



New housing and re-opening of Burnside school envisioned under new partnership

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For Immediate Release

VICTORIA, BC — The City of Victoria, Greater Victoria School District #61 and Pacifica Housing Society have signed a memorandum of understanding to bring a new affordable rental housing development to the former Burnside School site. The 88-unit development is geared toward moderate-income families with 2 and 3 bedroom units and will include new childcare spaces and programming space for the neighbourhood.

Under the agreement, the City would lease the adjacent land to the north of the Burnside school to Pacifica Housing for a 60-year period at nominal rates initially. The agreement is subject to Pacifica Housing both securing funding and bringing the project through the public consultation and development process.

The School District would complete the seismic upgrade of the Burnside building. The historical school will re-open as the Burnside Education Centre and will house the students and staff that are currently located at S.J. Willis. The building upgrades will include new modern learning spaces and outdoor spaces for students.

The goal of this partnership is to provide a wide range of benefits to the Burnside neighbourhood including new housing, community spaces, childcare services, activation of the site and the revitalization of the Burnside School (built 1912/13). The plan includes underground parking to help maximize public green space and limit impacts to street parking.

The plan fits with the recently completed neighbourhood plan, which envisions the site as a catalyst for the creation of a new urban village at the Jutland and Cecelia Road intersection, with public uses, community space, public greenspace and affordable housing. The site is conveniently located near the Burnside Community Centre, Cecelia Ravine Park and the Galloping Goose Regional Trail and provides good access transit, shops and services.

Quotes

Rob Fleming, Minister of Education, Province of British Columbia

"This affordable, family friendly development is excellent news for the Burnside Gorge community. I am thrilled to see it moving forward with our non-profit housing partners. It's a great example of what we can achieve when we come together with neighbourhood priorities at the heart of decision making. Our government is committed to make life more affordable for working families in the capital region and across B.C. and that's why we're investing in new affordable housing projects like this."

Mayor Lisa Helps, City of Victoria

"This unprecedented three-way collaboration will provide benefits including much needed family housing and childcare spaces as well as community development opportunities. In addition to supporting the 2016-2025 Victoria Housing Strategy, this proposed development is a great first step toward creating a walkable urban village at the Cecelia and Jutland Roads intersection as envisioned in the neighbourhood plan."

Edith Loring-Kuhanga, Board Chair, Greater Victoria School District

"We are elated about this innovative partnership that will see the preservation and reinvigoration of the Burnside school and the community. The Board of Education strongly believes our schools strengthen communities and having the opportunity to create a neighbourhood hub with amenities for families, young children and learners is the first step to building a healthy, sustainable and prosperous community."

Dean Fortin, Executive Director, Pacifica Housing Society

“Pacifica is excited to be enhancing the Burnside Gorge Community, with affordable market housing for families, child care facilities and renewed public space. We listened to what the residents wanted in the local area plan process, and are pleased to deliver on their aspirations for their neighbourhood.”

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For More Information:

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