographics and summaries of key themes and areas in the interim LRFP. We used a range of tools including a micro-website, infographics, a printed discussion guide, and social media channels to ensure that participants had a base level of understanding both to improve their literacy and the quality of responses. We provided summaries of:

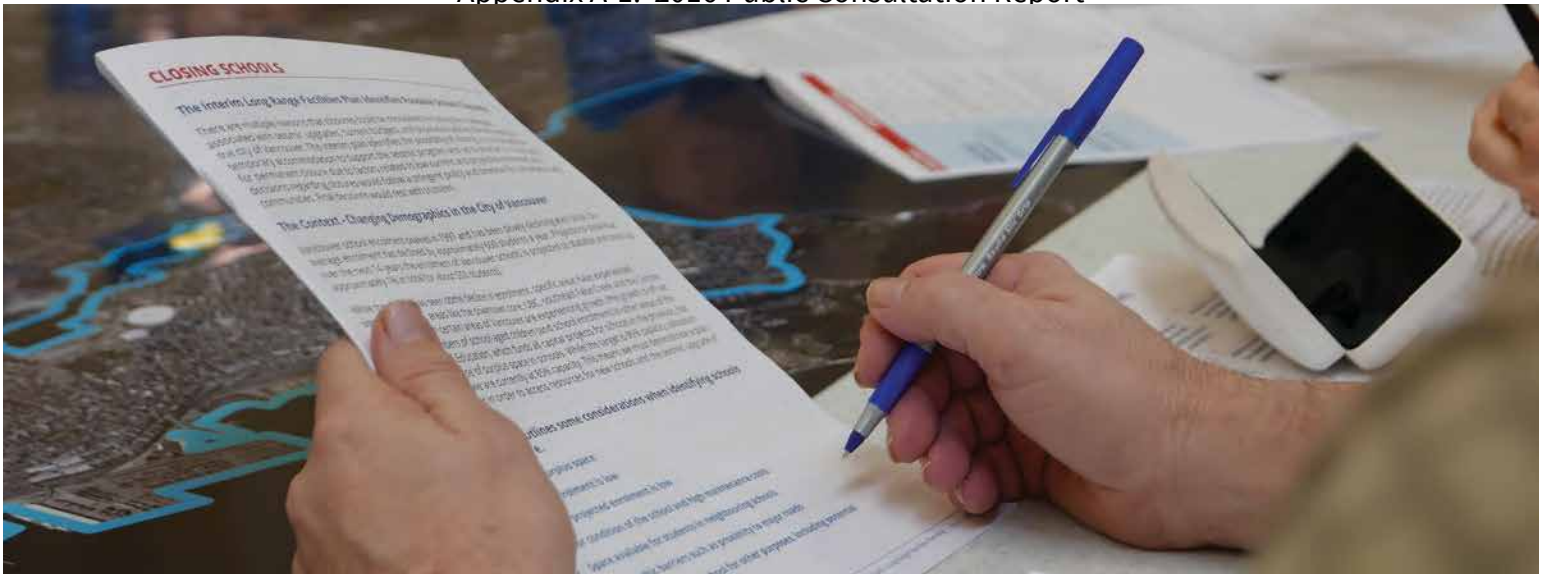
- Demographic Analysis
- Capacity Utilization
- Seismic Program and Risk Factors
- Temporary Accommodation
- Closures
- New Schools
- Heritage Retention

## DEMOGRAPHIC ANALYSIS



## CAPACITY UTILIZATION





## Development of Key Questions and Testing Core Areas

The consultation team was tasked with testing some of the key concepts in the interim LRFP, as well as listening broadly to and harvesting public responses. The Board tasked the team with pursuing more information on key themes via consultation. They included:

1. Responses to Criteria for Selecting Schools for Seismic Upgrade
2. Feedback on Proposed Strategies for Temporary Accommodation during Seismic Upgrades
3. Input into Criteria for School Closures
4. Exploration of Acceptable Use of Surplus Sites Not in Use for K-12 Instruction
5. Exploration of Values Regarding Non-School Sites like Kingsgate Mall
6. Community Input on Heritage Retention
7. Approaches to Ongoing Communication and Engagement on All Elements of LRFP

In addition to these themes, we developed questions that allowed us to understand community values, priorities, usage trends, as well as broad responses to the concepts outlined in the interim plan. We used our quantitative data findings to test trade-offs in key areas regarding closure, partial sale of land and reuse of surplus spaces. We used dialogues and stakeholder meetings to go deeper to identify themes, concerns, preferences and areas of support (Please see full questionnaire in Appendix 2).

## Analyzing Data

- We developed a clear picture of priorities, trade-offs and key concerns from the online survey with many opportunities for open-ended responses and reactions. We verified our findings with a representative survey conducted by IPSOS Reid.
- We used a thematic analysis – bundling and counting repetition of key themes – through workshops, meetings, feedback forms and open-ended commentary in the survey. Qualitative analysis software was used to count and verify incidences of key themes or words.
- We synthesized these dual tracks into overarching themes and findings.

## KEY THEMES

The following themes emerged through the dialogues and the qualitative feedback forms and open-ended survey questions.

### Get On With It:

#### ***Desire for Action***

- » There was concern about the number of schools across the district identified at high seismic risk. A significant strain of the commentary suggested that the pace of the seismic program should increase. Through dialogue, some citizens and stakeholders reported more support for closures if it meant speeding up the seismic program and providing more spaces for temporary accommodation. Survey responses indicated that seismically safe buildings were a priority and that the public would find school closures acceptable if it meant speeding up the seismic program.

#### ***Desire for Clarity***

- » A number of stakeholders, parents and groups representing families and students reported that whatever the outcomes of the planning process, they want to know the specifics of whether their schools will be closed, upgraded and/ or the resulting schedules and accommodation. Both the secondary school instructional staff and some of the community stakeholders identified that the “not knowing” or lack of clarity was creating stress and anxiety in their circles. We heard that certainty will allow communities to plan.

### Funding Requirements/ Capacity Utilization

- At least 30% of participants at the workshops identified challenges with the key given of the interim plan – the target of 95% capacity utilization as an average across the district. The current average is approximately 84.6%.
- Participants identified that while a school may be under capacity in terms of its enrolling spaces, that non-enrolling spaces may be well-used by the students and staff.
- Respondents questioned the lack of inclusion of music, learning, library and computer spaces as enrolling spaces instead of multi-purpose spaces.
- Participants and especially those participants in stakeholder groups with specific knowledge of the formulas to identify capacity utilization, were concerned that the identification of enrolling spaces were not accurate or up to date in terms of contemporary school usage.
- Another emergent theme was the questioning of why adult education programs, Strong Start early learning programs, and childcare/ out of school care do not figure in capacity utilization when offered on school sites, but in many cases offer valuable educative supports to VSB students and families.
- A smaller cohort named the need for more flexible spaces as key to supporting children with special needs including ELL classes, gifted students and those with learning challenges. Other identified more flexible spaces as a key to new curriculum approaches and innovative learning environments.

- There was an ongoing flag that while schools with calculated and projected lower enrolment may not move up the list for seismic upgrade or may be considered for closure, but may provide a robust community hub for students and families.
- There was discussion that movement of students across catchment to choice programs may not give an accurate or fair picture of school enrolment patterns.
- Overall, participants understood that the target was also given to larger districts across the province.

## Forecasting, Adaptability of Planning, and Analysis in Alignment with City of Vancouver Planning Priorities

- Throughout the workshops and meetings there has been a strongly expressed concern about forecasting accuracy in relation to Local Area Planning and land use planning throughout the City of Vancouver.
- The experience of enrolment challenges in key areas of the city prompted a number of respondents to question VSB's alignment with City of Vancouver forecasting and its overall accuracy.
- Enrolment challenges in Yaletown and Mount Pleasant schools were often cited in the qualitative and in person comments/forms.
- Another dominant strand of the conversation has been a question related to whether the plan can adapt to rapidly changing shifts in population, a possible influx of international learners, shifts in affordable housing policy or new family-oriented housing stock within communities targeted for school closures.



## Retention of School Lands

- A theme that emerged through the conversations and online commentary was a strongly expressed desire to retain public ownership of VSB school lands.
- Participants expressed concern that if school land was sold and then needed in future, it would be impossible for the VSB to purchase new land in Vancouver's highly exclusive market.
- In our online survey, respondents were supportive of the partial sale of school lands if the planning included uses that were complementary to school uses, or if the funds provided additional benefit to the VSB, either to enhance capital projects or operating expenses. There was strong support for the sale of Kingsgate Mall via the online survey, however, the in-person engagement identified a stream of support for ownership of the land in order to realize ongoing leasing revenues.

## Equity and Accessibility

- Through dialogues with groups who identify as vulnerable or have faced barriers to school participation and attendance (Aboriginal students, families and support networks, Filipino communities including children of Live In Care Giver Program workers, Punjabi seniors, Inner City Graduation Strategy Committee) equity emerged as a key consideration in response to the criteria to close schools and accommodate students during seismic upgrades.
- Transportation has been identified as a major challenge for low income families. Even when busing is available, challenges related to missed connections and family capacity to manage more complexity were identified.
- High school students who cannot afford public transportation and cannot walk to a new school may experience hardship related to closures and temporary accommodation.
- Numerous groups described challenges associated with precarious attachment in their lives at home. They may be in and out of foster care. They may have challenges integrating into new communities as newcomers to Canada, or they may develop close relationships with key staff and through a network of support available at schools.
- While some of those services and supports are portable, there was a strong theme of concern that change can be difficult for those with specific challenges where the familiarity of a helping or stable place like school takes on greater significance.
- Participants and survey respondents have identified the challenges posed by closure and repurposing to single parents, parents struggling with mobility, transportation, food security, family supports, subsidized childcare and learning supports.
- Some point to fragility of social networks and importance of school-based supports and how challenging it can be to lose specific place-based contacts. More resilient families and children struggle far less with change and have resources to overcome temporary accommodation and closure.

## Childcare

- Childcare was another persistent theme both from parents who fear losing childcare as well as from childcare providers who fear losing already oversubscribed spaces.
- Clearly, childcare has become a necessity for school-aged populations. Working parents, single or dual, often need before and after school care.
- Parents expressed concern about losing access to childcare during temporary accommodation as well as asking whether childcare would move with schools being closed or upgraded.
- Service providers identified a need to work closely with the VSB staff to seek creative solutions and accommodations during times of change or disruption.
- There were questions about the standardized numbers of spaces – 60 – following seismic upgrades or right sizing that could mean for large reductions in existing spaces despite demand.
- There were calls for collaboration, support and work among VSB, City of Vancouver Social Planning staff and community partners to find solutions.

## Communications and Relationship Building

- One of the key themes we heard repeatedly was the desire for ongoing relationships with the VSB team regarding facilities planning. The respondents realize that change may happen, but many participants identified that being able to get up to date information, to ask questions, seek clarification and then to ensure that specific challenges can be addressed would ease the stress and disruption of closure and seismic upgrades.
- Some identified this as a confidence builder to increase trust, transparency and the perception of accountability by the public.
- “If we know more, we will feel less anxious and can plan better and get behind your team.”

## Opportunities and Possibilities

- The comments and dialogue did turn to opportunities and often it focused on several key themes.
- Many discussed the opportunity to partner with other municipal, intergovernmental and social purpose organizations to develop new models. For example, numerous participants gave the example of bringing partners like Vancouver Coastal Health, Vancouver Public Library, BC Housing, City of Vancouver and VSB together to co-locate services on existing or new school sites.
- Affordable and family housing were often cited as examples of good complementary uses if a portion of school sites were sold or leased.
- They often pointed to the workability of hubs, as providing community supports and an economy of scale.

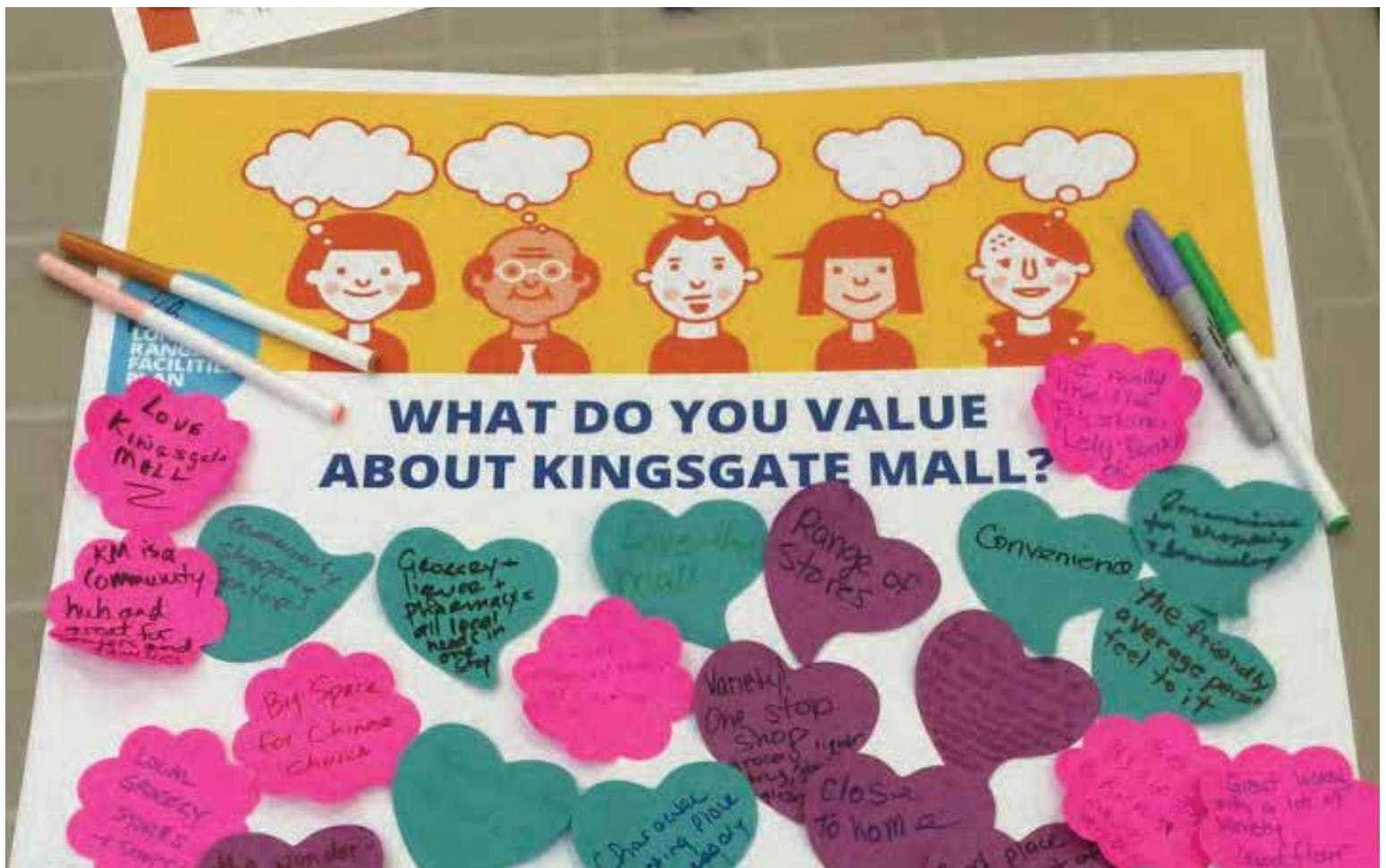


## Design Thinking

- When meeting with urban designers, they asked about developing new forms of learning environments that reflect the way the city is developing and new approaches to learning, like inquiry based models in the new curriculum.
- They discussed siting schools in towers and within residential projects.
- They explored the idea of decentralizing spaces so that schools and classrooms could be mobile and travel to where they were needed or that learning centres might work more as a spoke and hub model so that students could pursue different types of learning across the city, while retaining a “home base”.
- The designers looked at how school sites, particularly high school could be co-developed to align with neighbourhoods or other institutions of higher learning, and could also align with active and sustainable transportation models.

## Kingsgate Mall Outreach

- As part of the LRFP consultation, the team developed a micro-consultation at the Kingsgate Mall to canvas residents and patrons about what they value now and in future.
- While the data collected through the online survey and via IPSOS Reid identified a majority of respondents were supportive of selling non-school properties like Kingsgate Mall, on site and through discussion and interaction with patrons (350) we heard that while many were supportive of redevelopment, they stopped short of supporting the sale of the property in favour of retention of land and leasing revenues.
- There was a strong voice from mall users and local area residents worried about the pace of change in the neighbourhood who wanted to halt any development and leave the mall as it is.
- Others were passionate about key features of the mall and its services: affordable groceries, pharmacy, affordable clothing, toys, dental care, credit union and a liquor store.
- Many reported feeling welcome and using the mall as a gathering space during wet and warm weather, especially seniors and parents of young children.







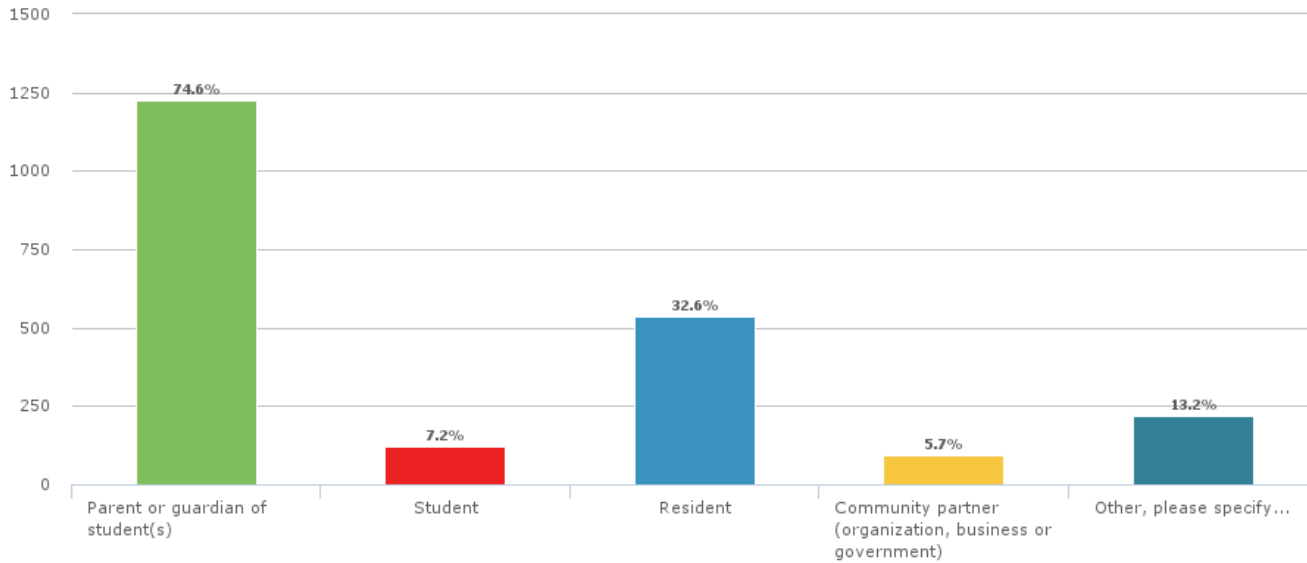
## GENERAL FINDINGS - TRADE OFFS

- Innovative learning environments and seismically safe schools are priorities for the majority of survey respondents. (Of note, recreational uses and walkability were less pressing, but remained second tier priorities)
- Through workshops and qualitative comments and we heard there is more support for closures where they expedite the seismic plan.
- There was greater acceptability of closures if there is a clear and demonstrable benefit to students and the VSB overall, like gains in upgrades, replacement schools and schools where they are needed.
- Communication and support for communities through closure and seismic upgrades is paramount.
- There is support for trade-offs that result from closures and partial sale of school properties throughout the survey results and comments, particularly if they can augment capital projects or existing projects.
- There is support for sale of non-school properties. However, there was some divergent discussion about opportunity to retain property and realize revenues from leasing to support VSB operations
- Reuse related to recreation, playing fields, childcare and increased green space have high support.
- Reuse related to leases to business and private schools have low support.
- Mixed use is inconclusive in the survey, but there have been interesting comments and ideas from in person engagement about creative strategies related to co-location and partnerships.
- Comments throughout support a measured plan, with innovative and sensitive approaches to closure, temporary accommodation and reuse to gain safer and better schools across the district. This includes frequent reminders to accommodate or make decisions with a lens on equity and accessibility for all students and families.

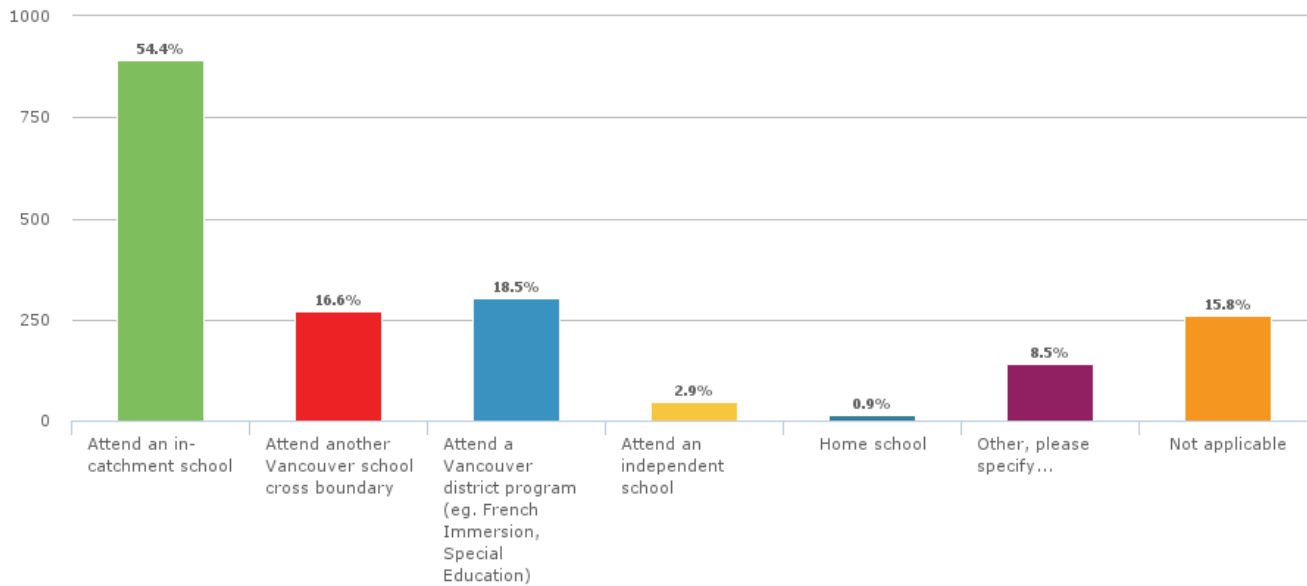
# VSB SURVEY FINDINGS - SUMMARY

## What is your connection to schools in the VSB?

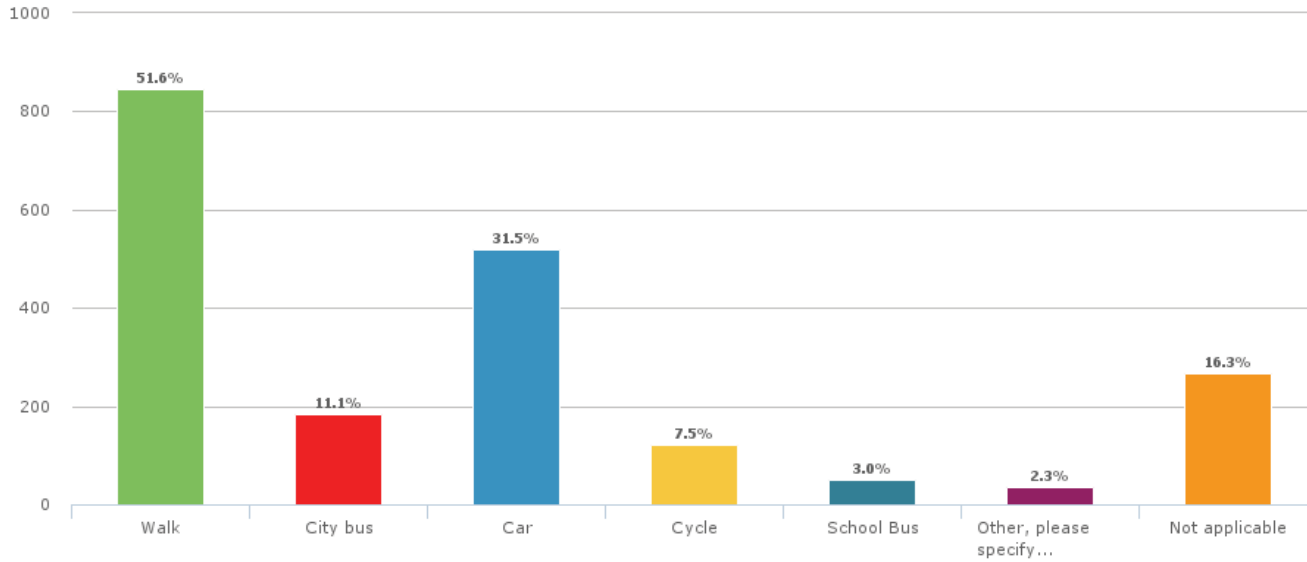
Please check all that apply.



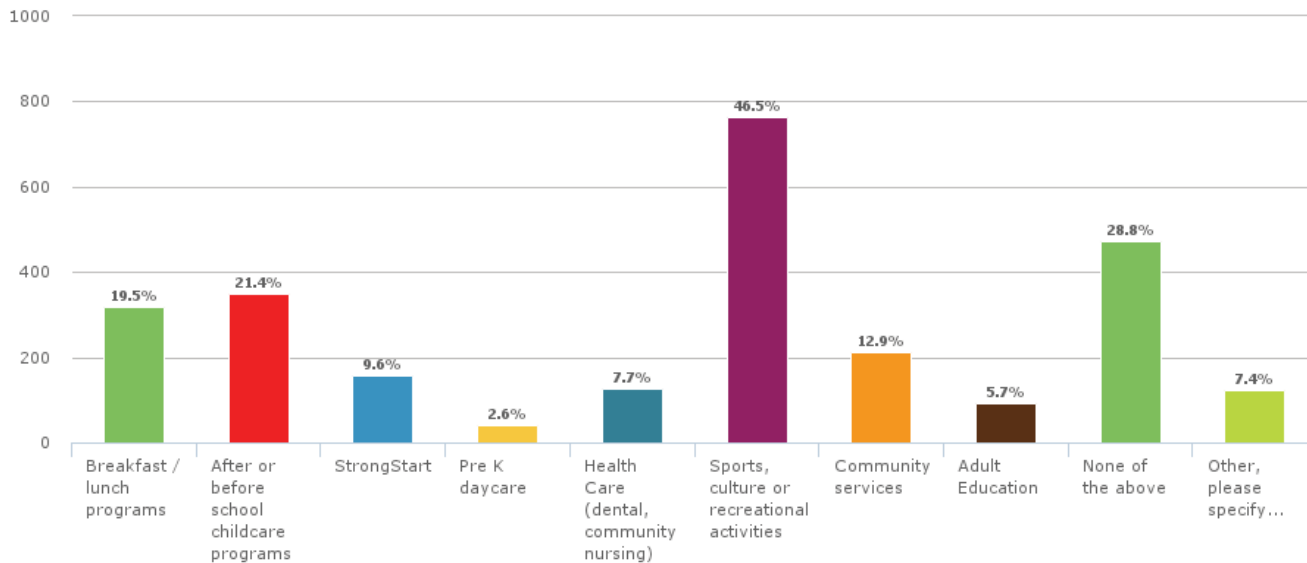
## Do you or your child?



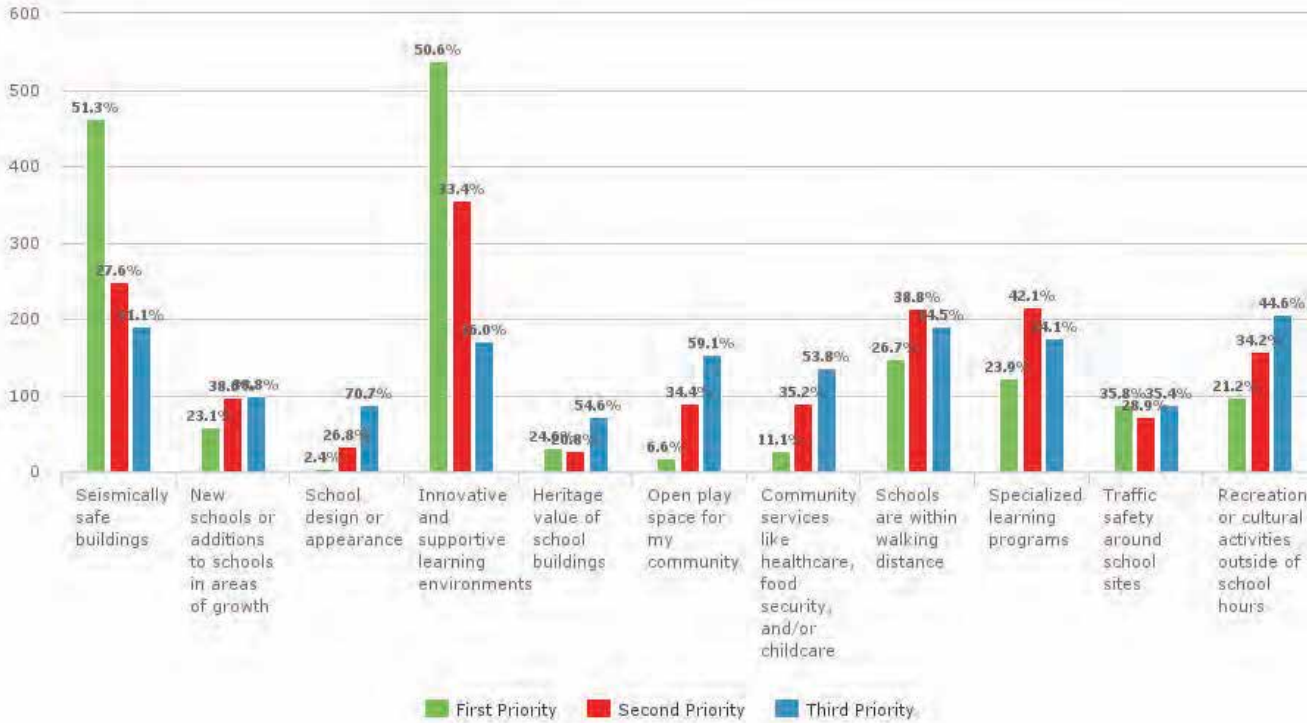
**If you are a student or parent / guardian of a student, how do you (they) get to school on most days?**



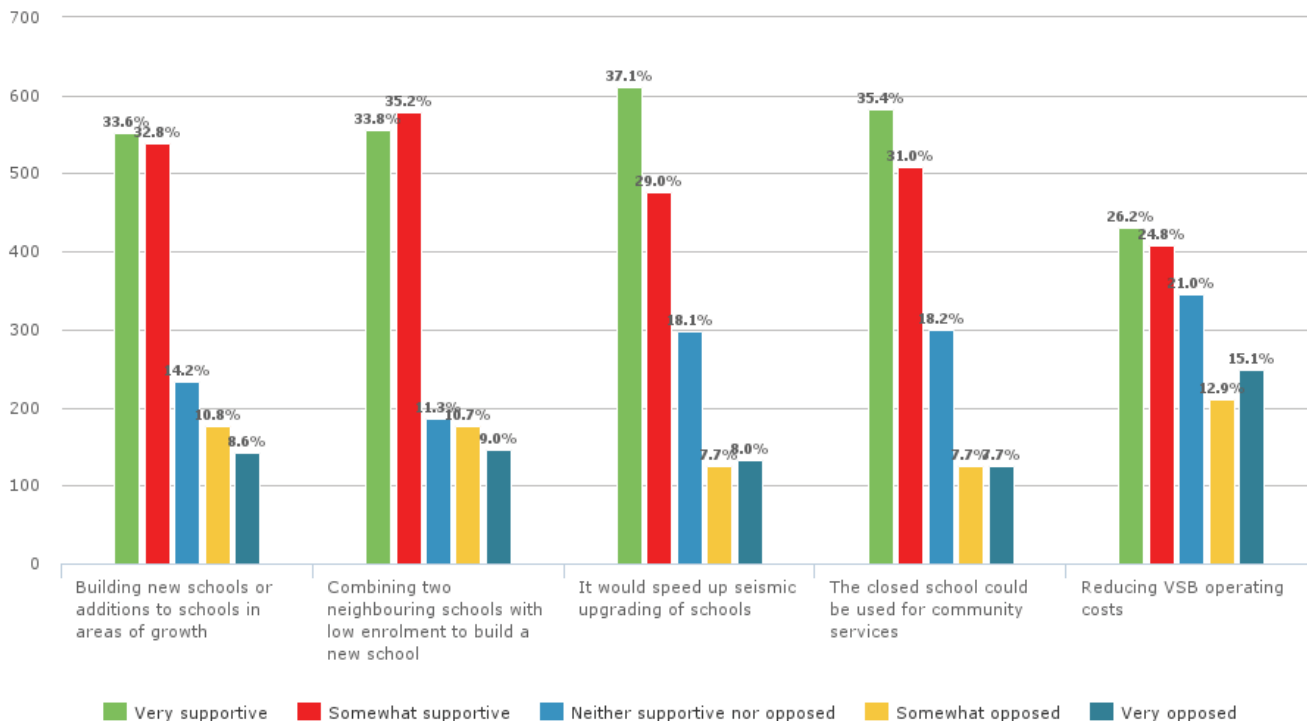
**Do you access any of the following programs at a VSB school?  
Please check all that apply.**



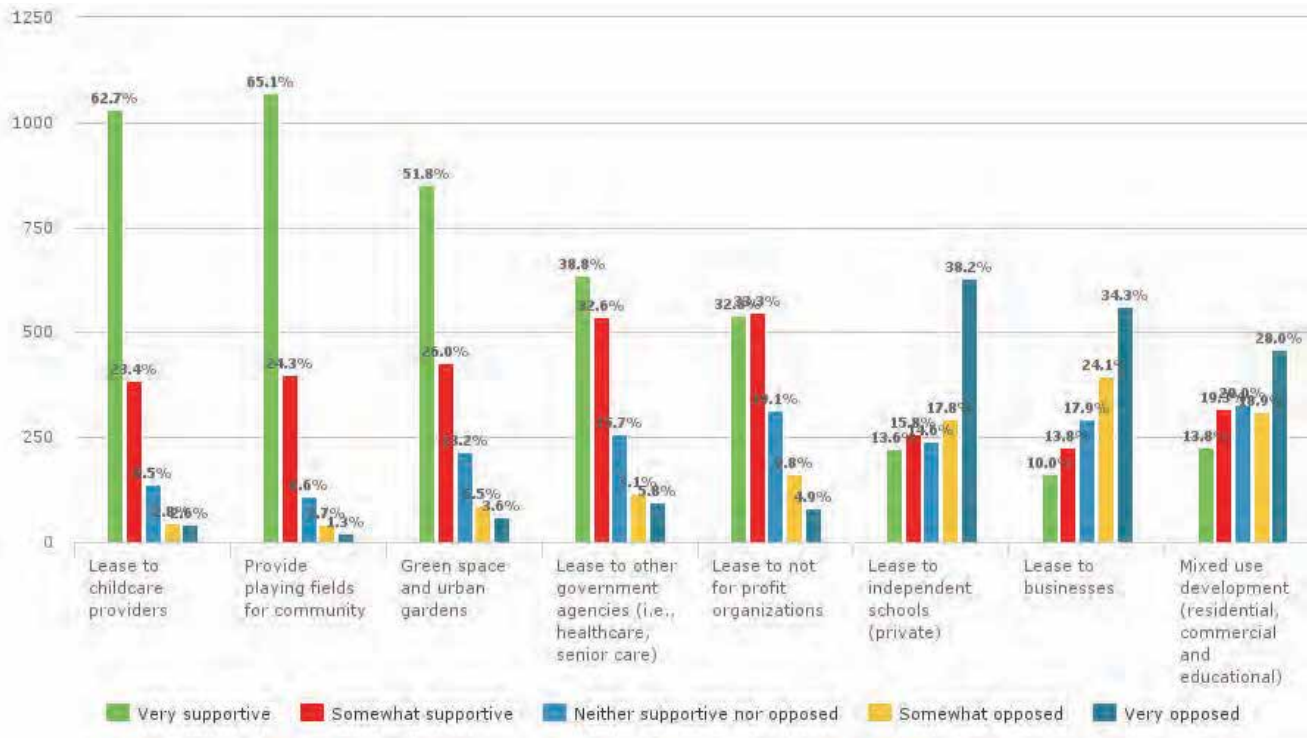
**What are your priorities when it comes to schools in Vancouver?  
Please rank your top three priorities from the list below.**



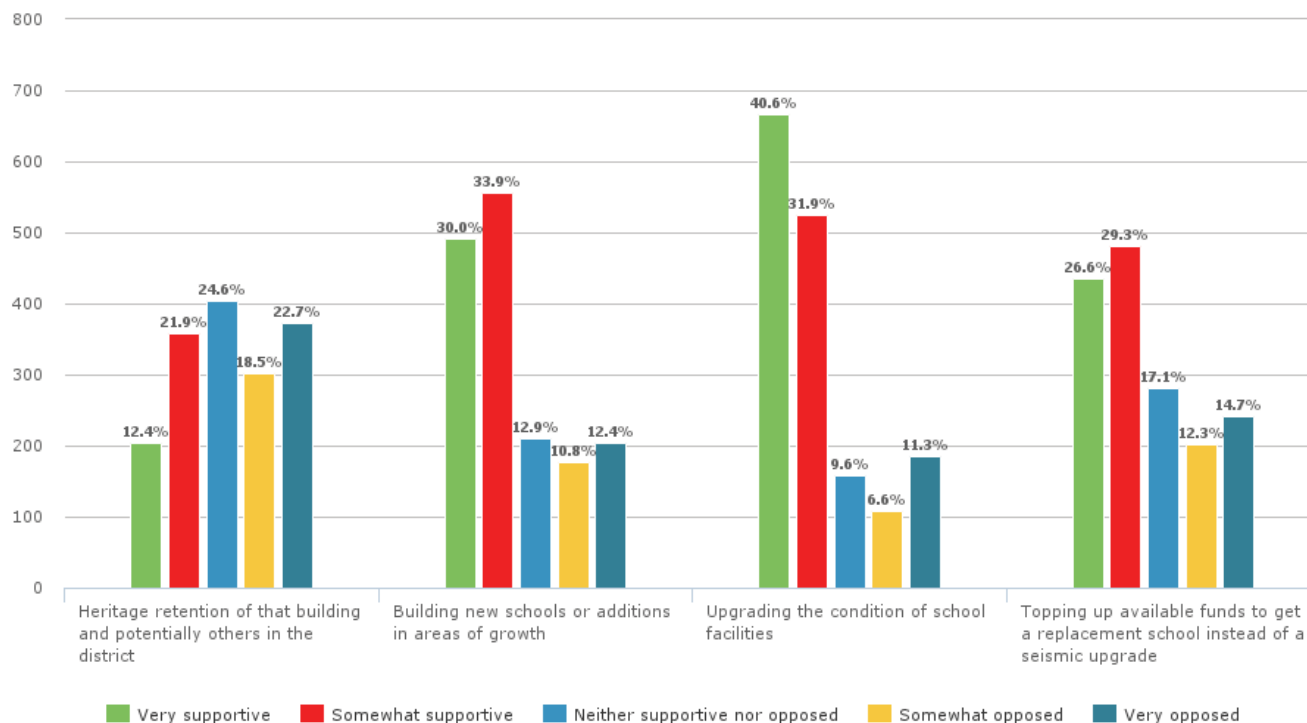
**How supportive would you be of closing schools if it means...**



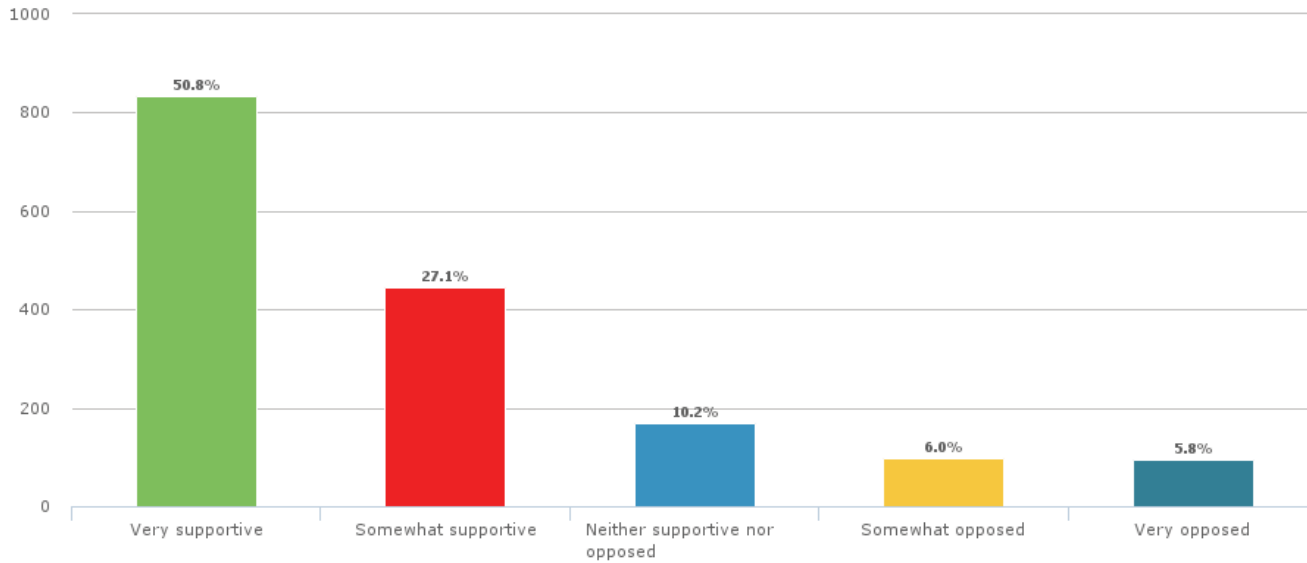
**If there are VSB properties or buildings not needed for delivery of K-12 education, what are acceptable uses among the following options?**



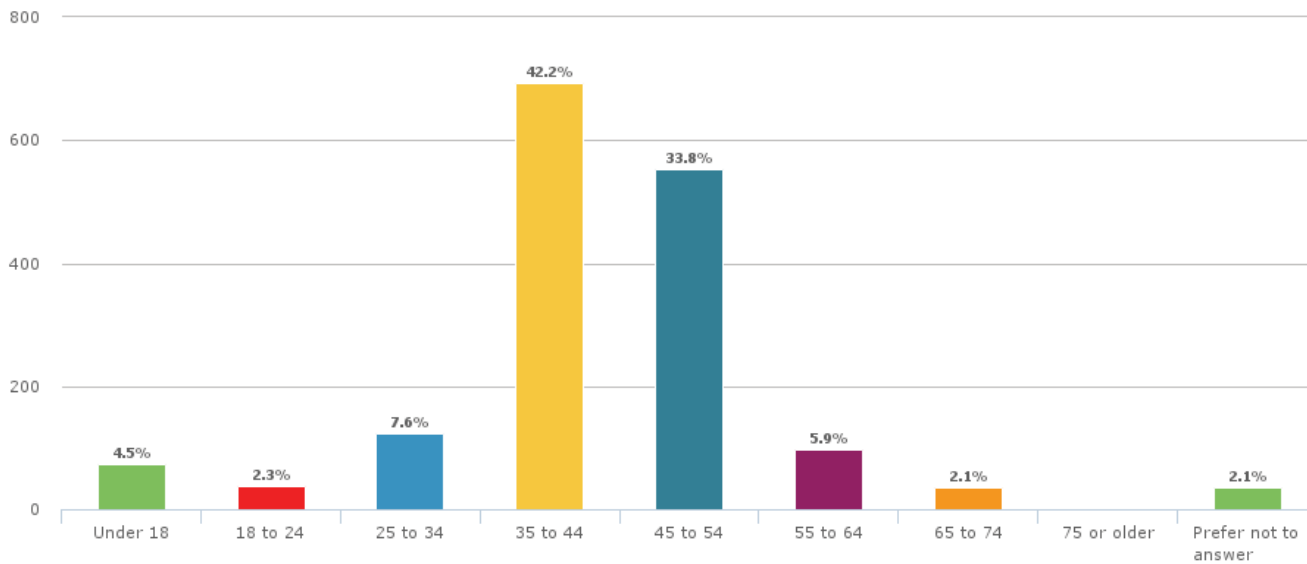
**Would you be supportive of VSB developing or selling a portion of school properties if the revenue was used to support?\*Note - Proceeds cannot be used for general operating purposes such as educational programming**



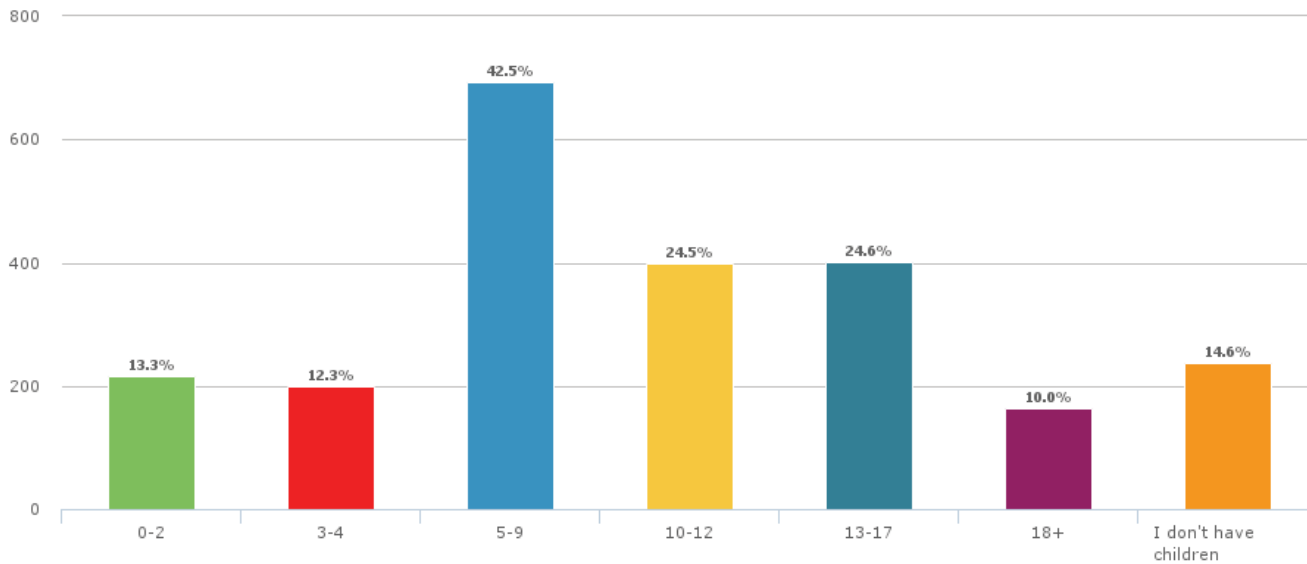
**In addition to school properties, the VSB owns four non-school sites (e.g., Kingsgate Mall). Would you be supportive of the VSB selling or developing all or portions of these sites to support capital projects (i.e., new schools, seismic upgrades, replacement schools)?**



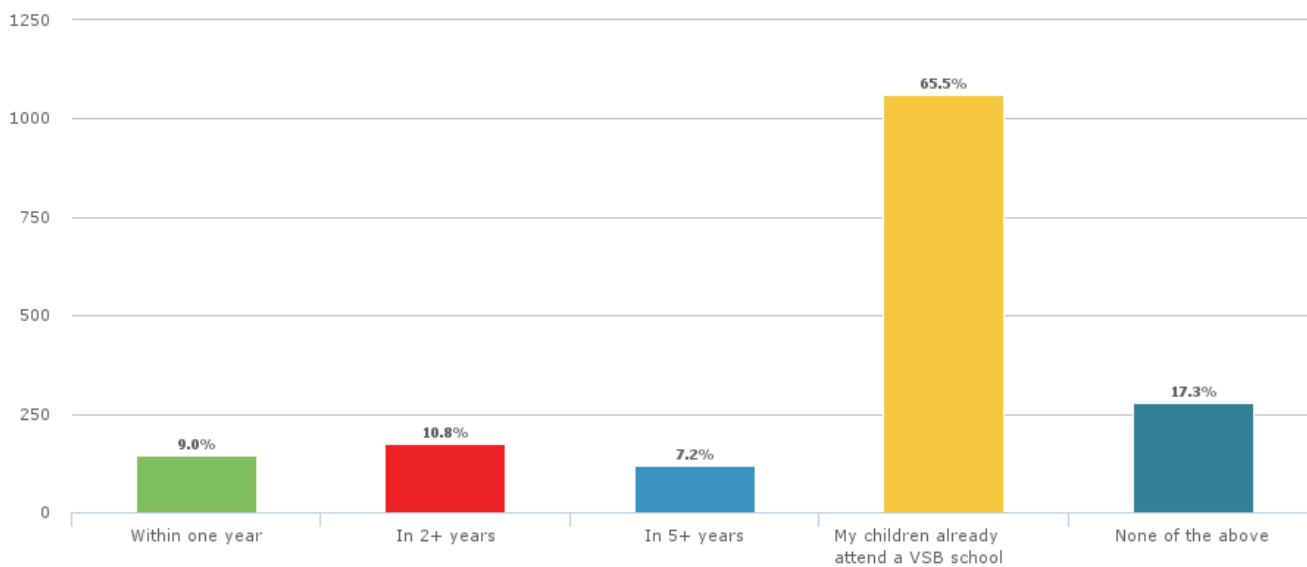
**How old are you?**



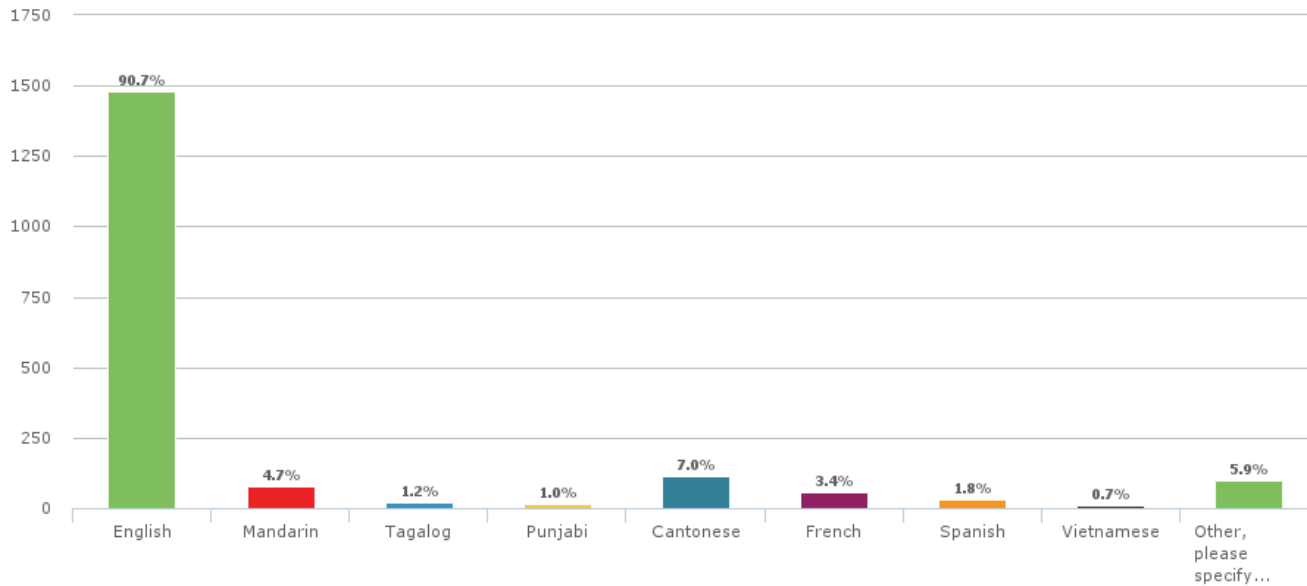
### If you have children, how old are they?



### Do you plan to have children attend a VSB school in future?



**What is your first language or the language you speak at home?  
Please choose all that apply.**







---

## IN CLOSING

---

The VSB, and in particular, the planning team, is committed to land use planning that involves the public and stakeholders in meaningful ways that create transparent, inclusive and constructive opportunities to share community knowledge, practices, experiences, values, and priorities. What the team heard and synthesized during the 10-week consultation process, was a set of complex responses to a complex social, political and urban context, yet there were some core findings that were common across the diverse perspectives that we have identified here. All the source materials for this report including transcribed flipcharts, forms and notes, and qualitative coding documents will be archived and will be available for review upon request.

As a roadmap for the coming 14 years, the LRFP will be updated and evaluated yearly, but when it comes to implementation, the VSB will continue to engage communities, particularly when it comes to closures, seismic planning and temporary accommodation. There will be focused conversations about how to move forward with community, once implementation schedules are developed. The consultation team would like to thank those who participated for their thoughtful, creative and passionate responses during the consultation.