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Everett School District negotiates land purchase for south-end schools

The school board learned on Tuesday that staff have successfully negotiated an agreement with The McNaughton Group for 30 acres on the north side of 180th SE between Sunset Road and 51st Ave SE inside the urban growth boundary. This announcement means, that at this time, the district is not continuing its effort to buy 24 separate parcels of land east of Sunset Road, between 164th Street SE and 180th Street SE, just outside Snohomish County's Urban Growth Area Boundary.

In December 2007 the district began contacting owners of the 24 properties, seeking access to their land to evaluate their collective potential as a site or sites for schools the district expects it will need over the next 20 years. At the same time, the district continued looking for other available land matching the criteria required to build schools.

Facilities and Planning Director Mike Gunn explained the new land acquisition plan to the board. "We are considering this land potentially for a future elementary and middle school. The current owner is Bear Creek Highlands, LLC, an affiliated entity of The McNaughton Group, LLC. Much of the property is heavily forested, but it is relatively flat, which is good for building schools. Seven abandoned homes are now on the site, and we would be demolishing those structures."

Total purchase price for the land is \$23.1 million, of which \$18.1 million will be in cash and \$5 million will be in the form of a credit for future school mitigation and impact fees. "Voters approved a construction bond in 2006 to build new schools, make major school renovations and buy land to build future schools," Superintendent Carol Whitehead reminded the board and audience. "This land purchase is funded by the bond approved two years ago."

The district has 30 days to complete a feasibility study, which will include an architectural site plan layout for the two schools, a professional inspection of the premises, wetlands investigations, an environmental assessment, traffic and road system analysis, a review of permitting and land use issues, and an evaluation of the availability of public utilities.

[As stated last winter](#) the district is seeking this land because of the Washington State Office of Financial Management projections indicating a population increase in the district of 15 to 20 percent over the next two decades. "Those increases, translated into student enrollment, mean a need for two new elementary schools and more classroom space for high school and middle school students over the next 20 years," Gunn noted.

Gunn estimates that the market value appraisal will be completed by August 26, 2008, at which time the school board will be asked to consider final approval of the Purchase and Sale agreement.

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