

Max Turyk Community Centre- Proposed Sale Q&A

Why is the City considering selling this property?

While the City has owned Max Turyk and operated it as a quasi-community-centre, its core function has been as a school and as leased space for a public school, childcare and preschool providers.

The Francophone School District (CSF) are currently the main tenant at the facility, and following a Supreme Court decision in 2020 that affirmed French language schools have the right to distinct facilities and the Provincial funding to facilitate that, they engaged with the City about the opportunity to purchase this facility.

The sale of Max Turyk provides an opportunity to support the continued success of École Sophie Morigeau, while still maintaining a piece of land for future development, and access to the associated recreation amenities through a joint-use agreement.

Additionally, the City of Fernie owns a significant number of facilities, and our overall portfolio is expensive to maintain. Selling this facility would reduce our infrastructure deficit and allow us to focus staff time and funds on improving other municipal facilities and enhancing service delivery in other areas.

What would be included in the sale?

The facility, and the accompanying 8.5 acres of land that also includes the sports fields, playgrounds, pickleball courts, and parking lot. As a condition of sale, the City would subdivide and retain a 1.5-acre piece of property on the site.

The City would own none of the assets, but would have a joint-use agreement in place to ensure the community still has access to the gym space and the outdoor amenities.

The City would also continue to support certain aspects of maintenance for these facilities, including the annual sports field maintenance program completed each spring.

Who is the CSF?

The CSF is a province-wide, public French-language school board that offers K to 12 education in French to over 6200 students in 47 schools. The CSF's ongoing goal is to provide high-quality French-language education, throughout the province, to as many students as possible.

Students attending public French-language schools in BC are the children of what are termed 'rights-holders' under Article 23 of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. Rights-holders are people whose first official language spoken and still understood is French, and/or who have attended French-language school.

How would the sale benefit City of Fernie residents and taxpayers?

The sale would result in a deposit into our reserves of the approximately \$3.4 million sale price, and reduce the potential liability to the City and taxpayers from owning this aging facility.

It would also reduce annual operating and maintenance costs for the facility, and allow us to reallocate existing staff time to increase the level of service at other City facilities.

With the joint use agreement, the community would continue to enjoy the recreation amenities on the site without being responsible for the ongoing maintenance and upkeep of the facility.

If the sale goes ahead, what are the plans for accommodating existing leaseholders and user groups with regular private facility bookings?

As a condition of the sale, the City has committed to extending leases with the existing tenants.

As a public organization with a core mission of caring for children and families, we're confident the Francophone School District (CSF) would continue to support these activities into the future.

A joint use agreement with the CSF would formalize continued community access to the indoor gym space, and outdoor recreation amenities including the sports fields.

While the booking of indoor space would be done through the CSF, fields would still be booked through the City, and regular user groups should experience little to no change in process, facility availability, and the associated costs.

Are there plans to protect childcare spaces in our community?

The CSF has indicated that they want to work with existing leaseholders to find an ongoing solution.

The City is actively working with the Province to add childcare capacity and prioritized affordable housing opportunities to help meet our community's needs.

If the sale goes ahead will there be changes to public access to outdoor recreation amenities (pickleball, playground, sports fields)?

Access to outdoor recreation facilities for members of the public will be restricted to outside school hours, in order to allow students to fully use the space.

Regularly scheduled bookings would be managed between groups and the CSF to enable club use in coordination with school needs, however drop-in use not formally booked would be limited to outside of school hours.

Would there be any changes to the current level of service for the Max Turyk Community Sports Fields?

The sports field seasonal maintenance will be the responsibility of the City of Fernie, while the day-to-day maintenance will be conducted by the CSF.

Service levels and schedules will follow the standards of CSF and will be evaluated with CSF operations team over the course of the joint use agreement.

What changes to the booking process, hours, and user fees would groups with recurring facility bookings experience?

The booking of the pickleball courts and the sports fields would continue to be handled by the City. The gymnasium booking would be handled by the CSF.

Fees charged by the CSF would take into consideration the applicable rates and fees established by the City's current User Fees Bylaw.

Why is the City now engaging the public about the consideration of this sale?

Negotiations to this point have taken place directly between the CSF and the City to ensure that terms both parties agree on could be reached. This was started following a discussion regarding school ownership at UBCM.

It was decided that the opportunity was worth pursuing and the City determined direct negotiations was the best route to confirm our shared commitments to community partnership and reducing any disruption in the community's enjoyment of the facility should the sale advance.

Further the Community Charter acknowledges and identifies that negotiations of a property sale and price in the public eye will impact the City's capacity to negotiate in good faith, and/or the ability to obtain the best price.

Having reached generally acceptable terms it is now time to engage the community on concerns and questions to ensure the public has the opportunity to participate in the consideration.

Is there an opportunity for the public to provide feedback?

Yes, prior to executing the sale we are seeking feedback on the important services provided through the facility and the considerations of this potential agreement.

We want to hear from the community if you have any questions or concerns about changes associated with the potential sale.

We have information about the proposed sale on our Let's Talk 'Max Turyk Community Centre - Proposed Sale' project page, and invite the public to join us on June 6 from 6-8pm to learn more about the proposed sale, ask questions, and provide feedback.

Is the City also considering the sale of other properties/facilities?

This opportunity came forward due to a Supreme Court decision. We are reviewing our properties as we advance our asset management program and pursue opportunities to expand affordable housing and childcare spaces in the community.

The City has adopted a [Municipal Lands Acquisition and Disposition Policy](#) that will guide future considerations. Through our upcoming OCP process the City will be seeking input from the Community around property and facilities we own, and exploring community values to help guide future decision making.

What are the plans for the property the City is subdividing off?

We will be looking for opportunities to advance affordable housing and childcare initiatives on that site, and intend to bring it forward to the province and BC Housing as an opportunity.

If the City moves ahead with the sale of Max Turyk Community Centre, will you be building a new Community Centre to accommodate the groups who currently use MTCC?

Groups currently using the Max Turyk Facility will continue to have access to the gym and outdoor amenities.

The City is continuing to follow the recommendations in the Official Community Plan and Leisure Services Master Plan, which are to advance the opportunity for a community centre on the Aquatic Centre site.

While construction of this facility is not currently budgeted, we are working on the scope of work for early planning including community consultation for this project.

Have other questions? Share them via the Q&A tool on Let's Talk Fernie and we'll publicly answer them, or attend an in-person information session on June 6 from 6-8pm at the Fernie Senior Citizens Drop-In Centre to connect directly with staff.