

**Presentation to North Bay Planning Area Accommodation Committee
School Closures and Potential Impacts to the Municipality
By Mayor Al McDonald – City of North Bay (15 Feb 2017)**

I am here tonight to encourage that the Student Accommodation Review Committee to carefully consider in their deliberations what the impact of school closures will have from a community perspective on our City. I will briefly speak to the impact I see on our city from a Community Development; Planning; Economic Development; and Infrastructure perspective.

It is inevitable that there will be school closing but I ask the committee to think of solutions that will have positive impacts on our community. Or a minimal negative impact on our community.

Community Development

- Schools are viewed as symbolic hearts of their communities and hold an intrinsic value to the communities and neighbourhoods they serve.
- Schools are an important component to the long-term strategic vision for many neighbourhoods. They are often the hubs around which the community develops.
- From a planning policy perspective, school closure is a major concern for neighbourhoods because long term planning objectives such as intensification, neighbourhood revitalization, and the creation of walkable, mixed communities are often undermined when schools close.
- Neighbourhoods often come together through schools and school communities. The school community allows people to interact with each other, develop relationships and work towards a common goal. The removal of the school from the neighbourhood results in a loss of community identity for the neighbourhood.

Our community is an aggregation of neighbourhoods. Our identity and strength as a community will be impacted by the decisions that you will make.

Planning

One of the objectives of the Planning through the City's Official Plan is to build on North Bay's quality of life strengths through the suitable supply and range of housing types, complemented by efficient public transit, and active transportation, access to facilities and services for employment, education, health and social care, sports recreation, culture and parks.

The potential removal of a high school in the southern part of the City does not support the objectives of the Municipality nor facilitate access to facilities and services for our community. It will negatively impact traffic, discourage active transportation by young people in our community thus potentially negatively impacting long term health and wellbeing, and remove critical educational services from that end of the City that services a significant base of our community.

Economic Development

Maintaining a high school in the southern part of the City is critical to building and maintaining an attractive place to live and supporting development and investment in that part of the City. The decisions of the committee will for example impact future subdivision development, park development and investment in businesses and services in not only that part of our community but in our City as a whole. Therefore I ask that you seriously consider what your decision will have on the future of parts of our City.

The City is making significant investments in our Community. And we view healthy, vibrant, strategically located schools as an important competitive advantage in attracting investment to our community.

Infrastructure

Impacts to City infrastructure are anticipated by the City's Engineering Department particularly in the case of the single high school scenario and likely to a lesser extent on the elementary school scenario. Impacts are anticipated with respect to Traffic and site services.

i. Traffic

The student population increase into one area of the City through a one high school solution could be in the range of a 50% to 100% increasing the proportion of students requiring transportation (busing/drop off) compared to a local school. These factors will increase traffic volume in a single high school solution. Expansion at the proposed site for a single high school will bring additional infrastructure requirements to the High St. and Chippewa St. areas adjacent to the school property. Improvements may also be required at the Chippewa/High intersection. Therefore we are concerned with the traffic and resulting safety impacts. Traffic studies will be required.

ii. Storm Water Management and Site Services

For redevelopment of the site considerations will be necessary with respect to storm water quantity and water quality controls. Confirmation of municipal sanitary and storm servicing would be required.

Overall, there will be stresses to our infrastructure under one school solutions that would not be as significant under other scenarios. These will result in cost to our City. I will encourage you to engage the City early in the process so that issues can be addressed early in your design making process.

Conclusion

From the Municipality's perspective, I understand that you face significant challenges and have a daunting task in front of you. I encourage that as you consider how to deliver the best possible education to our youth that you weigh the impacts on the community that will impact the quality of education that they will receive.

From our perspective, single school solutions, particularly in the case of the single high school solution is not the optimum solution for our youth or our community.

Finally, I will add, that I do not support the elimination of a high school from West Ferris.