

# **CEDAR HILL MIDDLE SCHOOL BACKGROUNDER GREATER VICTORIA SCHOOL DISTRICT**

June 24, 2022

## **Introduction**

There have been some changes and refinements to the proposed Cedar Hill Middle Replacement School plans after carefully considering the input from the community and responding to escalating costs.

To help the public understand where we are in the process and the latest site proposal, we have put this backgrounder together. We hope this provides clarity and answers any potential questions the public may have.

## **What has changed?**

### ***Cost Escalation***

In recent months the construction industry in British Columbia has seen unprecedented levels of escalation. Some estimations cite 1.2 to 1.3% per month. Due to supply chain issues many general contractors and subtrades are seeing price increases. They are also adding larger risk amounts to their bids to cover their potential risks or losses. This is a global issue which is impacting BC. On top of that, BC is seeing a shortage of skilled trades which is contributing to an increase in labour costs. We do not know if this trend will continue through to the tender period, or if there will be some relief. Prices in construction may continue to rise, or they may stabilize, but they are unlikely to come down. The quantity surveyor is therefore including an amount for future escalation in addition to current escalation in their latest cost estimate.

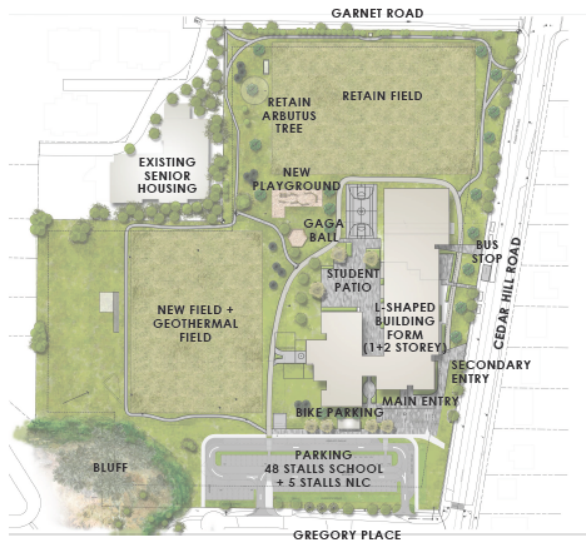
The Ministry of Education is facing similar issues on all projects currently and therefore does not have any additional funds to offer. As a result, the School District and design team have had to return to the drawing board and design the most efficient footprint possible to ensure the project is not deferred while still delivering a safe and progressive learning environment. At the previous open house, the School District showed an L-shaped footprint and a combination of one and two storey building. The updated design is now a two storey building with a tighter rectangular footprint. The design continues to reflect all of the community priorities outlined in the engagement process. The design team and School District staff remain committed to providing the community with a school that is safe, improves learning opportunities and meets the community's goals of: inclusivity, comfort, flexible teaching spaces, diverse informal learning spaces, student led learning, student exploration of diverse topics and disciplines, cross-disciplinary teaching, environmental stewardship, and connections with the outdoors/nature. The display boards at the upcoming open house will list each of the design drivers and how they continue to be met in the current design.

### ***Site Plans***

In March 2022, the School District hosted an open house with KMBR, the architectural firm obtained to design the new school. At this open house, a proposed site plan featuring an L-shaped footprint was proposed. The area of the site has now been reduced in order to reduce the costs of offsite improvements.

The City has ambitious goals for sidewalk, road, and bike path improvements surrounding the site and are requiring the School District to fund and construct these improvements along with the new school. The School District has noted that they do not have sufficient funds for what the municipality is requesting. The two parties have had several meetings to try to reach a satisfactory compromise. The result of this is that the School District is reducing the area of the site that is being redeveloped. The site is made up of numerous lots. The School District is opting to leave the lot on the North side unchanged and four small lots in the SW corner unchanged to avoid the need to provide offsite road improvements on those frontages. A new bike path along Cedar Hill Road will therefore extend from the SE corner at Cedar Hill and Gregory Place 2/3 of the way up the block ending near the bus stop south of Garnet.

Please see image below for comparisons.



PREVIOUS SITE PLAN



UPDATED SITE PLAN

## Outdoor

The area of site being redeveloped has decreased. The field at the north end of the site will be left more or less untouched. This was supported by the community during the engagement process. Parents and neighbours were keen to see this field left for student and community use during construction. The student patio, bike parking, gaga ball, playground, and second field have been retained. The new basketball/tennis courts have been deleted but could be installed in future if needed.

## Neighbourhood Learning Centre (NLC)

Due to record high escalation, the project budget, set out in the funding agreement, was no longer sufficient to cover the cost of construction. Given that most Ministry of Education projects are currently facing similar issues, the Ministry approved for the square footage of the Neighbourhood Learning Centre (NLC) to be eliminated from the design and the funds reallocated toward construction of the school space. The area of the school itself remain unchanged at 5383 sm for a 575 student population. The community kitchen, community multipurpose space, and additional area for enhanced community gymnasium have been deleted. However, the gymnasium remains a full sized middle school gym at 600 sm, there is still a student multipurpose space (namely the Student Commons) at the heart of the school, and an Indigenous Welcome Space associated with the Library Learning Commons, also at the heart of the school. The teaching spaces have not been affected by these changes.

The overall impact from a functional perspective is that the Community will no longer be able to use the school during school hours and the gym, though still suitable for school and extracurricular sports, is less likely to host tournaments. The parking has also been reduced by five stalls to 48 stalls total as those additional five stalls were previously provided for community use of the NLC multipurpose room during school hours.

## Schedule

The schedule has been affected by the additional value engineering exercise and footprint redesign required by the Ministry. It was further impacted by the requirements of the City related to heritage and offsite improvements. Lastly,

the time cannot be made up due to the City's current timelines for permit processing. Therefore, the schedule has been adjusted to reflect these, and to allow move-in in the summer months.

The school was originally planned to open in Spring 2025 with students moving in over Spring Break. The school is now scheduled to be completed by Spring 2025 and will welcome students for September 2025.

### ***Net Zero***

The design remains focused on achieving Net Zero Ready status. The province's regulatory framework will not allow the School District to install the full number of PV panels required to achieve strict Net Zero status. However, the facility is designed to allow expansion to the full array of panels in future. The Net Zero Ready target for the project remains unchanged. The design team recognizes that this is a high priority for the community, the School District, and the Board.

### **Other Key Considerations**

Since the last open house, consultation with the school community has continued as design plans advance. Throughout this process, the School District has remained committed to engaging and listening to the needs of the students, school administration and school staff.

The School District wishes to remain transparent in its process and share additional information and context about the current proposed school design.

### ***Shops/Robotics***

- An Applied Design, Skills and Technology (ADST) space is being provided in the new school design. This decision was made by the Core Committee and communicated to the Board in Spring 2022, prior to the design budget review.
- In the visioning and programming engagement process, the School District heard repeatedly from students, parents, and teachers that the new school should support student exploration and hands on learning, as well as more opportunities and spaces that support STEM.
- The new BC curriculum seeks to provide increased opportunities for hands-on-learning, interdisciplinary teaching, and flexibility to allow for teaching and curricular topics to change and expand over time. The Ministry funds ADST spaces for 10 subject matters in middle schools. A traditional wood shop is one of them, but ADST spaces can also support learning curriculum in other applied design technologies such as robotics, engineering, graphic design, etc. The decision was taken at the School District level to be forward looking with their ADST space and recognize that students are asking for robotics and engineering opportunities, and that there is an opportunity here for this space to go beyond a traditional wood shop.
- The new ADST shop will be geared toward robotics and engineering and will include 3D printing, wood and metal hand tools, etc. Staff have enquired about providing the equipment for a full woodshop on top of the flexible ADST space. However, due to the project's budget constraints and net zero targets this is not feasible without an additional source of funding.