

VICTORIA HIGH LANDS CONSULTATION - FAQ GREATER VICTORIA SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 61

November 8, 2019

Purpose:

This FAQ is intended to provide general background information about the land holdings of the School District at around Victoria High. This document will live on the District website and will continue to be updated to provide additional information and answer any further questions that may arise.

1. Is the Board considering disposing of lands at Vic High?

Yes, the District is proposing to exchange lands with the City of Victoria and then lease lands to the Capital Regional District (CRD) as an expansion to the current lands leased to the CRD.

2. What lands are subject to the potential disposition?

The District is proposing to trade the Springridge Commons Site, the Compost Education Site and two lots adjacent to Haegart Park to the City that would remain in their current form. The District would acquire all of the lands that were previously under the Ferrie Technical Building and those that are currently gravel. Presently, some of the titles in that area remain under the ownership of the City of Victoria and BC Housing. These lands would be consolidated with the lands currently leased by the CRD. The consolidated lands would then be leased for 60 years to the CRD. In addition, an eight metre easement would be granted to the CRD to create a public path and buffer between the school and the housing development.

3. Why is the District considering disposition?

The District went through a public consultation process on the future of Victoria High last year, as a result of our anticipate seismic project. The community was overwhelming in its support to maintain the heritage building rather than the Board building a new school at a lower cost. The District is also seeking to expand capacity at the school. As a result of choosing a higher cost seismic option and the desire to create additional capacity, the Board is expected to contribute funds above and beyond what will be received from the Ministry of Education for the project. Additionally, these lands remain surplus to the needs of the school and are well suited to the expansion of the CRD's existing affordable housing at the site. Supporting housing is also part of the district's facilities plan.

4. Has the land already changed hands?

No, the District, CRD and City all have their own processes to occur prior to any disposition. The District specifically must follow Policy and Regulation 7110 <https://www.sd61.bc.ca/our-district/documents/name/regulation-7110-disposal-of-real-property/> which includes consultation as well as information that the District must provide as follows:

- reasons for sale of the property.
- use of the proceeds of disposal.
- projected enrolment in the District.
- impact on District education programs.
- impact on community use of school buildings.

5. Why has the District not yet consulted when the concept was announced in fall of 2018?

The District does not yet have formal confirmation of the approval of the Victoria High project from the Ministry and therefore does not have confirmation of its expected contribution to the project. Without knowing our expected contribution consultation would be premature for two reasons:

1. We would be unable to fully answer the anticipated proceeds of the disposal; and
2. We would be unable to fully answer the potential impact on community and educational programs, in the event that funds would be left over, to enhance school and community amenities after our contribution to the main project was spent.

We were hopeful that we would have project approval by this point but given the complexity and cost of Victoria High—one of the largest school seismic projects in BC history—the approval process has been longer than anticipated.

6. When will you consult?

We anticipate word on the Victoria High project from the Ministry of Education by the end of June. We intend to meet with the community in a publicly advertised meeting on June 20 at 7 p.m. We note, that we are unlikely to know whether the project is approved by the date of the meeting but given timelines we do not want to wait any longer on consultation.

7. How can the CRD proceed to their own consultation without owning the land?

The CRD has the authorization to start the appropriate zoning processes based on authorization of the District. Any final deal is subject to the Board's final approval and the Ministry of Education providing approval after consultation.

8. What will the Board's consultation look like?

As noted above, the focus of the Board's process will be to provide the information in question 5. With respect to density, those issues would be dealt with through zoning and any other municipal process.

9. Given that the project is still not approved can the process be delayed?

Unfortunately, we do not feel that the process can be delayed. Given that the District will be required to fund part of the project we will need to be in the position to understand if we have the funds from potential land disposition sooner rather than later. In the event that the Caledonia project does not proceed due to CRD, City or District consultation process, the District will need to find an alternative source of funds to support Victoria High.