



Attachment 1

Council Report dated January 30, 2023

REPORT

Climate Action, Planning and Development

To: Mayor Johnstone and Members of Council
Date: January 30, 2023

From: Jackie Teed, Acting Director
Climate Action, Planning and Development
File: 13.2630.06

Item #: 2023-20

Subject: **Renewed Child Care Protocol between the City of New Westminister and New Westminister School District No.40**

RECOMMENDATION

THAT Council direct staff to forward a letter to New Westminister School District No.40 formally inviting them to jointly develop a renewed Child Care Protocol between the City of New Westminister and the School District.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to seek Council's direction for staff to forward a letter to New Westminister School District No.40 formally inviting them to jointly develop a renewed Child Care Protocol, which would set a framework for closer collaboration with regard to the development of new and the retention of existing child care spaces.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Quality, accessible and affordable child care provides significant benefits for children, families, and the larger community. While funding and provision of child care is a senior government responsibility, both the City and the School District play important facilitative roles in helping maintain, secure and develop licensed child care spaces within their collective control. Recognizing the benefits of cooperation, the City has a long history of collaborating with the School District to address child care needs, including through its original Child Care Protocol with the School District in 2009.

Several recent events have precipitated the need to renew the former Child Care Protocol. In November 2022, the City was formally advised that the School District would be utilizing existing Neighbourhood Learning Centre spaces to realize additional classroom capacity, which would displace two non-profit child care facilities (with a total of 74 spaces) that are currently serving families in the periphery of the Downtown. In a formal response to the School District, the City emphasized the importance of retaining existing child care spaces within their control, and renewing and recommitting to a Child Care Protocol, similar to the one that was adopted in 2009.

In 2022, the Ministry of Education became the Ministry of Education and Child Care. Renewing the Child Care Protocol with the New Westminster Schools would align with the expanded mandate of the Ministry, and leverage the Ministry's increased involvement to help realize much needed child care spaces, including better positioning the School District and City for successful application to Provincial child care grants.

BACKGROUND

Quality, accessible and affordable child care provides significant benefits for children, families, and the larger community, including employers.

For children, quality child care positively influences child development, which from the School District's perspective, facilitates school readiness and success. For parents, quality child care positively influences parenting decisions and contributes to child wellbeing. From the City's perspective, child care enables parents to work and contribute to the local economy. Employers also consider the availability of child care as part of their location and relocation decision-making.

The City's Role in Facilitating Child Care

Funding and provision of child care is a senior government responsibility, which resides with the Province and is now within the Ministry of Education and Child Care.

The City plays a facilitative role, including but not limited to: developing needs assessments and strategies; applying for and managing grants; coordinating rezoning applications in support of child care; prioritizing permits for child care spaces in schools; and, advocating to the senior levels of government on child care issues, including related to funding, staff remuneration, subsidies, etc.

The City's Collaboration with the School District

Recognizing that there are many advantages to delivering child care and community services for children and families on school sites, the City has a long history of collaborating with the School District.

This collaboration was enshrined in 2009, when the City and School District endorsed a Child Care Protocol, committing both organizations to working together "to maintain, stabilize and increase the viability of existing licensed child care spaces within their

collective control, and to plan for and develop, if feasible, new child care spaces on their collective lands.” Attachment 1 includes a copy of the Council endorsed Child Care Protocol and accompanying Report to Council.

Attachment 2 summarizes City and School District collaboration since the ratification of the Child Care Protocol related to child care and child development.

It is noted that City’s Child Care Strategy (2016) includes the following recommendation:

- That the City and School District review the Child Care Protocol (2009), which was endorsed by both parties, and that they identify additional opportunities for collaboration within their collective control.

Recent Calls for a Renewed Child Care Protocol.

On November 7, 2022, Mayor and Council received a letter from the School District regarding their current capacity challenges. The letter outlined their proposal to utilize the existing Neighbourhood Learning Centre spaces, including child care, at Fraser River Middle School and Ecole Qayqayt Elementary School in order to realize additional classroom capacity to meet their increasing enrollment numbers.

The City’s corresponding letter, dated November 29, 2022, acknowledged the School District’s challenging position and included the following key points:

- that the City and School District jointly advocate to the Province for additional support in meeting short- and long-term school capacity and child care needs, which are fundamentally within provincial jurisdiction; and,
- that the City and School Board renew and recommit to a Child Care Protocol, similar to the one that was adopted in 2009.

This report’s discussion section outlines opportunities and next steps related to a renewed Child Care Protocol.

DISCUSSION

Maintaining Existing Spaces

The City and School District each currently lease space to a number of non-profit child care operators, which represents a significant percentage of the non-profit child care spaces in New Westminster. As such, maintaining and expanding on these spaces is critical if progress is to be made in meeting the child care needs of children and families.

The New Ministry of Education and Child Care

In 2022, the Ministry of Education became the Ministry of Education and Child Care. The Ministry's expanded mandate, which includes prioritizing locating child care in school buildings and on school grounds, reinforces the importance of existing child care facilities and programs on school sites and sets the stage for future expansion. The new Ministry also intends to better integrate child care and early childhood educators into the overall K-12 school system.

The Ministry will continue to prioritize child care space creation projects that maximize the number of spaces in high-need areas throughout the province through the Child Care BC New Spaces Program. Recently several key program changes have been announced, which will provide further opportunities for the City and School District to collaborate more strategically. These include increased priority for:

- long-term community investments run by public partnerships (e.g. school districts, local governments, etc.) and not-for-profit organizations (societies);
- projects that increase availability of infant/toddler and school age care spaces; and,
- projects that increase school-age space creation, including a new application stream for BC School Boards creating new spaces under the School Age Care on School Grounds license category type.

Given this shifting landscape, and the Ministry's increased involvement in helping to realize much needed child care spaces, renewing the Child Care Protocol could help ensure child care needs and opportunities are kept front of mind, and creative solutions are found. It will also better position child care applications for funding.

Development of the Protocol

Initiating the renewal of the Child Care Protocol will require a formal commitment from the School District to participate in collaboration with the City. As such, staff is first seeking Council direction to forward a letter to the School District inviting them to jointly renew the Child Care Protocol.

Should the School District agree, City staff in the Community Planning section would seek to work directly with the new School District Manager of Early Learning and Child Care, a position created to support the Ministry's expanded child care mandate. Ongoing work on the renewed Child Care Protocol would be coordinated by these staff, while strategic check-ins with respective senior staff would be facilitated through the Joint New Westminster Schools and City of New Westminster Working Group. The next joint meeting is anticipated in February 2023, at which time an update on the Child Care Protocol, if the School District agrees to participate, would be provided.

Internally, Community Planning staff would check-in with the City’s Affordable Housing and Child Care Advisory Committee and corresponding Task Force on a regular basis with regard to the renewal of the Child Care Protocol.

To further inform the renewal of the Child Care Protocol, staff would conduct a municipal best practice review of municipalities in the region that have standing Child Care Protocols with their respective School Districts.

Key Elements of the Child Care Protocol

The rationale for a renewed Child Care Protocol would be to reestablish a commitment between the City and School District towards collaborative planning, efficient use of resources, and responsiveness to community needs, related to licensed child care spaces within their control. Key pillars to be reflected in the renewed Child Care Protocol could include:

- that the City continue to develop needs assessments and strategies; provide civic child care grants; coordinate rezoning applications in support of child care; and prioritize permits for child care spaces on school sites;
- that the School District document and communicate child care needs based on enrollment projections related to school age children;
- that existing child care spaces within City and School District control are secured and maintained, including the provision of affordable and sustainable lease arrangements;
- that new spaces within City and School District control are planned for and realized, including those arising from the construction of new or renovated civic facilities and schools;
- that the City and School District identify, communicate and apply for senior government funding opportunities and grants to their full potential; and
- that the City and School District, through the protocol, communicate the importance of quality, accessible and affordable licensed child care.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications related to developing the protocol, other than staff resources. The work would be led by the Community Planning section of the Climate Action, Planning and Development Department, and, if approved, the Supervisor for this section will prioritize this work, which may have implications for other work program items. Regarding any financial implications arising from completion of the protocol, and possible adoption by both organizations, City staff will seek Council approval for any child care grants or initiatives requiring City funding.

INTERDEPARTMENTAL LIAISON

If approved, the Community Planning section of the Climate Action, Planning and Development Department would work closely with other City Departments and Divisions, including Civic Buildings and Properties and Parks and Recreation. Community Planning staff would also work closely with the new School District Manager of Early Learning and Child Care.

OPTIONS

The following options are presented for Council’s consideration:

- 1. That Council direct staff to forward a letter to New Westminster Schools District No.40 formally inviting them to jointly develop a new Child Care Protocol between the City of New Westminster and the School District.
- 2. That Council provide staff with other direction.

Staff recommends Option 1.

ATTACHMENTS

- Attachment 1: 2009 Child Care Protocol and Report to Council
- Attachment 2: City and School District Collaboration Related to Child Care

APPROVALS

This report was prepared by:
Anur Mehdic, Social Planner

This report was reviewed by:
John Stark, Supervisor of Community Planning

This report was approved by:
Jackie Teed, Acting Director of Climate Action, Planning and Development
Lisa Spitale, Chief Administrative Officer

Attachment 1

2009 Child Care Protocol and Report to Council

REPORT

DEVELOPMENT SERVICES DEPARTMENT

To: Mayor W. Wright and Members of Council in Committee of the Whole Date: November 9, 2009

From: Lisa Spitale, Director of Development Services File: #118448

Subject: Child Care Protocol between the City of New Westminster and School District #40

RECOMMENDATION

That Council endorse the Child Care Protocol as attached in this report.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to seek Council's endorsement of the Child Care Protocol between the City of New Westminster and School District #40 (see attachment #1). This protocol will be presented by District staff to the School Board for its endorsement. If both parties endorse the protocol, then it will set a framework for closer collaboration.

SUMMARY

Quality, accessible and affordable child care produces significant social and economic benefits for New Westminster. From the City's perspective, child care enables parents to work and contribute to the local economy. It is also a major factor in the location and relocation decisions of families and businesses. From the School District's perspective, child care enables children to develop in all areas of child development and it facilitates school readiness and success.

This child care protocol recognizes that both the City and the School District have much to gain from working together to maintain existing and to develop new child care spaces within their collective control. In fact, this protocol is timely, given the development of three new schools in New Westminster and the possible development of an ECD Hub as

part of the expansion to the Queensborough Community Centre. It also builds upon the work of the ECD Public Partners' Committee, in which the City and School District are both signatories to the Memorandum of Understanding.

BACKGROUND

The City and the School District do not operate child care spaces. Instead, they provide space and land to non-profit operators to provide licensed child care.

The City offers long-term, low-lease space to Queen's Park Preschool at the Centennial Lodge. On October 6, 2008, Council endorsed in principle a preliminary concept plan for an ECD Hub as part of the expansion to the Queensborough Community Centre. As proposed, this hub would include a licensed child care operation with close to 60 spaces. On February 16, 2009, Council endorsed in principle the Child Care Strategy for New Westminster, which among a number of recommendations, including the following:

- That a review of City-owned lands/buildings be conducted to identify and inventory sites/spaces that could reasonably accommodate child care facilities/programs.
- That consideration be given to building or incorporating space for child care facilities as part of the development of new municipal facilities and/or the major renovation to existing ones.

As such, while the City currently plays a very limited role with regard to the provision of space and land for child care purposes, it does foresee an expanded role in the future.

The School District leases space to Westminster Children's After School Society, which, in turn, operates 240 school age (before and after school) care spaces. It also provides land to the Lower Mainland Purpose Society, which, in turn, operates 36 group child care spaces. As such, the School District plays a major role in the provision of space and land for child care purposes.

Recently, the City and the School District have jointly worked on a proposal under the Province's Neighbourhoods of Learning Project. This proposal calls for group daycare facilities in all three schools and school age care in the elementary and middle schools, along with an ECD hub as part of the middle school.

EXISTING POLICY/PRACTICE

The Child Care Strategy for New Westminster includes the following recommendation:

- That a Child Care Protocol be developed whereby the City and School District jointly work to stabilize and increase the viability of existing child care programs so that there is no loss in spaces within their collective control and that they plan for and develop new child care spaces on City/School District lands and promote joint use of space.

The City and the School District both sit on the ECD Public Partners' Committee, which also includes Fraser Health, the Ministry of Children and Family Development, and the United Way of the Lower Mainland. In December 2008, all five organizations signed a

Memorandum of Understanding to jointly work towards the development of four ECD hubs serving six neighbourhoods.

On September 29, 2009, the School Board endorsed the City's Child Care Strategy. School District staff are also bringing forth a 'Child Care Services in Schools' report for Board consideration and possible endorsement.

ANALYSIS

The City and School District operate many facilities and are major land owners. In fact, together they lease space and provide land to non-profit child care operators, which, in turn, operate close to 300 licensed spaces. This represents 36.5% of licensed group and school age care spaces in New Westminster. As such, maintaining these existing spaces is critical if progress is to be made to meeting the child care needs of residents of New Westminster.

This number of spaces could increase in the future, given the development of three new schools, which could incorporate licensed group and school age care facilities, and the expansion of the Queensborough Community Centre, which could incorporate an ECD Hub with close to 60 licensed group and school age care spaces. There may be additional opportunities, both as part of existing facilities and lands, and as part of new, expanded or renovated facilities.

As part of the Child Care Needs Assessment, which was endorsed by Council on October 27, 2008, there was support amongst parent child care survey respondents for locating child care facilities within schools and civic facilities. Regarding the former, it was felt that child care supports early learning and child development, while enabling parents to conveniently drop-off siblings of different ages for care and education purposes. As for the latter, it was felt that the co-location of child care facilities with other community and recreation uses, creates enhanced care environments (e.g., access to gymnasiums), while contributing to the development of 'inter-generational' community hubs

As such, the development of a protocol in which the importance of licensed child care is recognized; existing spaces are maintained and stabilized; new spaces are created; and senior government funding is realized, benefits the City, the School District and the community. It also demonstrates a commitment to collaborative planning, efficient use of resources and responsiveness to community needs.

SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

Licensed child care operations within City facilities or on City-owned lands would be expected to cover the costs associated with their ongoing operation, including utility charges; janitorial services; replacement of equipment, furnishings and toys; and general grounds maintenance. They could also be required to make lease or rent payments to offset some of the costs associated with exterior maintenance.

OPTIONS

There are two options for Council's consideration; they are:

Option #1: That Council endorse the Child Care Protocol as included in this report.

Option #2: That Council provide staff with other direction.

Staff recommend option #1.

CONCLUSION

This protocol would facilitate increased collaborative planning for child care purposes between the City and School District. It would also demonstrate the commitment of both parties to maintain and stabilize existing spaces, while working together towards creating new spaces. This collaboration and commitment would be well received by community members and by the senior levels of government, which would assist in grant requests and proposals, including the current one under the Neighbourhoods of Learning Project..

John Stark,
Senior Social Planner

Approved for Presentation to Council

Lisa Spitale,
Director of Development Services

Paul Daminato,
City Administrator

Attachment #1:

Child Care Protocol between the City of New Westminster and School District #40

Purpose:

The City of New Westminster (the City) and School District No. 40 (SD #40) recognize that licensed child care is an essential community-based service and that it makes a significant contribution to the social and economic development of New Westminster. They also recognize that licensed child care is an investment in the future, as quality care is associated with improved child outcomes, including school readiness and success.

For the above reasons and others, the City and SD #40, as major landowners and operators of facilities, agree to work together under this Child Care Protocol to maintain, stabilize and increase the viability of existing licensed child care spaces within their collective control, and to plan for and develop, if feasible, new child care spaces on their collective lands. They also agree to advocate for increased senior government funding to develop a comprehensive child care system. A comprehensive child care system is one that includes the provision of quality programs that are accessible and affordable.

Objectives:

The City and SD #40 agree to work towards the following objectives:

- To maintain the existing number of licensed child care spaces (so that there is no loss of licensed child care spaces as a result of issues within their collective control).
- To stabilize existing child care spaces, including ensuring the provision of adequate, quality space and sustainable lease arrangements.
- To plan for and develop new child care spaces on their collective lands, if feasible, and to promote joint use of space for all types of licensed child care.
- To continue to participate on the Early Childhood Development (ECD) Public Partners' Committee to develop four ECD hubs serving six neighbourhoods in New Westminster.
- To explore opportunities for licensed child care and early childhood development arising from the construction of new schools in New Westminster.
- To increase public awareness of the significant social and economic benefits associated with licensed child care and early childhood development.
- To advocate for increased senior government funding to develop a comprehensive child care system in New Westminster.

Rationale:

Quality, accessible and affordable child care provides significant social and economic benefits for the recipient community. Quality child care has a direct relationship to school readiness and success, parental support, literacy development, poverty reduction, and community engagement. Accessible and affordable child care also enables parents to work and contribute to the local economy; alleviates dependence on income assistance; and is a major factor in the location and relocation decisions of both families and businesses. Research suggests that for every dollar spent on high-quality early childhood development and care, there is a two dollar pay off to society (Cleveland and Krashinsky, 1998).

While the funding and regulation of licensed child care is primarily a Provincial government responsibility, the City, SD #40 and other community shareholders can play an important role in the planning, development, monitoring and coordination of child care.

Although the City and SD #40 do not directly provide licensed child care, they do support non-profit societies and/or associations to deliver quality, accessible and affordable child care within their facilities and on their grounds. They can also work together to create a more focused, comprehensive and integrated approach in supporting existing child care spaces and creating new ones.

Background:

The impetus for this Child Care Protocol came from the City of New Westminster's Child Care Strategy (February 16, 2009). This strategy provides an overall framework and long-term direction with regard to child care in New Westminster. The report recognizes the importance of school-based, licensed child care facilities to meeting the child care needs of parents and students and it recommends the need for more collaborative planning related to child care between the City and SD #40.

The strategy contains the following recommendation:

That a Child Care Protocol be developed whereby the City and SD #40 jointly work to stabilize and increase the viability of existing child care programs so that there is no loss in spaces within their collective control and that they plan for and develop new child care spaces on City/School District lands and promote joint use of space.

On September 29, 2009, the School Board also endorsed the Child Care Strategy.

Regarding moving forward, much of the groundwork has already been laid, as both the City and SD #40 participate on the ECD Public Partners' Committee, along with Fraser Health, the Ministry of Children and Family Development and the United Way of the Lower Mainland. This committee is working to develop four ECD hubs serving six neighbourhoods in New Westminster.

Guiding Principles:

The City and SD #40, under this Child Care Protocol, will be guided by the following principles:

Quality: *Quality child care is child care which supports the child's emotional, intellectual, physical and social development and assists and complements the family in its child-rearing role. Research and experience indicate that the predictors of quality programming include: the existence of and compliance with licensing standards; the provision of specific staff training in child development and early childhood education; the effective administration of the programs; the involvement of parents in the care option of their choice; and the provision of sufficient operating funds and program resources to support care that is developmentally and individually appropriate.*

Accessibility: Accessible child care is child care in which there is appropriate and adequate capacity for all families and children who require it. This means an integrated continuum of services for children from birth to 12 years of age in developmentally appropriate programs for infants, toddlers, preschoolers and elementary school-aged children; the planning, coordination and delivery of child care services at the neighbourhood level; the provision of culturally and linguistically appropriate services; and the development of physically accessible facilities that promote the full inclusion of all children.

Affordability: Affordable child care is child care which provides access to quality care for all families regardless of income. It is adequately funded by senior levels of government and offers subsidies to families to make up the difference between their ability to pay and the actual cost of child care.

Attachment 2

City and School District Collaboration Related to Child Care

City and School District Collaboration Related to Child Care

Year	Project Description
2009	The City and the School District developed and ratified a Child Care Protocol to maintain and stabilize existing spaces and plan and develop new spaces on their collective lands.
2010	<p>The City and the School District jointly submitted an application under the Neighbourhood Learning Centre (NLC) Program. This application resulted in the following community amenities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 74 pre-school age child care spaces • 25 school age child care spaces • Early Childhood Development Hub at Ecole Qayqayt Elementary School • Welcome and Wellness Centres at New Westminster Secondary School
2011/14	The City collaborated on the design and programming of the NLC spaces at both Ecole Qayqayt Elementary and Fraser River Middle Schools.
2015	The City provided \$40,000 to help furnish and equip the pre-school age child care facility at Ecole Qayqayt Elementary School.
2015/2016	<p>The City developed its Child Care Strategy (2016), which incorporates 23 actions in support of “a comprehensive child care system; one that includes the provision of quality programs that are accessible and affordable.”</p> <p>The development of the 2016 Child Care Strategy was informed by the Kids New West Child Care Action Team, which included representation from the School District.</p>
2016	The City provided \$44,000 to relocate, retrofit and operationalize a school portable with up to 25 school age child care spaces at Queensborough Middle School.
2019	The City provided \$136,950 to relocate, retrofit and operationalize two school portables with up to 40 school age care spaces at Queensborough Middle School.
2019	The City provided \$1,200,000 to assist in the construction of a child care facility with 37 pre-school spaces at Richard McBride Elementary School.
2020/2021	The City established the COVID 19 Child Care Working group at the start of the pandemic, where sector representatives, including from the School District, worked together to advise on possible pandemic response efforts related to local child care issues.
2021-2022	The City established the Child Care Working Group Queensborough Sub-Committee, comprised of the City, the School District and Westminster Children’s After School Society (WCAS), which continues to explore options for new group school age care spaces in Queensborough.