

Tuesday, November 26, 2019

## Greater Victoria School District Approves Land Disposal

**Victoria, B.C.** – The Greater Victoria School District approved the disposition of land to fund its share for the Victoria High School Seismic Upgrade Project through the exchange and lease of land that is surplus to future educational needs. The decision was made at last night’s board meeting as a result of input received from the community, including all the input collected at the November 12, 2019 open house.

“The community and the Board agreed that retaining heritage values was a key part of the Victoria High Seismic Upgrade Project, however, by choosing the most expensive option, it left us with a shortfall,” said Board Chair Jordan Watters. “We came up with an innovative solution with our partners that allows us to pay for our share of the upgrade, increase capacity for 200 more students, and add additional amenities. It also benefits the community by allowing our partners to build much-needed affordable housing. This arrangement demonstrates that when local governments work together to solve problems, the community benefits.”

The Board has advanced the following arrangements subject to concluding negotiation, Ministry approval, and City of Victoria zoning approval:

- The District and City of Victoria will exchange lands that are surplus to the District’s future educational needs in return for land closer to the school
- The District will lease 2.15 acres of that land to the Capital Regional Housing Corporation for the purpose of affordable housing by developing the Caledonia Project
- The lease will be for 60 years
- The lease payment of \$4.1 – \$4.5 million will pay for the seismic upgrade shortfall of \$2.6 million and amenity enhancements at Victoria High.

Following extensive public consultation in 2018, the Board of Education approved the ‘Seismic Plus Enhancements (1000) Plus NLC’ option to be submitted to the Ministry for approval, which includes:

- 200 additional seats for future enrolment (1000 seats)
- Improved school amenities
- Neighbourhood Learning Centre
- Major upgrade to S.J. Willis Education Centre

For additional background information on the seismic upgrade and consultation process:

[www.sd61.bc.ca/news-events/community/vic-high-planning-for-the-future/](http://www.sd61.bc.ca/news-events/community/vic-high-planning-for-the-future/)

Last June, the Ministry of Education approved \$77.1 million in funding for the ‘Seismic Plus Enhancements (1000) Plus NLC option’, which left a shortfall of \$2.6 million. The Board and District

explored a number of alternatives, including selling the land to a private buyer and using contingency funding. The land exchange and lease provided the most benefits to the District long-term.

“Now that the Board’s intentions are clear, we look forward to consulting with the community about what types of amenities it wants to see at Victoria High,” said Superintendent Shelley Green. “We’ll be issuing a survey to get that input between December and the new year so we can go forward and plan our new school. Our goal is to have students relocate to the S.J. Willis Education Centre for fall 2020, then get them back in the upgraded school for fall 2022.”

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**For more information, please contact:**

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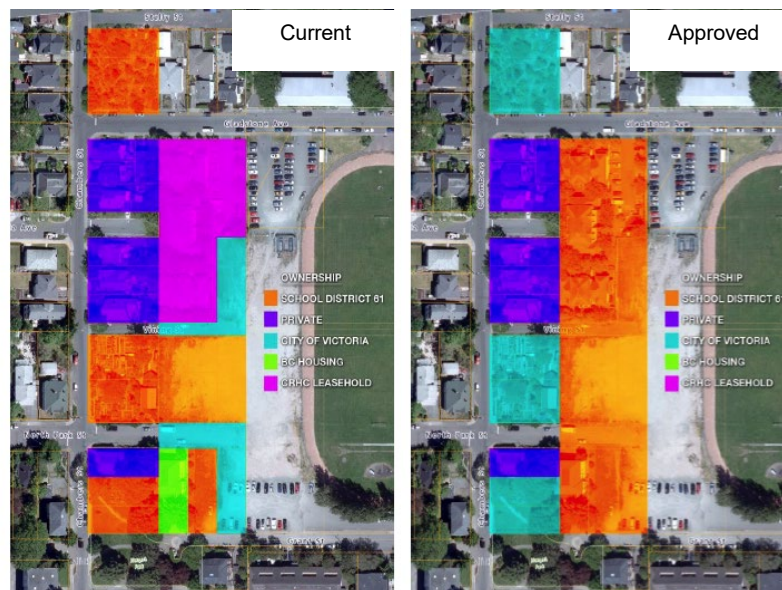
## Victoria High Land Exchange and Lease – Factsheet

The following land transactions are advanced by the Board of Education:

- Disposal of 2.34 acres of land
- The District will transfer ownership of the following lands to the City of Victoria
  - The Compost Education Centre
  - Spring Ridge Commons land
  - Lands adjacent to Haegart Park
- City of Victoria will transfer two lots and two road closures to the District
- City of Victoria commits to maintain the green spaces in its master plan
- BC Housing will transfer Tonto Rosette to the District
- The District will lease the newly assembled lands to the Capital Regional Housing Corporation for 60 years for \$4.1 – \$4.5 million.

Benefits of the Victoria High Seismic Upgrade Project and land exchange and lease arrangement include:

- Providing funds to pay for additional amenities at Victoria High
- Adding additional capacity for up to 200 students, meeting future needs
- Supporting the District’s Long Term Facilities Plan
- Supporting partner relationships, allowing the City of Victoria, BC Housing and the Capital Regional Housing Corporation to provide much-needed affordable housing to citizens of the community by developing the Caledonia Project
- Maintaining community green space
- Coordinating land into a contiguous land assembly, adding value to the land



Current and Approved Land Arrangement