

## REALLOCATION OF THE OZERNA SURPLUS SCHOOL SITE FOR SCHOOL USE

### Recommendation

That the April 2, 2025, Financial and Corporate Services report FCS02932, be received for information.

<b>Requested Action</b>	Information only		
<b>ConnectEdmonton's Guiding Principle</b>	<b>ConnectEdmonton Strategic Goals</b>		
<b>CONNECTED</b> This unifies our work to achieve our strategic goals.	<b>Healthy City</b>		
<b>City Plan Values</b>	ACCESS.		
<b>City Plan Big City Move(s)</b>	A rebuildable city	<b>Relationship to Council's Strategic Priorities</b>	15-minute districts
<b>Corporate Business Plan</b>	Serving Edmontonians		
<b>Council Policy, Program or Project Relationships</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Joint Use Agreement</li> <li>School Construction Accelerator Program</li> </ul>		
<b>Related Council Discussions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>N/A</li> </ul>		

### Executive Summary

- The Ozerna school site was declared surplus in 2015 by the school boards and claimed by the City of Edmonton.
- The site is not required for municipal use and is surplus to City needs.

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- Conseil scolaire Centre-Nord (CSCN) have indicated a need for another school site in the northeast for a francophone school and would like access to the Ozerna surplus school site for that purpose.
- This site was recently reconsidered for affordable housing uses, but it was determined that the potential benefits and opportunities to CSCN justified making this site available to them.
- The City has confirmed that its Joint Use Partners do not have an interest in any of the other surplus school sites in the City's inventory.
- Administration will reallocate this site to CSCN for use as a francophone school.

## REPORT

The Ozerna surplus school site is located at 160 Ozerna Road NW. It is a 1.2 hectare site within the larger 5.0 hectare Ozerna Park. The site was declared surplus by the Edmonton Public School Board (EPSB) in 2015. In alignment with the process outlined in the Joint Use Agreement: Land, the site was first offered to the Edmonton Catholic School District (ECSD) and the Conseil scolaire Centre-Nord (CSCN). Neither school board claimed the site and it was subsequently offered to and claimed by the City of Edmonton.

When the City claimed the site, an internal review determined that there was not a municipal use for the site, including retention as open space or an affordable housing development location. Administration subsequently declared the site surplus to City needs. As a surplus site, it was intended to have its municipal reserve designation removed and then be subdivided, rezoned and disposed of.

In alignment with the *Municipal Government Act* and City Policy C468A - Policy to Govern the Use of Funds from the Sale of Surplus School Sites, any net proceeds received from the sale of the surplus school site would be allocated to the Funds in Lieu Reserve Account for school or park uses.

As part of the City's work related to developing surplus school sites as part of the Housing Accelerator Fund, the City discussed all of the sites with its Joint Use Agreement Partners. Administration confirmed with the three school districts that they did not have an interest in any of the sites, apart from CSCN having an interest in the Ozerna site.

Prior to agreeing to make the site available to CSCN, Administration reconsidered this site for potential use for affordable housing. Multiple factors were considered including the potential benefits to CSCN and the francophone community, the opportunity provided by the Province's School Construction Accelerator Program, the number of surplus school sites already allocated for affordable housing uses and current school pressures.

### School Construction Accelerator Program

In 2024, the Government of Alberta announced the School Construction Accelerator Program. This program was announced in response to the increasing growth pressures on schools throughout Alberta. The program is intended to approve funding for roughly 90 school sites

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throughout Alberta through to 2031. As a result of this program, the City's three major school boards are reviewing and revising their strategies and capital priority plans.

The City brought all the surplus school sites within its inventory to the October 10, 2024, Joint Use Agreement Steering Committee for review. The school boards did not express interest in any surplus school sites except for the Ozerna site, where CSCN expressed an interest for a francophone school.

### **Reallocation of the Ozerna Site for a Francophone School**

CSCN had initially passed on claiming the Ozerna school site in 2015, but circumstances have changed substantially in the past 10 years. CSCN is experiencing substantial growth and, along with the other two school boards, is feeling increasing enrollment pressures. CSCN currently only has nine operational schools within Edmonton. As a result, many of their students must bus long distances to attend their schools, which creates high bussing costs for CSCN. The Province's advancement of the School Construction Accelerator Program has provided an opportunity to address some of these issues by funding the construction of new schools.

CSCN has indicated that the Ozerna surplus school site would pair well with a site they have claimed in the Matt Berry neighbourhood. CSCN tries to reduce bussing costs by pairing schools with similar age cohorts on the same bus. The City's northeast does not have a francophone school, so these two sites would alleviate pressure on other schools, increase accessibility to French language education and reduce student travel times.

Given the above, Administration is supportive of reallocating the Ozerna surplus school site to CSCN for use as a francophone school site. If this report is received for information, Administration will have the site added back to Schedule B of the Joint Use Agreement: Land and indicated for use by CSCN. CSCN has indicated that they would include the site in their capital priorities to take advantage of the School Construction Accelerator Program.

### **Budget/Financial Implications**

There will be no change to operating costs resulting from this reallocation, as the City already maintains this property and will continue to be responsible for site maintenance until the school site is developed.

If sold, net proceeds from the sale of the surplus school site would have been allocated to the Funds in Lieu Reserve Account under Policy C468A and used for school or park uses. As this site is now being allocated back to CSCN, these proceeds will not be available unless the site is once again declared surplus by the school boards and then sold.

### **Community Insight**

No community engagement was completed in preparation of this report.

In 2021, Administration created an Engaged Edmonton webpage to gather feedback from the community on the type of residential development the community would be most comfortable with on the Ozerna surplus school site. Several relevant themes were identified through this engagement:

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- The majority of community members would prefer that the site was not developed for residential uses;
- There is a temporary soccer field located onsite that was indicated as being important to some community members;
- The majority of the community would like to see the area remain as green space; and
- Some community members would like to see the site developed as a school.

### GBA+

CSCN is the youngest school board and does not have a school presence throughout the city like EPSB and ECSD do. Many of its students must travel long distances to attend school. 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.

Making the Ozerna site available to CSCN supports that initiative and would provide more equitable access to francophone education, reduce bus times for children, reduce bussing costs for the school board and make more funds available for education.

### Environment and Climate Review

This report was reviewed for environment and climate risks. The environmental risks summarized below were identified using City-developed environment and climate screening criteria. If CSCN receives provincial funding to construct a school, the following impacts are possible:

- New building construction may impact green spaces, natural areas and trees, harming natural carbon sinks and carbon sequestration.
- New buildings produce high emissions from embodied carbon during construction processes and building materials, especially concrete.
- New building construction typically results in more impermeable surfaces, which may increase flood risk and exacerbate flood effects.
- The addition of a francophone school in this area may help reduce transit times for students and allow more students to use active transport, potentially reducing greenhouse gas emissions from bussing.

### Attachment

1. Ozerna Surplus School Site Location