

NANAIMO LADYSMITH PUBLIC SCHOOLS
STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS COMMITTEE
PUBLIC MEETING
ACTION SHEET

DATE: June 11, 2025
TO: Strategic Directions Committee
FROM: Mark Walsh, Secretary-Treasurer, Pete Sabo, Ex. Director of Planning & Operations
Kevin Winiski, Acting Manager Facilities Planning
SUBJECT: Proposed 2026/2027 (Major) Five-Year Capital Plan

Recommendation

The Strategic Directions Committee recommends that the Board of Education of School District No. 68 (Nanaimo-Ladysmith) in accordance with provisions under section 142(4) of the School Act, approve the proposed Major Capital plan for 2026/2027, as provided, for submission to the Ministry of Infrastructure and the Ministry of Education & Child Care Capital Branch.

Background

This action sheet, which aligns with the Board's goals and the Long-Range Facilities Plan (LRFP), aims to provide an overview of the major capital projects the District intends to pursue. Minor capital projects are addressed in a separate memo and motion. The capital plan continues to emphasize the District's dual challenges of capacity constraints, and significant seismic requirements. While there are some adjustments from year to year due to changes in enrollment projections, the plan remains largely consistent across years.

The Five-Year Capital Plan

Each year, Boards of Education are required to submit a Five-Year Capital Plan detailing the high priority capital projects needed for their school districts, in accordance with the Capital Plan instructions.

Each year capital plan instructions are published which guide staff on the preparation and submission:

- https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/education/administration/resource-management/capital-planning/capital-plan-instructions-2026-27_5-yr-cp-submissions.pdf

School districts' annual Five-Year Capital Plan submissions play a crucial role in identifying priority capital projects for the Ministry's upcoming fiscal year. Additionally, these submissions offer valuable insight into the District's priorities for future years, contributing to the Ministry's long-term capital planning.

The Ministry is seeking submissions for consideration for the following major capital programs:

- Child Care (CC)
- Rural District Program (RDP)
- Site Acquisition Program (SAP)

- School Expansion Program (EXP)
- School Replacement Program (REP)
- Seismic Mitigation Program (SMP)

These are the submission deadlines for the various programs:

1. May 17, 2025 – 2026/27 Annual Facility Grant (AFG)
2. June 30, 2025 – 2026/27 Major Capital Programs (SMP, EXP, REP, RDP)
3. September 30, 2025 – 2026/27 Minor Capital Programs (SEP, CNCP, PEP, BUS, BEP)
4. October 1, 2025 – 2026/27 Minor Capital Programs (FIP)
5. 2026/27 Major and Minor Child Care (CC) to be determined at a future date.

The Ministry requires major capital items to be submitted at the end of June each year and minor capital projects are submitted by the end of September each year. This memo will only address major capital projects, and the minor capital project submission will be addressed in a separate Action Sheet.

The Annual Five-Year Capital Plan Submission is guided by the Long-Range Facilities Plan (LRFP), through which school districts assess their capital needs over the next five years. This process includes prioritizing capital requirements, conducting preliminary assessments of project needs, options, scoping, and costing, and subsequently developing and submitting the Five-Year Capital Plan. Along with the plan, supporting documentation, including a Project Request Fact Sheet (PRFS), is also provided.

The Ministry provides each school district with a written response to their annual Five-Year Capital Plan submission once the assessment of all submissions is complete, and funding for fiscal year 2026/2027 is announced by the Ministry. See attached response letter to the 2025/2026 Capital submission.

This written response identifies the next steps for supported projects which may include:

- Proceed to design, tender and construction
- Proceed to development of a Concept plan or Project Definition Report (PDR)
- Proceed with site acquisition
- Proceed with bus acquisition

The Ministry also provides school districts with an Annual Facility Grant (AFG) based on an established formula. Due to the nature of the program and delivery needs, the 2025/2026 AFG projects were previously presented to the business committee. The 2025/26 AFG funding provided included an increase.

Operating Capacity

Previously, class sizes for Kindergarten, Grades 1-7, and Grades 8-12 were set in legislation, and were mandatorily applied to all school districts across the province. Currently, class sizes are negotiated as a working condition for teachers in their local contract with the board of education. As such, operating capacities vary between school districts. Individual school districts must determine the operating capacities of existing schools to calculate their capacity utilization. For the purpose of these submissions an elementary school capacity is calculated as the average class size over the last 3 years multiplied by the number of classrooms available, by ministry standards, in each school.

Enrolment Projections

The current capital plan will rely on the enrolment projections provided by Baragar for the short-term capital requests (Years 1-5) and the Licker Geospatial data for the longer-term (site acquisition) requests (Years 6-10). Reference to the Licker Geospatial data will be noted in the detailed PRFS (project request fact sheets) documents as supporting information, where applicable.

Development of a Facilities Plan

The Board passed the Long-Range Facilities Plan in 2021. In the creation of this plan the LRFP recommendations were considered. A summative report “Monitoring our Progress” was created to track the progress of the LRFP, which was brought to the Strategic Directions Committee on April 9, 2025.

The source documents used to compile this year’s Five-Year Capital Plan are available upon request. Please note that submission details (project costing and supporting documentation) are still being developed/gathered and will be submitted, along with the plan.

It is important to note that some of the capital requests may not result in the specific outcome requested. Requesting support for an expansion will result in the LRFP advisory committee discussing the preferred option for the community that the Ministry will usually support if it is the same cost.

Child Care (CC)

There are various types of Childcare project submissions to consider. After coordinating with Learning Services, the following childcare projects are being recommended to be included in this year’s capital plan.

The following requests are anticipated to be submitted under the “new spaces” program:

1. Dufferin Learning Centre – LRFP Rec. 22, 25
 - a. 5 Spaces, two for a 0-2 year (48) and 3 for 3-5 program (72)
 - b. Includes consideration for 24-hour care
 - c. Closely connected with VIHA and NGRH staff
2. Rutherford Elementary – LRFP Rec. 22, 25
 - a. 2 spaces, one for a 0-2 year (24) and one for a 3-5 program (24)
 - b. Note, this request was submitted in the 25/26 capital plan and to date the district has not received a response, resulting in a re-submission this year’s plan.
3. Cedar Elementary – LRFP Rec. 22, 25
 - a. 2 spaces, one for a 0-2 year (24) and one for a 3-5 program (24)
 - b. Note, this request was submitted for the 2025/2026 Childcare deadline in the fall of 2024, however, was not supported by the Ministry resulting in a submission this year’s plan.

The following request is to be submitted under the “new space integrated” program:

1. New school on Davis Road – LRFP Rec. 22, 25
 - a. 3 spaces, one for a 0-2 year (24) and one for a 3-5 program (24)
 - b. This is submitted again this year and supports the recommended option for the seismic upgrade of LIS (i.e.: new school on the Davis Road site).

Rural Districts Program (RDP)

This program is utilized if the board of education wishes to undertake a demolition project in one of its rural communities – NO request is recommended in this program.

Site Acquisition (SAP)

The site acquisition requests reflect both the shorter term Baragar data and the longer-term Licker Geospatial data. The district requires Ministry support for a site acquisition. A site acquisition can be either at the targeted school or potentially acquiring a new site in the area, dependent on direction from the LRFP committee, the Board and the Ministry.

1. Pleasant Valley – LRFP Rec. 2, 6

Similar to Departure Bay, Pleasant Valley appears to be growing quickly. While it likely does not need additional land on site, an additional site may be required associated with growth in Lantzville and North Nanaimo. Baragar's projections show the need for 5 portables by 2030, Licker Geospatial shows growth requirements for 10 portables by 2030 and 17 portables by 2035.

2. Departure Bay – LRFP Rec. 2, 6

Departure Bay is currently oversubscribed and slated to continue to grow. Addressing such growth has options (expansion, new school, boundary changes or a mixture of options). Ultimately, a new site may be required.

3. Chase River – LRFP Rec. 2, 6

While Baragar's data does not show Chase River in a situation of rapid growth, it already has multiple portables, and an expansion of the school may require additional land. Furthermore, if Sandstone proceeds, an additional site may be required.

4. Bayview – LRFP Rec. 2, 6

While Baragar does not show immediate growth at Bayview, building trends in the area (e.g. the Harbour View District) suggest increased enrollment. Bayview cannot support additional capacity with the size of its' current site.

5. Dover Bay area LRFP Rec. 2, 6

Dover and Wellington's growth projections indicate significant growth that may require an additional site in the future to support enrolment.

Expansion Projects (EXP)

Currently enrolment and expansion sizes are based on existing catchments and feeder schools. Note that this year based on discussions with Ministry staff NDSS expansion has been moved to be included in the replacement Program.

An expansion to Forest Park has been moved to a higher priority (years 1-3) due to portable forecasts and Chase River and Wellington projects have been removed due to approved expansion projects.

Year 1-3

1. Pleasant Valley – LRFP Rec. 1, 5, 7, 22, 32

Pleasant Valley currently has 3 portables on site with a 4th unit being planned. The school is forecast to require 5 General Instruction portables by the 2029/2030 school year. Licker Geospatial shows growth requirements for 10 portables in 2030 and 17 portables in 2035. District feels this is a candidate for a prefab/modular project.

2. Dover Bay Secondary – LRFP Rec. 1, 5, 7, 8, 9

Dover Bay currently has 10 portables on site. Based on current catchment areas and enrolment projections, it is anticipated that approximately 17 portable classrooms will be required by the 2029/2030 school year. This equates to a need for an additional 425 student spaces, increasing the school's total capacity from 1,325 to 1,750 students.

A Project Development Report (PDR-equivalent), completed in 2006, confirmed the feasibility of an expansion of this scale on the current school site. The proposed addition would also include the necessary elective and specialty instructional spaces appropriate for a secondary school of this size.

3. Forest Park - LRFP Rec. 1, 5, 7, 22, 32

Forest Park currently has 3 portables on site and is forecasted to require 4 General Instruction portables by the 2029/2030 school year. Licker Geospatial shows growth requirements for 5 portables in 2030 and 6 portables in 2035. District feels this is a candidate for a prefab/modular project.

4. Fairview - LRFP Rec. 1, 5, 7, 22, 32

Fairview has a total of 19 available divisions for classroom use, one of which is a portable, and due to continued growth and student complexity the school is constrained by its current capacity.

Over the last two years the district has added two Co-Teachers to the site to alleviate pressures, however it is clear that additional space is necessary to support the student population.

Year 4 or 5

The next group of schools are intended to be put on the Ministry's radar. It is unlikely that we would receive support in the immediate term to proceed with these projects, but it is important that they are recognized.

Last year a Learning Alternatives school on Harewood site was de-prioritized, this year it has not been included as a request.

The following schools have 3 portables forecasted by the 2029/2030 school year.

- Mountain View - 3 portables by 2029/2030 (Candidate for Modular/Prefab)

- Cedar Elementary - 3 portables by 2029/2030 (Candidate for Modular/Prefab)
- Georgia Avenue - 3 portables by 2029/2030 (Candidate for Modular/Prefab)

The following schools have portables; however, additions have not been requested at this time due to various considerations:

Schools affected by opening of Rutherford in 2025:

- Departure Bay - 4 portables by 2029/2030
- McGirr - 4 portables by 2029/2030

Schools affected by options for the yet approved LIS Seismic Upgrade:

- Ladysmith Primary - 7 portables by 2029/2030
- Ecole North Oyster- 1 portable by 2029/2030

Schools with additions currently supported:

- Ladysmith Primary - 7 portables by 2029/2030

The district continues working with BC Housing, City of Nanaimo and SFN on the Te'tuxwtun project on 5th Street, which encompasses the Harewood site.

Replacement Projects (REP)

1. NDSS – LRFP Rec. 1, 5, 7, 8, 9, 11, 22, 32

The Ministry direction to achieve a seismic upgrade, expansion and renewal is to focus on a single request to Replace NDSS. The school has multiple aged-out systems and requires a significant amount of maintenance. A replacement project would offer an opportunity to incorporate key Ministry and District initiatives including but not limited to GHG reduction, use of mass timber, Neighborhood Learning Centre's, inclusion, accessibility, etc.

Guidance on this submission reflects the close work of staff with Ministry representatives on the practical realities of such a large and complex project.

2. Chase River – LRFP Rec. 1, 5, 7, 11, 12, 22, 32

An alternate solution to the seismic upgrade of Chase River is to replace Chase River. The school is an aged single-story facility on a site with numerous challenges. The site has limited parking as well as a playfield with poor drainage. A portion of the site is being utilized for a childcare facility and a recently approved 6 classroom prefabricated expansion. Benefits of a replacement project would include a new school, revisioning of the site to better meet the challenging limitations, elimination of intrusive seismic upgrades and simplification of swing space requirements.

Seismic Mitigation Program (SMP)

Buildings are assigned to Seismic Groups 1 to 4 to help prioritize seismic upgrades, with Group 1 representing the highest priority for strengthening, and Group 4 the lowest. Note that this year based on discussions with Ministry staff NDSS seismic has been moved to be included in the request for a replacement.

Priorities from last year have been slightly altered from last year with Gabriola being moved to the #1 priority.

Group One Priorities (H1)

1. Gabriola – LRFP Rec. 13

Due to Gabriola's geographic isolation, the school may have limited access to external support during a seismic event. Upgrading the facility could enhance its role as a vital community asset in the event of an emergency.

2. Departure Bay – LRFP Rec. 10

Given that action must be taken to address capacity, it aligns with the LRFP to perform multiple capital projects at the same time to avoid multiple years of disruption to a school.

3. Ladysmith Primary Gym

This is a small value project that could be moved forward quickly. Not included in current expansion approval.

Note: a seismic upgrade of the Gym is included as an option within the Ladysmith Primary Expansion PDR. However, it is not within the typical scope of an Expansion project and there is no certainty it will be included in the Project.

4. Ecole Pauline Haarer Gym (and retaining wall)

This is a small(er) value project that could be moved forward quickly if funded

5. NDSS (site) - Transportation Building – H1 Risk

The Transportation Building does not fall within the Ministry's priorities (not a K-12 educational facility) in the seismic upgrade program; however, it was reported to have the lowest PPR rating (highest life safety risk) of any block or building throughout the district. The Seismic Project Identification Report (SPIR) supporting this request is pending at the Technical Review Board (TRB). The final report will identify upgrade options to be considered for funding by NLPS and the Ministry.

6. Brechin Elementary - This is a full building upgrade project.

7. Cedar Elementary - LRFP Rec. 13

8. Chase River – LRFP Rec. 10

Given that action must be taken to address condition of the building and systems, it aligns with the LRFP to perform multiple capital projects at the same time to avoid multiple years of disruption to a school.

Group 2 Seismic projects

9. Reassessed schools (H1) with addition projects in the 2026/2027 Capital Plan;

Forest Park, Fairview, Mountain View

Group 3 Seismic Projects:

10. Reassessed (H1) open schools with no request in the 2026/2027 Capital Plan
Bayview, Ecole Hammond Bay, Georgia Avenue, Harewood Gym, Island Connect ED, John Barsby, Ladysmith Secondary, McGirr, Park Avenue, Quarterway, Rutherford, Seaview, Uplands.

Group 4 Seismic Projects

11. Reassessed (H1) and CLOSED schools of note:
Davis Road, Dufferin, Woodlands, Woodbank.

Removed from List:

12. Reassessed (H1) and CLOSED schools of note:
South Wellington – Leased to RDN for 25 years.

Reference

Appendix A: Ministry Response to the Annual Five-Year Capital Plan Submission for 2025/2026

