

Tuesday, November 22, 2022

Victoria High seismic construction project extended four months; new occupancy date January 2024

VICTORIA, BC – Students will return to a seismically upgraded and expanded Victoria High School in January 2024. Due to a heated construction market that has led to delays in materials and labour shortages, the occupancy date for the school has changed from September 2023 to January 2024.

Unexpected site and building conditions due to the age of the school have also led to additional renovation and upgrades throughout the project.

“Given that the school is over 100 years old, this project has been very complex. Since construction started in 2020, there have been several challenges along the way, including the requirement of additional temporary supports for construction and market pressures on resources and labour availability that arose with the pandemic,” said Superintendent Deb Whitten. “We anticipate the construction to be completed by Fall 2023. However, we must allow an appropriate amount of time to facilitate a successful transition for staff that will not be disruptive to student learning. As a result, the move will be facilitated during the winter break to set all staff and students up for a successful start-up in the seismically upgraded school.”

The Province is providing \$77.1 million for the seismic improvements, a 200-seat expansion and preservation of the iconic landmark located at 1260 Grant St. The School District is contributing \$2.6 million to the capital project. Exterior elements, such as terracotta, granite and brick masonry, are being retained. Interior features, including the marble and stained glass in the main entrance and lobby, and the painted wooden panels and stained glass in the auditorium, are also being preserved. In addition, there will be an updated heritage corridor.

Other improvements include new windows and floors, including gymnasium floors. There will be updates to the stage in the auditorium along with a new multi-purpose room, heating system, library commons area, and environmentally friendly lighting throughout the school.

Outside there will be 78 new trees planted, including Dogwoods, Eastern Redbuds, English and Red Oak and Galaxy Magnolias. An observatory deck will be part of the new build, along with improved lighting for the building and the field. The site plan also includes additional bike parking and more accessible pathways to the school to encourage active transportation. A new turf field and sand volleyball courts will also be added to the school property.

For more information, please review the site plan: <https://www.sd61.bc.ca/news-events/seismic-projects/>

Victoria High students are currently relocated at the former SJ Willis school site at 923 Topaz Avenue. The Fairey Technology wing at Vic High remains open with students transported between the two locations for trades programming, which includes autobody, auto tech, electrical, woodwork, metalwork, and metal art jewelry.

Staff and students will transition into the seismically safe school in January 2024.

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