

POLICY C583A UPDATE - HENDERSON ESTATES AND LEGER

Recommendation

That Executive Committee recommend to City Council:

That Policy C583A - Developing Surplus School Sites be updated to:

1. remove Henderson Estates from the list of applicable surplus school sites; and
2. add Leger to the list of applicable surplus school sites.

Requested Action		Council decision required	
ConnectEdmonton's Guiding Principle		ConnectEdmonton Strategic Goals	
CONNECTED This unifies our work to achieve our strategic goals.		Healthy City	
City Plan Values	BELONG		
City Plan Big City Move(s)	Inclusive and compassionate	Relationship to Council's Strategic Priorities	Community safety and well-being
Corporate Business Plan	Transforming for the future		
Council Policy, Program or Project Relationships	A short list of the most relevant items, including but not limited to: <ul style="list-style-type: none">Policy C583A Developing Surplus Schools SitesAffordable Housing StrategyJoint Use Agreement		
Related Council Discussions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">N/A		

Executive Summary

- The Henderson Estates surplus school site is allocated for affordable housing use in alignment with Policy C583A Developing Surplus School Sites.
- The City owns the Leger school site but allocated the site to Conseil scolaire Centre-Nord (CSCN) for school use in alignment with the Joint Use Agreement.

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- The City of Edmonton and the CSCN would like to exchange interests in the Henderson Estates surplus school site and Leger school site.
- This exchange would allow the City to develop a more dense affordable housing development on the Leger site and CSCN to develop a francophone school on the Henderson Estates site.
- Council approval is required to remove Henderson Estates from the list of surplus school sites in Policy C583A which will then allow the exchange to occur. There would be no change to the intention in the policy's Statement or to its Guiding Principles.
- If this recommendation is not approved, Administration will advance Henderson Estates as an affordable housing development in alignment with Policy C583A and CSCN could consider its interest in developing a school site on the Leger site.

REPORT

Policy C583A Developing Surplus School Sites (Attachment 1) was updated on December 12, 2023 and is intended to guide the development of surplus school sites. The policy contains a list of fourteen surplus school sites the policy applies to, including Henderson Estates.

The Henderson Estates site (Attachment 2) was one of 20 school sites declared surplus in 2009 by the Edmonton Public School Board (EPSB). In 2010, the site was identified for residential development. In 2015, the original Policy C583 was created, further refining the site's use to affordable housing.

The Leger school site (Attachment 3) is located in the Bryan Anderson Athletic Grounds at 2010 Leger Road NW, southwest of the Booster Juice Recreation Centre in Terwillegar. EPSB declared the site surplus in 2024. That same year, the CSCN claimed it in alignment with the process outlined in the Joint Use Agreement: Land (JUA: Land).

The JUA: Land is an agreement between the City of Edmonton, EPSB, CSCN and the Edmonton Catholic School District (ECSD). It outlines how the partners plan, assemble, develop and dispose of school sites and associated fields. Schedule B of the JUA: Land contains all assembled school sites on reserve land allocated for school use. The Leger school site is included on this list (circled in red on page six of Attachment 4). Schedule B has not been updated since Leger was declared surplus by EPSB and claimed by CSCN which is why it is currently identified on the list as being allocated to EPSB. It is important to note while the Leger site is identified for use as a school, it is owned by the City of Edmonton.

Land Exchange

The Leger school site is ideally located for an affordable housing development. It is near schools, a recreation centre, mass transit, a future library and a short distance from commercial developments that include grocery stores. Relative to the Henderson Estates site, the Leger site would allow for a larger, more dense affordable housing development based on available site area and context. The Leger site is more costly to service; however, due to the higher number of units it will yield, it has a lower per door servicing cost. Attachment 5 outlines the comparison of the two sites.

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CSCN Administration has indicated that a school located at Henderson Estates would be preferable to one at Leger. This is largely due to their practice of pairing up bussing for similar age cohorts attending separate public and catholic francophone schools. CSCN believes that Henderson Estates would pair well with another site they recently claimed in the Haddow neighbourhood, located directly south of the Henderson Estates neighbourhood. CSCN has indicated they would like to include both Haddow and Henderson Estates as high capital priorities to the provincial government to take advantage of the Government of Alberta's School Construction Accelerator Program.

The technical review completed for the Leger site found that the current school site and portions of an alternative site are a former gravel pit with poor soil conditions. The study determined that the western portion of the alternate site, shown in Attachment 3, is suitable for a residential development. While an affordable housing development can work around the areas of poor soils in Leger, the large footprint of a school would likely be unable to do the same, resulting in substantially increased school development costs. The Henderson Estates site has more uniform soil conditions than the Leger site and is more suitable for school development.

Generally, the City tries to develop surplus school sites in the approved locations. However, given the increased benefits of the Leger site for affordable housing, the interest of CSCN in the Henderson Estates site, and the willingness of both parties to work together to achieve mutually beneficial outcomes, the City has determined that, in this case, swapping interests in the sites and developing on the alternate site for affordable housing is the better option.

The City of Edmonton and CSCN seek to formally exchange interests in the Leger and Henderson Estates sites. The result of this exchange would be:

- CSCN would be permitted to develop a francophone school on the Henderson Estates site; and
- The City of Edmonton would develop the alternate Leger site for affordable housing, in alignment with Policy C583A.

Process

CSCN Administration supports the exchange and has the delegated authority to exchange interests in the site. CSCN has also obtained the required approval from the Minister of Education to release its interest in the Leger site. The proposed change would require revisions to Schedule B of the JUA: Land to remove the Leger site, add Henderson Estates, and indicate it as being allocated for CSCN. The JUA Steering Committee manages and administers the JUA: Land. A formal request was made to the JUA Steering Committee by City of Edmonton representatives at the November 22, 2024, steering committee meeting. The request was approved by consensus of all parties subject to City Council approval that Henderson Estates can be removed from Policy C583A.

Next Steps

Should Council approve the recommendation in this report to remove Henderson Estates from Policy C583A, the replacement of the Leger site with the Henderson Estates site in Schedule B of the JUA: Land will be implemented and the exchange in interests will be complete. Administration

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would advance development of the Leger site for affordable housing in alignment with the updated Policy C583A.

If this recommendation is not approved, Administration would advance development of the Henderson Estates sites for affordable housing in alignment with Policy C583A.

Budget/Financial Implications

There are no budget implications resulting from the exchange in interest as neither the City nor CSCN will be required to pay money for the exchange and the City owns and will continue to own both sites.

There will be no change to maintenance costs of the sites as the City is responsible for maintaining lands identified for school use until a school is developed and so is already maintaining both sites within current operating budgets. Following the development of a school, the School Board is only responsible for maintaining the school footprint. These responsibilities are outlined in the JUA: Land.

The Leger site will be more expensive to service to bring to a shovel ready state; however, it will allow for a higher density development that will result in a lower per door cost than the Henderson Estates site.

Legal Implications

Normally if a School Board declares a School Site to be surplus the JUA: Land requires that School Site to first be offered for sale to other School Boards, and then to the City.

In this case, since the representatives of the School Boards have indicated their approval for the proposed amendment to the Leger Site's school site status, and that the City legally owns the Leger Site, Administration does not believe that the JUA: Land process for sale of surplus school sites is applicable.

As Administration has the authority to amend the JUA: Land schedule listing the School Sites, completing the removal of the Leger Site from the School Site list and adding the Henderson Estates Site in its place requires no further amendments to the JUA: Land.

Community Insight

No targeted engagement has been undertaken as part of this report or proposed land exchange.

The City is aware that many residents in Henderson Estates strongly oppose the development of an affordable housing site in Henderson Park. There have also been indications that some residents would still not support the development of a school in that location and would prefer the site to function as open space.

The community leagues for Leger and Henderson Estates were notified of this report prior to its publication but no formal engagement has occurred.

GBA+

The City of Edmonton aims to provide people from all backgrounds with the opportunity to live in a safe, comfortable home that they can afford. This project seeks to increase Edmonton's supply

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of housing that is safe, affordable and adequate for those in need by providing shovel-ready land for affordable housing development. According to Statistics Canada, a household is considered to be in "core housing need" if its housing falls below at least one of the adequacy, affordability or suitability standards and it would have to spend 30 per cent or more of its total before-tax income to pay the median rent of alternative local housing that is acceptable (meets all three housing standards).

The affordable housing built on the Leger site will align with the City of Edmonton's goal of building an inclusive city where everyone can enjoy safety, stability, and the opportunity to build a life. That begins with ensuring there are housing options to meet the needs of all Edmontonians in all neighbourhoods.

The first iteration of the JUA was signed in 1959 with EPSB and ECSD. CSCN joined the JUA in 2009 and is seeing substantial growth pressures. Due to it being the youngest school board, it does not have a school presence throughout the city like EPSB and ECSD. Unfortunately, many of its students must travel long distances to attend these schools. CSCN has been claiming reserve sites that the other two boards have been declaring surplus in an attempt to have more schools in more strategic locations. This exchange supports that initiative and would provide more equitable access to francophone education, reduce bus times for children and reduce bussing costs to the school board, making more funds available for education.

Environment and Climate Review

This report was reviewed for environment and climate risks. Based on the review completed no significant interactions with the City's environmental and climate goals were identified within the scope of this report.

Attachments

1. Policy C583A Developing Surplus School Sites
2. Henderson Estates Site Context Map
3. Leger Site Context Map
4. Joint Use Agreement: Land - School Reserve Properties - Schedule B
5. Affordable Housing Site Comparison