

British Columbia

City of Burnaby to buy Fortius sports facility for \$26.6M for public recreation

The facility announced last month it would shut down due to financial pressures fuelled by the pandemic

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The facility opened in 2013 following a \$23-million donation. (Submitted by City of Burnaby)

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The City of Burnaby has inked a \$26.6-million deal to buy the land and facilities occupied by a state-of-the-art sports centre.

The city has signed a purchase and sale agreement with the Fortius Foundation to buy the five-acre property at 3713 Kensington Avenue, along with a 146,000-square-foot building that has been occupied by Fortius Sport and Health for the past seven years.

The city intends to operate the facility as a recreation centre.

"By purchasing the Fortius facility, the City of Burnaby has secured an important recreation asset at Burnaby Lake in perpetuity," Mayor Mike Hurley said in a statement.

"This purchase will ensure this facility, located alongside the city's sport fields, ice arenas and swimming pool at Burnaby Lake, continues to deliver services that support the recreation and athletic needs of residents."

The sale's closing date is set for Feb. 1, 2021.

B.C. mining magnate Scott Cousens donated \$23 million to [launch the centre](#) in 2013, in what was called the largest donation in Canadian sports history at the time.

The facility opened as an integrated athlete development centre, with a double gymnasium, a FIFA-standard turf pitch, fitness centre and office space. Its patrons ranged from amateur sport teams to Olympic athletes.

City: sale will bring taxpayer savings

The site announced last month that it would shut down at the end of the year due to financial pressures fuelled by the COVID-19 pandemic.

"While we are deeply saddened to close our doors, I am proud of the efforts our team members made to leave a positive legacy in our community," said Cousens, Fortius's founder and chairman.

"We are happy to know the facility will continue to contribute to the health and wellness of Burnaby for years to come."

The deal will also reimburse Fortius for the balance of the pre-paid lease on the adjacent sport fields, which are on city-owned land.

The city is redrawing its plans to replace the C.G. Memorial Brown Pool and Burnaby Lake Arena with a new Burnaby Lake Sports Complex, across the street from Fortius.

The city says the Fortius purchase will result in savings for Burnaby taxpayers, including significant savings through reduced space and parking requirements.

The city says it will share more details about recreation programming at the facility in the coming weeks.