

School Site Acquisition Charge FAQ

What is a School Site Acquisition Charge (SSAC)?

SSAC is a charge per dwelling unit to be paid by residential developers. The charge will be collected by local government and transferred to school boards. The money collected will be used to help pay for new school sites needed as a result of new residential development.

Why is this being done now?

The District is projecting considerable growth in the next ten years. This growth is expected to require expansion to existing schools as well as the building of new schools to accommodate the additional students. In order to seek Ministry capital funding to support site acquisitions Districts are required to have an SSAC in place.

How were the enrolment estimates developed?

Growth projections were developed by our LRFP enrollment consultants using housing growth projections directly from the plans of the Local Governments. Using housing growth data the consultants determined the number of dwellings (eligible development units) that can be expected to be built over the next 10 years, where they will be located and how many children those dwellings will produce.

How were the locations of potential new school sites determined?

The projected enrolment growth, including the location of that growth, was applied to current catchments to determine future capacity requirements. Using this data staff were able to identify the areas where new or expanded school sites would be required.

Why implement an SSAC when the District has closed schools that can be re-opened?

Although re-opening closed schools is being considered, not all closed schools are located in the areas where the majority of the growth is happening.

How were the per unit charges determined?

The estimated cost to purchase the required property is calculated by multiplying the area of the site by the estimated cost per hectare. The legislation limits SSAC collected to a maximum of 35% of the total estimated cost. Once the share to be paid through SSAC is calculated it is divided by the total number of Eligible Development Units resulting in an average charge per unit. This is then multiplied by a density factor to determine the per unit charge for each level of density.

What types of units are exempt from SSAC charges?

Developments that create less than four “doors” on a parcel are exempt, however a local government can enact a bylaw to reduce this to two “doors”. Each dwelling is considered to be a “door”. If agreed to by all parties, the SSAC charge would be waived for developers who provide land in lieu of a cash payment.

Why ask for the SSAC to be applied to a minimum of 2-doors and not 4 doors?

In some areas the only development potential will come from densification. The change to 2-doors allows for charges to be applied on in-fill. An example of in-fill would be if a developer purchased a parcel of land in an existing residential neighbourhood, subdivided it and built two single-family houses on it, thus creating 2 doors on the original parcel.

What can proceeds from SSAC be used for?

In addition to the cost of the actual land, costs associated with acquisition, such as appraisals, legal costs, transfer taxes, and GST, are eligible costs.

Can a municipality or regional district refuse to apply the SSAC?

No. Our partners can question the need for the SSAC (e.g. enrollment projections are incorrect or we do not actually need the seats), however, once those numbers are determined the charge can be instituted. If there is a dispute there is a mediation mechanism in the legislation. Notably, we have requested our partners institute the charge on all developments creating 2 new doors (rather than the 4 required in the legislation). Our partners are not obligated to accede to this request.