School District No. 63 (Saanich)
White Road Property Consultation

Final Report
September 2018

Prepared by Jason Reid, Secretary Treasurer
for the White Road Property Committee

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Appendices:

Background Information

In June 2016, the Saanich Board of Education passed a motion directing the Secretary Treasurer to commence a public consultation process pursuant to policy 2480 (Disposal of School Board Land and/or Improvements). Under policy 2480, when a property is no longer required to serve the needs of the district and will not be required for future educational purposes, then the board shall dispose of the property by sale or lease through a public process. In September 2016, the White Road Property Committee (the "Committee") was struck and its terms of reference was approved by the Board (Appendix 1).

The White Road property is a 1.73 acre lot located at the intersection of White Road and Veyaness Road. The property is currently zoned RE-2, Rural Estate. A more detailed site description is included in Appendix 2.

The White Road property was donated to the trustees of the South Saanich School District, a predecessor of School District No. 63 (Saanich), on April 7, 1873 by Mr. William Turgoose. In the original hand written transfer document to the School District the following condition was documented:

> *"… unto the Trustees of the South Saanich School District (hereinafter referred to as the said Trustees) and their Successors forever Upon Trust To hold and use the same for Public School purposes in the said District"*

At this time, clear legal title to the property was conveyed to the School District and there is no reference to the above condition on the title. This means that while a condition exists, the estate of Mr. Turgoose transferred to the School District all rights of ownership.

The property was the location of a school until approximately 1913 and has long been vacant. Subsequent to its use as a school site, the White Road property and adjacent properties to the north, east and south were zoned as residential. Land to the west of the property is in the agricultural land reserve. The site is forested and is used in an informal yet unauthorized manner regularly by the local community where trails are present.

The following was the overall question to the community guiding the consultation:

> *What should the School Board do with the White Road property so that the educational needs of our students and community are best served and the wishes of the donor are respected?*

The property is not suitable for a modern school site because of its relatively small size and its location and zoning. Respecting the wishes of the donor, determining if there is a suitable alternative "public school purpose" was a key objective of the consultation. When assessing the suitability of potential alternative use of the property, the Committee considered if the proposed use:

- ✓ was for a public school purpose as intended by the donor,
- ✓ provided tangible benefits (in relation to costs) consistent with the educational mandate of the School Board, and
- ✓ was appropriate for the neighbourhood.

In the event that a suitable alternative use does not exist, the consultation also considered how the proceeds from disposal could support public school purposes.

The donor had two wishes for the property: (1) that the property be held, and (2) that the property be used for public school purposes in the district. Continuing to hold the property as a vacant site means that public school purposes are not being supported as intended and the School Board is assuming cost and risk inconsistent with its educational mandate.

Consultation Process

Phase 1

Following the Committee's approval of the consultation plan, the public consultation process commenced March 2017. Information relevant to the consultation, including materials reviewed by the Committee have been posted to the following site throughout the process:

https://www.sd63.bc.ca/leadership-governance/white-road-consultation

Neighbours of the property and other stakeholders were invited to participate in a community open house held on March 16, 2017, which was followed by a community survey.

There was good participation overall at the open house and with the community survey; however, it was noted that not all stakeholder groups were well represented. In particular, the Committee noted that the district's school communities[1] were not well represented. The Committee also considered recommendations from participants regarding the need promote the consultation more broadly. At that time, committee members noted that some recommendations (from the open house and survey) relating to outdoor learning could potentially align with the curricular needs of students and provide an opportunity to honor the agricultural legacy of the donor. However, many other recommendations were inconsistent with the educational mandate of the school district and the wishes of the donor.

Following review of the feedback received from the March 2017 public open house and the subsequent community survey[2], the committee considered options for broadening the consultation to more effectively include all stakeholders and, in particular, school communities who had not been well represented to date. The committee identified the following objectives in revising the consultation strategy:

- To increase engagement with school communities including staff in schools, educational partners and parents. Feedback from school communities will focus on potential options for the property resulting in tangible benefits for students and respecting the wishes of the donor.
- To increase engagement in the broader community through various means such as social media, advertising, community notices, earned media or other means as appropriate.

[1] School communities include school administrators, educators and staff, students, parents and all other community members who are invested in the success of their school.

[2] The detailed results from the open house and survey are included in the White Road Committee materials for the April 11, 2017 and May 9, 2017 meetings and are posted on the consultation site.

A significant consideration in the timing of the next phase was the impact of the November 2016 Supreme Court decision restoring teacher contract language related to class size and composition. Given the considerable focus and effort being undertaken during the spring of 2017 to implement these new requirements, the committee decided it would not have been realistic to engage in meaningful consultation with school communities at that time. It was also possible that our view regarding potential alternative use of the property could change as we worked through the impact of reduced class sizes on district facility requirements. For these reasons, at the May 2017 meeting of the White Road Committee it was decided that the next stage of the consultation would be postponed until the fall.

Phase 2

In October 2017, the White Road Committee met and approved a revised consultation plan. This revised plan included the following direct engagement with school communities:

- Working session with school administrators and completion of a survey by each school coordinated by school administrators.
- Working session with COPACS and completion of a survey by individual PACs

The revised plan also included the development of a promotional plan (in November 2017) intended to increase awareness in the broader community and a public consultation meeting (February 2018) and survey (March 2018) to seek feedback from the community on the results of phase 2. A summary of this revised consultation process and timeline is included as Appendix 3. In November 2017, the committee met and approved a promotion plan that included expanded mail notices to neighbours, advertisements in local papers, a media release on the history of the property and the consultation, and promotion through a variety of social media platforms. These activities were intentionally sequenced to heighten awareness leading up to the public consultation meeting on February 21, 2018.

In February 2018 the Committee met to review the status of promotional activities, and the results of the consultations with school communities to be presented at the public consultation meeting. These results included survey responses from 10 schools, 5 PACs and 1 educational partner (Beacon Community Services). The following is a summary of the themes[3] identified from these survey results:

1. Are there potential alternative uses for this property by the School District that would be consistent with the educational mandate of the Board of Education and the wishes of the donor?

    - Multipurpose community facility – a number of uses were proposed including integrated services, Indigenous studies/cultural centre, community programs, office space for lease, educational program space and meeting space (including replacement for Saanich Schools Education Centre). This would be achieved through a partnership with shared use between SD63 and other agencies/partners.
    - Central location for Children Development and Alternative Learning programs.

[3] Detailed and summary results of the school communities consultation are included in the February 6, 2018 committee materials posted on the consultation site.

- Conference Center including services for naturalists/artists, and indigenous learning
- A modern meeting space to replace the Saanich Schools Education Centre.
- Housing for new teachers in their first years.
- Outdoor education / agricultural / community garden or farm / nature-scape / nature park
- Sports and recreation / physical education / trades program
- Student housing (international)
- Long term residential leases / rental housing / lease revenue
- Space for before and after school care

2. <u>If the site is not sold and an alternative educational use is not found, should the property be held as a vacant site indefinitely?</u>
    - Most respondents answered "no", but there were a number of responses stating that the site should be held as they believe there are alternative educational uses.

3. <u>If the Board were to sell the White Road property, how should the proceeds be used?</u>

    - legacy fund supporting vulnerable students
    - create a legacy consistent with the wishes of the donor – focusing on outdoor and agricultural learning (create outdoor/agricultural learning centers for each school).
    - Replace Saanich Schools Education Centre / community space
    - Outdoor education / Indigenous Education / learning lab
    - Invest in future capital projects / invest in schools / school upgrades / educational programs / teacher resources / playground equipment
    - Support learning services – invest in equipment, furniture and functional space
    - Childcare space
    - Upgrade technology in schools / Support arts and equipment for programs
    - Something that would result in a long term benefit
    - It shouldn't be sold

4. <u>If the Board were to sell the White Road property, what future use would you like to see for this property**?**</u>
    - Mixed use – community centre, childcare, professional offices, and residential
    - Family/Affordable housing
    - Community garden / park
    - Space for childcare
    - Community use / sports and rec.
    - Youth social centre
    - It shouldn't be sold

At the February 21, 2018 Public Consultation Meeting, the themes from the school communities consultation were reported and feedback was received from participants both at the meeting (idea generating exercise – 26 participants) and through a subsequent survey (7 responses). Attendance at the meeting was lower than expected (26 people signed in); however, there appeared to be broader

representation of the stakeholder groups as compared to the March 2017 open house. Lower than expected attendance may have been the result of poor weather conditions with accumulating snow. Both during the school communities consultation and at the public consultation meeting, participants were asked to consider the following questions when assessing the suitability of an alternative educational use of the property:

- Is the alternative use proposed for a public school purpose as intended by the donor?
- Does the alternative use provide tangible benefits consistent with the educational mandate of the School Board?
- Is the alternative use appropriate for the neighbourhood?[4]

In April 2018[5], the committee reviewed the results of the public consultation meeting. Many of the themes from the public consultation meeting were similar to those identified in the school communities consultation. During the open house and in the subsequent survey a theme that emerged (was recommended by many participants) was using the site for a nature based early learning program.

When reviewing these results and results at other stages of the consultation the committee has also reviewed recommended uses that are not consistent with a "public school purpose" such as creating a community park. The Committee also reviewed other recommended uses that were for educational use but that would not be suitable for a residential neighbourhood. Throughout the consultation a consistent theme from neighbours of the property has been maintaining the greenspace and minimizing impact on the site and neighbourhood. While maintaining greenspace is in itself not a public school purpose, the impact on the site and surrounding neighbourhood was a consideration when assessing potential alternative use.

During the second phase of the consultation staff met with a number of educational partners and persons or organizations with an interest in the consultation. In these meetings the following organizations expressed a potential interest in the property:

- Saanich Teachers Association (STA) – if a multipurpose facility was developed the STA would consider participating by relocating their current office space from the Keating site.
- BC Housing – expressed an interest in potential development opportunities related to the property to provide housing and/or to support programs.
- Beacon Community Services – expressed an interest in partnering with the district if the property was developed as a early learning center.

[4] Any non-residential use would require rezoning of the property. For such a rezoning application to be successful the proposed use would need to be appropriate for the surrounding residential neighbourhood.

[5] Detailed and summary results from the Public Consultation Meeting are included in the April 10, 2018 committee materials posted on the consultation site.

Alternative Use Options Identified

When assessing whether a potential alternative use was appropriate, the committee first considered if the proposed use was for a public school purpose as intended by the donor, if it provided tangible benefits (in relation to costs) consistent with the educational mandate of the School Board, and if it was appropriate for the neighbourhood. As any non-residential use of the property would require rezoning, the likelihood of rezoning was a factor when considering if the use was appropriate for the neighbourhood.

A theme that emerged through the consultation was using the site for an outdoor learning and/or agricultural program for Saanich Students. While there is value in enhancing existing nature based programs for K-12 students, the benefit of this potential alternative use was limited by logistical matters. Transporting students to and from the site during the school day would not be realistic and would be unnecessary as school sites either already have nature based outdoor spaces or have the space to develop one if needed. Similarly, there were other potential alternative uses identified that would have an educational program benefit but were not appropriate for the neighbourhood

Applying these criteria, the committee narrowed potential alternatives for further consideration to three options. These options are described and evaluated in more detail below.

Option 1: Multi-use Community Facility

A number of participants recommended using the site for a Multi-use Community Facility.

Some of the proposals specifically recommended moving the Saanich Learning Center (district meeting space) from the Keating Elementary School site to the White Road Property. Funding for the expansion of Keating Elementary had been announced in January 2018 and these proposals were likely made as options to reduce pressure on the Keating site were under consideration at the time of the consultation. Subsequent to the conclusion of the consultation, the district decided to relocate the meeting space to the Saanichton site where existing space could be reconfigured into a meeting space.

In addition to a new location for district meeting space other recommendations included creation of a community building with mixed uses including: conference space, educational/academic space, Indigenous studies/cultural center, integrated services and/or office space for lease. With many of the ideas proposed there is potential educational benefit for students and the community. However, while there could be benefits from the proposed uses, there are also impediments to such a multi-use facility.

The first potential impediment would be the impact on both traffic flow and the site. The impact of the proposed use on traffic flow would be a consideration before rezoning of the property was approved. Similarly, the site impact of creating sufficient parking would also be a consideration. It is likely that a shared use facility would require 40 or more parking spaces, which would have a significant impact on the site requiring the removal of many trees.

The second potential impediment is securing funding for such a facility. There is the potential to generate some funding through partial lease of the building, but funding would be necessary for most of the cost and it would be challenging to secure. No potential community partners have approached us and funding would not be available through the Ministry of Education's capital program.

Option 2: Nature Based Early Learning Center

Using the property for a Nature Based Early Learning Center was a theme that emerged during the second phase of the consultation and was the most popular option proposed by participants at the February 21, 2018 community open house.

As the need for early learning spaces exceeds what is available, it is a priority for the community and for the Provincial government. Creating program space for early learning programs fits within the educational mandate of the school district and it is a public school purpose so would be consistent with the wishes of the donor. As early learning facilities are commonly located within residential neighbourhoods near the families they service, use of the site for this purpose has good potential for being suitable. Given this potential, conceptual drawings were prepared visualizing such a facility on the site (see appendix 4).

The conceptual drawing shows that a small building (equivalent to about 4 classrooms) and up to 20 parking stalls could be accommodated while also preserving many of the trees on the site. While a septic field in shown in the drawings, initial discussions with Central Saanich indicate that sewer service is likely available. If sewer service is available, more trees can be preserved as a septic field would not be needed.

A benefit of this proposed use is that greenspace would be preserved and, subject to meeting the childcare licencing requirement, the community would likely have access to much of the site as greenspace. Staff at Central Saanich noted that if the district were willing to enter into convents to protect trees and designate a portion of the property as a "no build zone" it would increase the chance of success with a rezoning application. While there would be an impact related to traffic flow it would be less than for a multi-use facility.

The creation of new childcare spaces is a priority of the BC government and funding is available through the Childcare BC New Spaces Fund.

Option 3: Revenue Generation or Housing for School Purpose

Through the consultation there were a number of ideas proposed within the category of housing and/or revenue generation. These included:

- Long term residential leases / rental housing
- Housing for new teachers in their first years
- Student housing (international)

Some of these recommendations could meet the criteria of supporting educational programs either directly or indirectly by generating revenue that could support educational programs. Using the property for housing could also potentially work in the neighbourhood, although any use inconsistent with the property's current zoning (single family residence) would require rezoning.

Conclusions and Recommendation

A Multi-Use Facility (Option 1) could provide educational benefits; however, the impact on traffic and the site would likely be incompatible with the neighbourhood and would be an issue for rezoning. Securing funding for such a facility would also be challenging. Therefore, in the absence of a community partner with a clear vision and funding for such a facility, the Committee concluded that it was not an option that could be explored further.

Revenue Generation or Housing for School Purpose (Option 3) could potentially be a viable option; however, it was not the most popular option based on the feedback received at the community open house. Also, as an indirect public school use it wouldn't rank above directly supporting an educational program need.

The option that best met the criteria for alternative educational use was a Nature Based Early Learning Center (Option 2). This option also received the greatest level of support at the February 2018 community open house and in the subsequent survey.

Recommendation

The Committee recommends that the Board of Education approve the completion of a review considering the benefits and feasibility of creating a Nature Based Early Learning Center on the White Road Property.

The review would include development of a refined site plan (with building and landscape plans); completion of a traffic study; an assessment of financial feasibility; and an assessment of program benefits. A community open house would be held to seek community feedback prior to completion of the review. Following completion of the review the Board of Education would decide whether or not to proceed with a rezoning application.

Appendix 1: White Road Property Committee Terms of Reference

Purpose:

The purpose of the committee is to conduct a public consultation process for the potential sale of the White Road property with consideration of how the sale proceeds would best serve the educational needs of our students and community or, if applicable, with consideration of suitable alternative uses for the property.

The committee will:

1. Ensure the process adheres to Board Policy 2480 (Disposal of School Board Land and/or Improvements) and to the School Act, Regulations and Ministerial Orders.
2. Conduct a public consultation process that results in open communication and engagement with the community when considering options for disposal or alternative use of the property.
3. Analyze information gathered and feedback from public meetings or surveys including neighbourhood and municipal input.
4. Maintain proper records of its proceedings and regularly report to the Finance, Facilities and Technology (FF&T) Committee.
5. Prepare a final report that includes recommendations to the Board.

Membership:

- Jason Reid, Secretary Treasurer
- Dave Eberwein, Superintendent of Schools
- Chuck Morris, Director of Facilities
- Trustee Tim Dunford
- Trustee Nancy Borden
- Trustee Wayne Hunter

Councilor Bob Thompson will be Council liaison for the District of Central Saanich.

As required, the Chair may invite other people to participate as needed.

Meetings:

The committee will meet regularly during the consultation period.

Indicators of Success:

- Viable options are found and reported that respect both the mandate of the School Board and the wishes of the donor of the property.
- Community concerns are heard and considered in determination of options.

Appendix 2: Site Description and Property Data

Municipal Address	Lot A, Plan VIP17298 - White Road, Central Saanich, British Columbia
Legal Description	Lot A, Section 8, Range 3E, South Saanich Land District, Plan VIP17298 (PID 003-922-766)
Encumbrances	There are no encumbrances registered against the title of the property.
2017 Assessed Value (BC Assessment)	$571,000
Area	The site has a total area of approximately 1.73 acres
Frontage	497 feet, more or less, onto White Road and approximately 265 feet onto Veyaness Road.
Land Use Classification (Zoning)	The property is currently zoned RE-2, Rural Estate. The property is within the urban containment boundary.
Density/Site Coverage	The site is currently vacant and unimproved.

Site Map

Appendix 3: Revised Consultation Process and Timeline

Consultation Process and Timeline	
Date	**Event or Activity**
February 7, 2017 (from 12pm to 1pm) **COMPLETED**	White Road ("WR") Committee meeting to review and approve the consultation plan including identification of preliminary set of planning principles/values, and the draft communications to neighbours and stakeholders.
February 8 to 14, 2017 **COMPLETED**	Letter sent to neighbouring properties and stakeholders to explain the process and invite attendance at the open house and participation in survey. The approved consultation plan will be posted to a consultation webpage on the district website (this webpage will be populated through-out the process). Notification of the consultation process will also be provided with on-site signage.
March 7, 2017 (from 12pm to 1pm) **COMPLETED**	WR Committee meeting to review open house agenda, format and presentation.
March 16, 2017 (from 7pm to 9pm) **COMPLETED**	Open House Meeting at the Saanich Schools Education Centre located behind Keating Elementary School (6843 Central Saanich Rd. Saanichton, BC).
March 17, 2017 **COMPLETED**	Link to community survey is distributed as well as the email address for the White Road consultation inbox.
April 11, 2017 (from 12pm to 1pm) **COMPLETED**	WR Committee meets to review feedback received from Open House and Community Survey.
May 9, 2017 (from 12pm to 1pm) **COMPLETED**	WR Committee meets to discuss next steps in consultation.
Next Steps in Revised Consultation Plan	
October 10, 2017 (from 12pm to 1pm)	WR Committee meets to review and discuss the next steps in the consultation. Following the meeting, stakeholders are advised of the revised consultation plan by email and materials are posted to the consultation webpage.
November 14, 2017 (from 12pm to 1pm)	WR Committee meets to review and discuss the promotional plan to increase awareness of the consultation and improve

	engagement with the broader community.
November 15, 2017 (from 3pm to 4pm)	Working session with school administrators to review the consultation and the process for receiving input from each school.
November 2017 to January 2018	School administrators consult with their schools to identify potential options for the property to be reported through survey. Promotion of consultation process through various means such as social media, advertising, community notices, earned media or other means as appropriate.
January 11, 2018 (from 7pm to 8pm)	Working session with the Confederation of Parent Advisory Councils of Saanich (COPACS) to present and review options identified by schools and to discuss options for seeking further input from parents on potential options identified.
January 2018	Receive feedback from school Parent Advisory Councils (PACS) through survey or other means on potential options for the property.
February 6, 2018 (from 12pm to 1pm)	WR Committee reviews the results of the consultation with school communities and the draft materials for the February 21, 2018 final public consultation meeting.
February 21, 2018 (from 7pm to 9pm)	Final public consultation meeting at Bayside Middle School. The results of the consultation to date will be presented including options identified. Feedback will be received through working sessions and through distribution of a survey following the open house.
March 7, 2018	Community survey closes
April 10, 2018 (from 12pm to 1pm)	WR committee reviews results of consultation to date and considers the next steps in the consultation.

Appendix 4: White Road Early Learning Center Conceptual Design

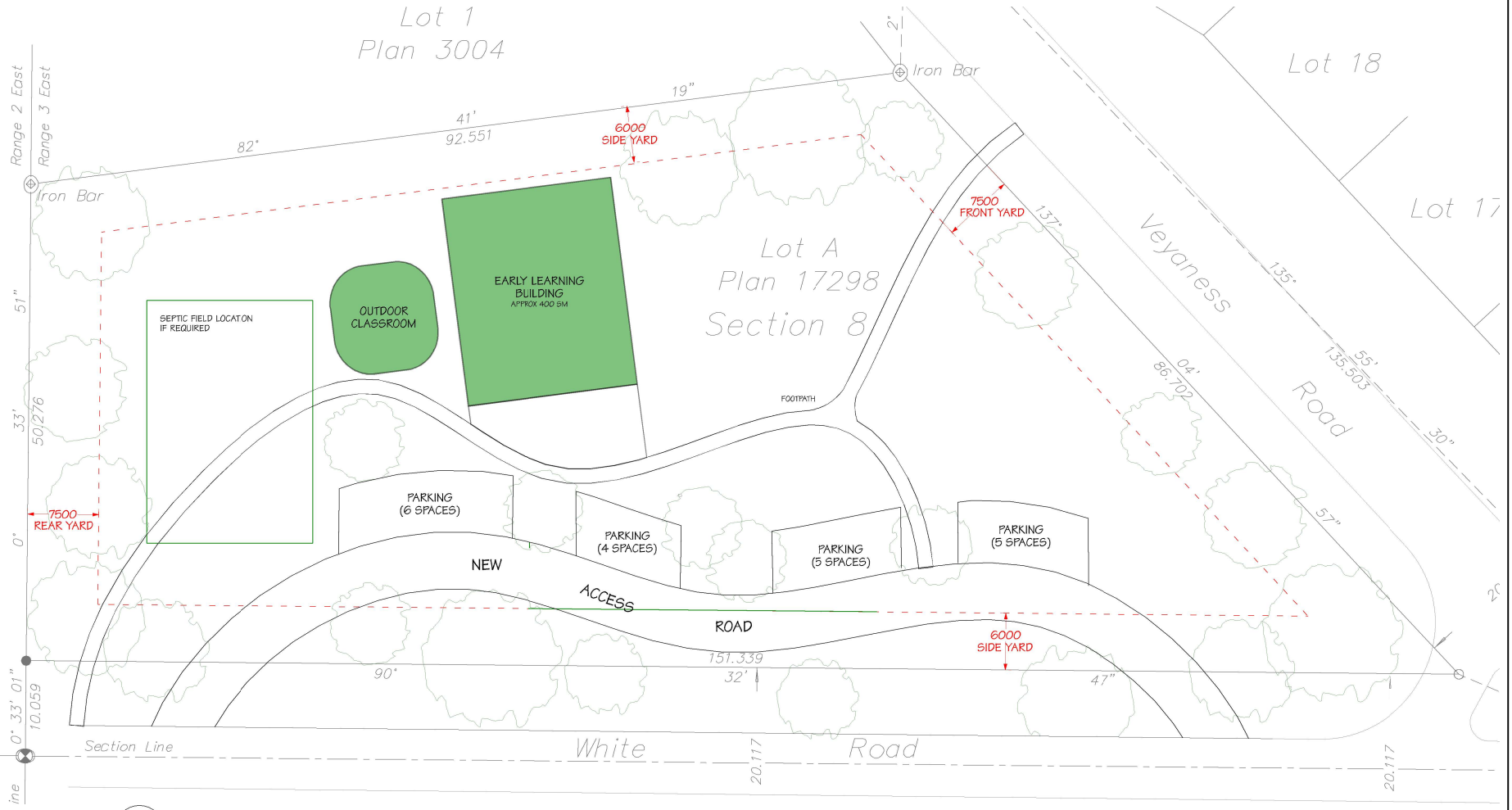
Legal:

Lot A, Section 8, Range 3 East, South Saanich District, Plan 17298.

Pursuant to Section 68 of the Land Title Act. BCGS 92B 053

Zoning:

(24) General Institutional: P-1 Permitted	CURRENT ZONING RE2 - Rezone to P1
Siting of Buildings and Structures	
Front Yard - minimum of 7.5 m	TBD m
Rear Yard minimum of 7.5 m	TBD m
Side Yard minimum of 6.0 m	TBD m
Size of Buildings and Structures	
Height maximum of 8.0 m	
Lot Coverage maximum of 40%	= 2827 sm
SITE AREA	= 7067 sm
Floor Area Ratio maximum of 0.4	



1 / A1.0 SITE PLAN 1:200

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10M

REVISIONS

DRAFT
JULY 25 ,2018

SEAL

SCHOOL DISTRICT No. 63 (Saanich)
EARLY LEARNING BUILDING
VEYANESS RD / WHITE RD
CONCEPT DESIGN

BSA
BRADLEY SHUYA ARCHITECT INC.
762 Ralph St., Victoria B.C.
p. 250.727.0605 • f. 250.727.0636
brad@bradleyshuyaarchitect.com
www.bradleyshuyaarchitect.com

SITE PLAN

Date 25-July-2018
Scale AS NOTED
Drawn AF
Job 18-14
Sheet **A1.0**