

Report to Community and Protective Services Committee

To: Chair and Members
Community and Protective Services Committee

From: Kevin Dickins, Deputy City Manager, Social and Health Development

Subject: Funding and Project Agreement between City of London and the London District Catholic School Board

Date: October 21, 2024

Recommendation

That, on the recommendation of the Deputy City Manager, Social and Health Development, the following actions **BE TAKEN** that:

- a) The attached proposed by-law attached as (Appendix “A”) **BE INTRODUCED** at the Municipal Council meeting on November 5, 2024, to:
 - i. Authorize and Approve the Funding and Project Agreement (the “Agreement”) between The Corporation of the City of London and London Catholic District School Board (LDCSB) for the renovation of child care at John Paul II secondary school as attached as Schedule 1 to the proposed by-law;
 - ii. Authorize the Mayor and the City Clerk to execute the Agreement; and
 - iii. Delegate to the Director Child Care and Early Years to act as the City’s representative in administration of the Agreement.
- b) This report **BE RECEIVED** for information.

Executive Summary

The City of London, as the Service System Manager (SSM) of Child Care and Early Years for London and Middlesex, has a responsibility to plan for child care and early years services in the community and expand access to quality, accessible, inclusive child care for families. To support this requirement, the City of London is interested in entering into an agreement with the London District Catholic School Board to renovate and reconfigure an existing, underutilized child care space in John Paul II Catholic Secondary School and capitalize on an affordable opportunity to increase licensed child care spaces for families. This venture supports the City’s directed growth strategy and the Council’s approved *London-Middlesex Child Care and Early Years Service System Plan 2024-2028*.

Linkage to the Corporate Strategic Plan

Strategic Area of Focus: Wellbeing and Safety

Outcome: London is an affordable and supportive community for individuals and families.

Analysis

1.0 Background Information

1.1 Previous Reports Related to this Matter

- London-Middlesex Child Care and Early Years Service System Plan 2024-2028 (CPSC: May 21, 2024)
- Targeted Expansion of Licensed Child Care through the Canada-Wide Early Learning and Child Care Agreement (CPSC: March 21, 2023)
- Supporting More Licensed Childcare Spaces (CPSC: May 31, 2022)

2.0 Discussion and Considerations

2.1 Service System Management of Licensed Child Care and Early Years

The City of London is the designated Consolidated Municipal Service Manager (CMSM) for Child Care and Early Years in London and Middlesex, operating on behalf of the Ministry of Education. The responsibilities and authorities granted to a CMSM are set out in the *Child Care and Early Years Act, 2014* (“CCEYA, 2014”) and include the designation of Service System Manager (SSM) to plan for child care and early years services, provision of fee subsidy, administration of operating funding, system capacity-building, and special needs resourcing for licensed child care. Under the CCEYA, 2014, SSMs are required to implement a council-approved child care and early years plan.

2.2 Expanding Licensed Child Care Spaces

The *London-Middlesex Child Care and Early Years Service System Plan 2024-2028* includes a directed growth strategy to establish 2,889 new licensed child care spaces by 2026 in London and Middlesex, under the *Canada-Wide Early Learning and Child Care Agreement*.

In Spring 2024, the London District Catholic School Board (LDCSB) approached the City with an opportunity to reclaim an unlicensed child care space located within John Paul II Catholic Secondary School and expand the number of licensed spaces the square footage of the facility can accommodate under the CCEYA, 2014.

2.3 Reason for Renovations: Reconfiguration and Viability

The child care was built as part of the school in 1991/1992, when child care inclusion was a requirement of all school builds and was configured for 30 children.

At the invitation of the LDCSB, the City reviewed the unlicensed child care space to assess the practicality of reopening it to expand access to licensed child care. Upon review, it was determined that the existing configuration of rooms did not allow for the maximum number of children in each classroom and would require an inefficient staffing model under the requirements of the CCEYA, 2014, which prescribes child to staff ratios. These inefficiencies make it challenging to secure a child care operator as it reduces financial viability.

The proposed Funding and Project Agreement supports maximizing the number of licensed child care spaces in the centre at 45 spaces, in compliance with the CCEYA, 2014.

The work is anticipated to begin in 2024 and be completed in 2025.

2.4 Alignment with London-Middlesex Service System Plan 2024-2028

Under the *London-Middlesex Child Care and Early Years Service System Plan 2024-2028*, the City outlines a plan for Directed Growth that supports priority populations in the expansion of licensed child care under the *Canada-Wide Child Care and Early Years Agreement*. The location of this centre aligns with the priorities identified in the plan, increasing access to child care in a high-needs area and providing significant relief to families paying for licensed child care.

Under the Funding and Project Agreement, the City will provide advice to the Board on the priority populations criteria, to inform its selection of an operator who will be able to fulfill the requirements for a CWELCC funding agreement with the City.

To support the growth of licensed child care spaces, the child care workforce also needs to expand. As part of the Service System Plan’s workforce strategy, targeted outreach to high school guidance counsellors has been completed to engage high school students in

exploring a career in early childhood education. The operation of a child care centre within a high school setting provides additional opportunities for learning and partnerships with the LDCSB to support awareness and consideration of the child care and early learning profession.

3.0 Financial Impact/Considerations

3.1 Budget and Risk

The total cost of this project is estimated at \$630,000 inclusive, which will be covered through the 2024 Child Care and Early Years operating budget. There is no anticipated budgetary impact for this expansion. Additionally, the cost per space is lower than the provincial benchmark for renovations and therefore represents an efficient use of funds.

Through the Agreement, the City and LDCSB will review any tenders exceeding \$630,000. If the tendered project exceeds this amount, the City has the right to refuse to proceed with the Project.

The LDCSB has a history of completing projects on time and within budgets through previous project and funding agreements between LDCSB and the City. Should there be any unused funds in relation to this project, the LDCSB shall return all unexpended funds to the City.

3.2 Role of the London District Catholic School Board (LDCSB)

The existing space was originally funded by the Province of Ontario as part of the original construction of John Paul II Catholic Secondary School in 1991/1992. LDCSB will provide the facility and the land for the child care centre in the school, and will contract through its existing procurement and tendering processes qualified candidates for all aspects of design, construction and operation of the child care. LDCSB has significant experience in renovation and construction projects, including construction of child care and Family Centres through agreements with the City. The LDCSB has existing systems in place to ensure efficient use of resources to achieve high quality construction within budget.

Conclusion

The London District Catholic School Board (LDCSB) is a valuable collaborator in creating opportunities to include licensed child care within its facilities. The Funding and Project Agreement supports the much-needed expansion of licensed child care in London and aligns with the Council-approved *London-Middlesex Child Care and Early Years Service System Plan 2024-2028* for directed growth.

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Recommended by: Kevin Dickins, Deputy City Manager, Social and Health Development