

Let's demolish North, sell off valuable land

I am writing to suggest an alternative solution to Community High School District 99's dilemma concerning the land that we bought in Woodridge for a third high school.

We own three properties intended for use as high schools: Downers Grove North High School, Downers Grove South High School and undeveloped land in Woodridge at Center Drive. Our District 99 School Board has studied the issue and announced that we only need two of the three sites. The board decided in April to sell one of the properties to fund capital improvements, stating "District 99 must make a decision that maximizes its revenue stream in order to provide the best educational programs for all the students it serves."

But if the board wants to maximize revenue, it would be grossly incompetent to sell the least valuable of the three properties. To maximize revenue, we need to sell the property with the highest value, and everyone knows that property values in Downers Grove are much higher than those in Woodridge. This is an indisputable fact.

Downers Grove North High School is sitting on land that is far too valuable for public use. I propose that we build a new high school in Woodridge and pay for it by demolishing Downers Grove North and selling the land.

Of course, when we sell the Downers Grove North land, it is District 99 policy to ignore the current zoning, the interests of those living nearby, and all previous agreements and understandings regarding the property. My very conservative estimate is that we could get \$109.75 million for the site, perhaps for subsidized low-income housing or a Wal-Mart Super Center.

That is more than enough to build a new, state-of-the-art high school in Woodridge. Let's do it for all the children of the district.

Craig Kraus

Woodridge