

## Henry Hudson PAC meeting notes

April 17, 2025

### Agenda:

- Presentation from Rob of the VSB Project Office regarding site landscaping
- Phase 2 fundraising presentation from Caitlin
- Admin team updates from Sonja and Christina
- Upcoming PAC events update from Samy

### Site update and landscaping

- Fencing around the entrance plaza (northwest corner): over the summer, the temporary fencing will be replaced by a more aesthetic permanent fence, about 4 feet high.  
Q: Will the new fence prevent people outside from looking / filming inside the school?  
A: No, the fence is as transparent as possible. It can be enhanced with decorations though.  
Comment: we are seeing people come to the school to document the trees (related to concerns around preservation of trees as the project progresses). School staff have been contacting these folks to explain that any images with faces of children cannot be shared online.
- Researching options for replacing the grass that died out on the southwest corner. Must be resistant to trampling by 500 kids, and must not disturb the tree roots in that area (so no asphalt or gravel).
- 3 more picnic tables will be added at the end of this month. Also, long benches ordered and should be installed over the summer around the flagpole garden. The fence around the flagpole will be removed when the plants there are sufficiently established.
- The fencing along Maple in the southwest corner will be raised up so that it's horizontally level and nicer to look at, and also better at keeping balls in the yard and off the street.
- Limestone walkway along the south perimeter will be replaced by asphalt, for easier access and better durability.
- There will be a hard surface path all around the school, so that it's fully accessible to e.g. wheelchair users.  
Q: Will there be access to the site from York?  
A: Yes - via a set of stairs past the extension, as well as the vehicle ramp into the parking lot.
- Garden planting area (near the extension) will have 4 picnic tables, 8 planter boxes, and the harvest table.
- Bioswale: this area will retain excess rainwater so that it's not overwhelming either the school nor the municipal stormwater system. Fenced off with 3-4 gates so that people or equipment don't end up there accidentally, but still accessible as a teaching area when it's dry. Pipes underneath, and the plants inside, store water until it can drain. The intent is to have no more than 2 inches of surface pooling anywhere.  
Q: What does the bioswale look like?  
A: It's essentially a ditch filled with rocks and plants.

Comment: communicating how this system works can be useful for the members of the community who are very interested in the environmental and greenery aspects of the project.

- All-weather field is designed to be usable year round, bordered on the west by a boulevard of trees.
- Basketball area with 4 hoops and a fence that goes up to 11 feet high, to keep balls off Cornwall Ave (some balls have already ended up on Cornwall).
- A narrow space at the north boundary was going to have planting, but it will be paved instead to gain a bit more play area.
- Protecting the plaza from runaway vehicles: while the plastic barriers will be removed, there are various utility poles, trees, and electrical boxes, that any vehicle would hit before they get to the fence. In the corner, three bollards will be installed as well.
- Greenery: the rebuilt site does not have an analogue to the shrubbery area that existed along Cypress Street. There are rows of trees in other places on the site - more than we had before. There are opportunities for the PAC to support additional greenery (more trees, more mature ones), subject to approval from all the stakeholders, but only after the build project is finished.
- Impromptu dig sites: Kindergarteners who like to dig ditches will likely be able to do so in the long jump pit, once its location is figured out.

## Fundraising Update

- Huge Thank You to everyone who supported the fundraising push for the playground so far. We will have an awesome playground for students come September.
- The PAC raised around \$200,000, with some funds reserved in case of unexpected expenses (tariffs), and some left over for other enhancements to the outdoor space. The all-in cost of the play area, including VSB funds, is around \$400,000.
- Primary grades play area: we'd like to support a secondary play structure in the southwest corner for younger children. A grant from Cal Tire may be available to help fund this. Unconfirmed ballpark cost of this structure: \$100,000.
- Outdoor classroom: this is a priority for the teachers. The PAC can support the equipment there, e.g. seating areas for students and staff, and enhancements for neurodiverse students.
- Garden boxes: looking into grants available for gardening and agriculture programs.
- Other opportunities: additions to the bioswale, additional greenery.
- Our effective fundraising is all thanks to person-to-person relationships: people reaching out to their circles, colleagues, business partners etc.

**ACTION:** there is a [corporate letter template](#) and a [community letter template](#) on the PAC website. *We are asking every parent in the school community to send each of these to (at least) one person.* Many people in the Kitsilano community will be using this space and wanting to support it. **Spread the word!**

- Q: A very common question we hear is why is private fundraising needed for this kind of project - why isn't VSB paying for all of it?

A: Yes, with a public school these things *should* be publicly funded, and the PACs advocate for that, including a recent meeting with our MLA. Concurrently, given that some of the enhancements we want to see are either not funded, or may be funded sometime in the future (after our own kids have graduated), it is in our interest to help

build an awesome school environment today. The PAC will prepare communication to clarify this for newcomers into the school community.

- Communication and engagement: Alicia stepped up to keep the PAC notice board at the entrance to the school updated. Thank you Alicia! She also reiterated the importance of class WhatsApp groups as a way to reach parents who aren't necessarily up to date on email communications.
- Corporate fundraising engagement: We are in communication with developers in the area to see if they will support the project. It's a slow-moving process, and there is a lot of uncertainty for businesses at the moment. Caitlyn has a long list of companies to reach out to - connections and introductions from school parents would be immensely useful.
- Partnerships (details [here](#)) - reminder that you can get \$25 off Pedalheads camps and also have them contribute \$25 to the PAC by using coupon code HENRYH25. Vancouver Canadians event will happen in June, around Father's Day.

### Principal's Update

- Breakfast Club runs Mon/Wed/Fri 8:30-8:50, thanks to a grant from President's Choice. Anywhere from 50 to 100 students have been coming for breakfast. We're seeing fewer behavioural problems in the mornings when kids start the day with a full tummy. Support workers are volunteering their time to help with setup and serving. Gluten-free and vegan options are available.  
The grant lasts through the end of the school year, and Sonja has applied to have it renewed for next year. We will know in June whether Hudson was chosen to receive the grant again.
- Growing Readers program - for grade 2-4 kids who need a bit of extra help, happening Mon/Tue before school. Thanks to the primary team for volunteering their time to help our learners.
- Badminton for Grade 6-7 is happening now. Track and Field (grades 4-7) is starting up at Vanier Park. Look out for more information about track meets coming from the teachers soon.
- Indigenous weaving with the VSB Indigenous Education department workshops happening this week and next.

### Upcoming Events

- **Dance party:** Thursday April 24, 16:00-18:00. Concession will be available. See announcement on our [web page](#) for more info.

### Other Business

- Q: Would the gym have enough capacity for the whole school once the extension comes online?

A: No. The gym can accommodate 396 people, which is less than the total students+staff already. Like other elementary schools, we would need to hold assemblies in shifts.

With the extension, the capacity of the school will be ~530 students. The extension

will have 2 additional water fountains, to relieve the line-up for the one station in the current building.

- The mud kitchens have been delivered, but will have to be bolted down as they have “gone walking” from other locations in the city.
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