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Director of Education:
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October 31, 2023

Hon. Stephen Lecce
Minister of Education
5th Flr, 438 University Ave.
Toronto, ON M5G 2K8
Via email: minister.edu@ontario.ca

Hon. Rob Flack
MPP | Elgin – Middlesex – London
750 Talbot St suite 201
St Thomas, ON N5P 1E2
Via email: Rob.Flack@pc.ola.org

Dear Minister Lecce and Honorable Rob Flack MPP

Thank you for meeting with Vice-Chair Mai, Director Fisher, and myself on October 12, 2023.

You have demonstrated during this meeting and on many other occasions how much you value open conversations with school boards in Ontario. We appreciate your time and hope that the meeting was productive for both of you.

As discussed, I have attached to this letter several documents to help further our conversation.

Attachment 1 - Letter to the City of London Mayor and Council

This letter to Mayor Josh Morgan and City of London Council outlines the significant challenges Thames Valley faces due to the City's current 3-year timeframe for school boards to acquire land for new schools. As a result of this timeframe, which we have asked the City to review, Thames Valley is experiencing situations where a new school is pending approval from the Ministry, as the land acquisition deadline is imminent or expired. Such a case occurred in northwest London.

Attachment 2 - Chart summarizing Thames Valley's major capital activities

I have also attached a chart summarizing Thames Valley's major capital activities. In addition to the challenge outlined above, there are **three main issues that have resulted in construction delays:**

1. Inability to procure land in advance of a capital priorities approval

Thames Valley is not able to purchase land until capital priorities funding is approved. By that time, land may not be available, and our negotiating capabilities are reduced. We are also not able to finalize designs until land is acquired as designs are subject to site/property constraints.

2. Insufficient benchmark funding

Approved benchmark funding is significantly below market value. Consequently, the school board must spend significant time to modify or re-engineer site plans to fit within the approved allocation. For example, such modifications were necessary with the Summerside Public School construction project.

3. Capital Approval Process

Thames Valley appreciates everything the Ministry is doing to streamline the Capital Approval Process. As noted in the attached construction project chart, we are currently awaiting Ministry approvals for the New Northwest London Public School and New Southwest London Public School.

Once again, thank you for your time and consideration. The Board of Trustees looks forward to continuing this important conversation and working together to meet the needs of Thames Valley students and families.

Sincerely,



Lori-Ann Pizzolato
Chair of the Board
Thames Valley District School Board

cc: Mark Fisher, Director Fisher
Trustees
Student Trustees



Chair of the Board

October 23, 2023

Mayor Josh Morgan and London City Council
City of London
300 Dufferin Ave.
London, Ontario
N6B 1Z2

Dear Mayor Morgan and Councillors,

As the 4th largest school board in Ontario, Thames Valley District School Board (TVDSB) serves over 83,000 students. This number is growing rapidly as development intensifies and new families move to area. TVDSB requires many new schools in London to meet the needs of our growing community.

At the September 26, 2023 Board Meeting, TVDSB Trustees passed the following motion:

THAT the Chair write a letter to the City of London Mayor and Council requesting a review of the City's timelines for reserving land for schools in new developments.

The motion followed Trustees' review of TVDSB's submissions to the Ministry of Education's 2023-24 Capital Priorities Program.

School boards rely on the Ministry's Capital Priorities Program to fund the construction of new schools. TVDSB's funding submissions to the Ministry represent the school board's most critical and urgent needs.

The City of London's current 3-year timeframe for school boards to acquire land for new schools poses significant challenges. The Ministry usually gives school boards only one opportunity per year to apply for funding for new schools. The Ministry must approve funding for a new school before TVDSB can acquire land for a school. For the Ministry to approve funding for a new school, students must already live in a new development area.

Consequently, TVDSB is facing situations where a new school is pending approval from the Ministry, as the land acquisition deadline is imminent or expired, as occurred in northwest London. If the school board cannot acquire land for a new school within an appropriate

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We build each student's tomorrow, every day.

timeframe, construction is delayed, and funding may be withdrawn. The school board must then use temporary measures to accommodate students. These measures divide neighborhoods and lengthen commute times for families. They also result in more portable classrooms at existing schools.

On behalf of TVDSB's Board of Trustees, I respectfully request that Council review London's current site acquisition timelines and following collaboration with us, consider adjusting these timelines so that school boards can better meet the growing needs of London families.

Thank you for your time and consideration of this ongoing and critical issue.
Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "L. Pizzolato".

Lori-Ann Pizzolato
Chair of the Board
Thames Valley District School Board

Project	Type	Status	Year of Announcement	Space Template Approvals	Ministry Approval to Proceed (ATP)	Construction	Opening	Land Acquired	Comments
Eagle Heights PS	Addition	Under Construction	2021-2022	Submitted: June 2022 Approved: October 2022	Submitted: January 2023 Approved: April 2023	Award: May 2023 Construction Start: July 2023	Addition to be completed September 2024 Remaining scope interior early winter 2024	N/A	
New Northwest London PS	New School and Childcare	Waiting for ATP Approval	2020-2021	Submitted: September 2022 Approved: September 2022	Submitted: June 2023 Awaiting Ministry Approval	TBD	TBD	October 2022	Site plan consultation was initiated August 2022 to date we still do not have full site plan approvals. Land challenges resulted in delays in moving forward with school: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There were no school blocks available in this area of the City at the time of the approval. • TVDSB commenced a search for a site immediately after approval and entered into discussions with an area developer to acquire a site. Those discussions started in November 2020. • As this was not a school block but a property that was zoned for residential development, planning approvals were required and the City of London was involved in this process. • There was disagreement on valuation and given this as well as the fact that this was not an identified school block, the process took significantly longer. • Notice of Site Acquisition submission was made on July 5, 2022. Ministry approval was issued August 30, 2022. • We closed on the property on October 18, 2022, through a Section 30 agreement under the Expropriations Act and will be submitting final land costs to Ministry shortly as these have recently been resolved with the developer.
New SouthWest London PS	New School and Childcare	Waiting for ATP Approval	2021-2022	Submitted: September 2022 Approved: September 2022	Submitted: June 2023 Awaiting Ministry Approval	TBD	TBD	January 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A school block was available in Southwest London. This was the only school block available at the time. • There was a developer who was willing to sell but there were still some delays due to disagreement regarding valuation. • Notice of Site Acquisition submission was made on September 1, 2022. Ministry approval was issued December 1, 2022. • We closed on the property on January 12, 2023.

Project	Type	Status	Year of Announcement	Space Template Approvals	Ministry Approval to Proceed (ATP)	Construction	Opening	Land Acquired	Comments
New North Woodstock PS	New School and Childcare	Submitting ATP Request	2021-2022	Submitted: October 2022 Approved: December 2022 Scope Change Submitted: March 2023 Scope Change Approved: July 2023	To be submitted week of October 16	TBD	TBD	April 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Only one school block was available for purchase in north Woodstock and there was considerable disagreement with the developer regarding the appraised value. Notice of Site Acquisition submission was made on November 4, 2022. Ministry approval was issued January 18, 2023.
New Belmont PS	New School and Childcare	Design Development Phase	2019-2020	Scope change Submission: October 2022 Scope Change Approval: March 2023 Space Template Submission: April 2023 Space Template Approval: May 2023	TBD	TBD	TBD	July 2023	<p>Land Challenges</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discussions with developer formally commenced in 2019 Capital Priorities approval issued June 2020. TVDSB approached the developer again following approval of the business case. After many months of discussions and good faith negotiation by TVDSB, the developer ultimately refused to sell a school site until their subdivision was approved and registered. Registration of the subdivision has still not occurred to date. Notice of Site Acquisition submission was made on April 29, 2022. Ministry approval was issued June 28, 2022. This is proceeding as an expropriation. A series of procedural steps were undertaken in the subsequent months in accordance with the timelines prescribed by the Expropriations Act. Expropriation Plan was deposited at the Land Registry Office on April 6, 2023, which vested the property in the TVDSB. Possession of the school site was obtained on July 31, 2023, in accordance with the timing as prescribed by the Expropriations Act. <p>Site Servicing Challenges</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> As the developer has not moved forward with servicing the development, we are looking at interim alternative servicing solutions with the municipality which requires their approval and compliance with Provincial legislation, <i>the Drain Act</i>. Until this is approved at a municipal level, TVDSB cannot proceed with building permits, tenders and/or submit for Ministry capital approvals