

My name is Soren Henrich. I am a resident of Victoria. I am addressing the proposed disposal and sale of land at Lansdowne South Middle School.

I serve as a community representative on the BCI Steering Committee, since 2006, and am a director of the Friends of Bowker Creek Society. My children attended Richmond School and I was involved in the previous community consultation regarding the 2007 attempt at land disposal.

I believe building *on this site* is not in the broad community interest.

Given the threat of more frequent rainstorm events, natural areas in the city should be left in their natural state for flood control and mitigation.

Given that Bowker Creek flows through this property and importance of this property for flood mitigation, will SD61 consult with local governments including the downstream municipalities of Oak Bay and Victoria before disposing of this land?

I would like to know more about how the SD61 *Climate Emergency Action* will include stormwater management for climate adaptation and show leadership to students in addressing the climate crisis and environmental stewardship – before land disposal takes place.

I respectfully request the School Board fulfill their mandate to maintain the property for education purposes and honour its existing commitments to the Bowker Creek Initiative (BCI) *Blueprint*, endorsed by SD61 in 2018, and consider this site for enhanced student outdoor learning, similar to what has been achieved at Oak Bay High School.

SD61 should not be disposing this land without meeting the Ministerial requirement for broad consultation and community and local government dialog that has not yet taken place.

The Ministry's Policy states:

“ 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.

...and that the Minister, “...must approve of disposal **before** SD61 enters into an agreement to sell.”

Further, I believe the information SD61 has provided to date is not sufficient assurance the public interest in this property has been taken into consideration. There is not yet enough information for the public to engage effectively in the land disposal process.

Please consider from the community perspective how the premature joint media release in mid-October announcing the sales agreement in the local press and the arbitrary Nov. 24th deadline for public input – a very short deadline from the community perspective – causes much consternation and generates a tremendous amount of volunteer energy and effort to respond effectively.

I note that the Board indicates in its own Consultation Policy that it:

“...values attitudes and practices that encourage integrity, respect and trust in all relationships.”

I wish SD61 will treat this as an opportunity to repair the dialog with the affected communities, consult with local government and the Bowker Creek Initiative, for an outcome that will support long-standing values, already established.

In closing:

I urge you to slow down the land disposal process, or better – stop this land disposal; until a broad, meaningful and transparent process that fully involves community and educational interests takes place.