



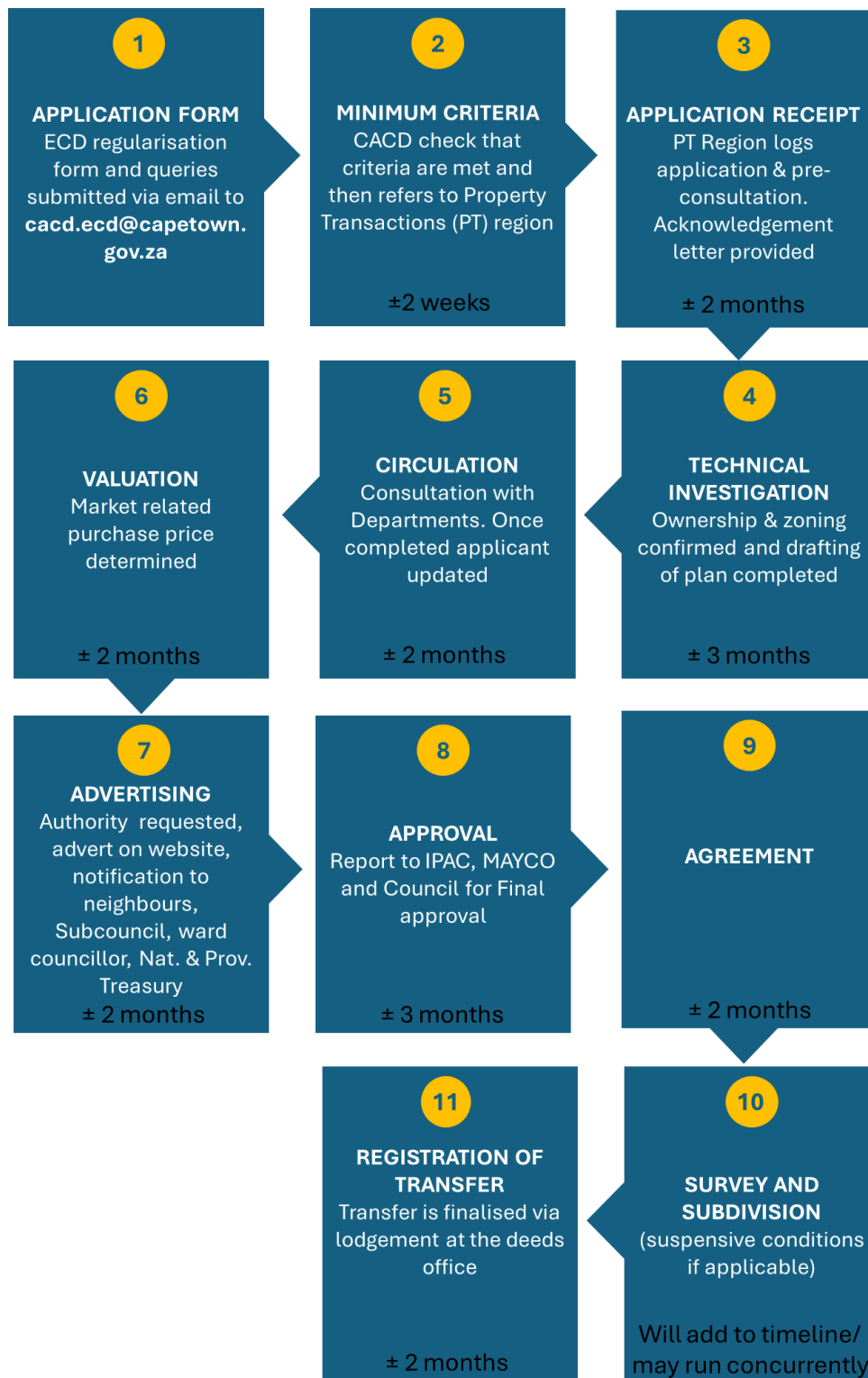
CITY OF CAPE TOWN
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INFORMATION GUIDE FOR ECD CENTRES LOCATED ON CITY LAND INTERESTED IN PURCHASING THE PROPERTY

SEPTEMBER 2026

In recognition of the role ECDs play in providing a vital social service in communities, the City of Cape Town has initiated a programme to sell City land to ECD centres that have been operating on City property. The purpose is to provide tenure security which will support ECDs to access Provincial subsidies and donor funding.

Key stages of the sale application and transaction procedure are provided in the diagram below. It is important to note that timeframes are indicative of a standard application, and timeframes may be extended in more complex cases. A set of frequently asked questions is provided in the following section, which unpacks many of these steps in further detail.



Frequently Asked Questions

1. How do I check if an ECD Centre is part of the regularisation process?

Only ECD centres that have historically been operating on City owned land are included in the regularisation process. A list of these centres, as known to the City at the time of publication, will be available on the [Property Transactions website](#). Check this list to confirm whether a specific ECD is part of the programme. If an ECD centre is operating on City land but is not listed, please email CACD.ECD@capetown.gov.za to notify us.

2. What are the minimum qualification criteria to purchase through the regularisation programme?

To qualify for purchase via the regularisation programme, ECD centre operators currently occupying City-owned land must meet the following criteria:

- Have a Business Partner number.
- Be registered with one of the following:
 - National Department of Social Development; or
 - a Non -Profit Company registered with CIPC; or
 - a Voluntary Association with a constitution.
- Be connected to municipal services, with requisite account numbers and municipal accounts paid up to date.

Business Partner Number & Municipal Services Account

A business partner (BP) number is a 10-digit number used by the City to identify an individual or organisation. The number is located in the top right corner of a City services account, under the tax invoice and account numbers. For further assistance with your BP number you can email revenue.eservices@capetown.gov.za and for queries related to municipal accounts email accounts@capetown.gov.za

If the operator does not have a registered account number this can be provided at finalisation of the application process so the application may still be submitted stating they do not have a service account. Please also indicate if the centre is served by Eskom.

3. What will be required to finalise the sale of City property?

In order to finalise the sale, it is required that the applicant be prepared to accept the property in its current condition and take all responsibility for repairs and maintenance to bring the property to a compliant state.

It will be the responsibility of the applicant to obtain certificates of compliance for water and electrical installations, as well as beetle and gas as may be applicable. These must be obtained before transfer can proceed at the Deeds Office.

Obtaining an occupancy certificate will also be the responsibility of the applicant.

Any costs resulting from the above requirements must be funded by the applicant.

4. How do I submit an application?

Applicants must complete the simplified ECD purchase application form (PM004) and submit it, together with the supporting documentation, to CACD.ECD@capetown.gov.za

The simplified ECD application form and accompanying guide to completing the form are available online: The application form is available online: capetown.gov.za/City-Connect/Apply/City-housing-and-properties/City-property-tenders/apply-to-buy-or-lease-city-owned-land. Select “Apply to buy City-owned land for ECD Centre purposes” on the left. The application form will be available in the downloads section at the bottom of the page.

The Community, Arts and Culture Development (CACD) Department will then verify whether the minimum criteria for support are met. If the application meets the criteria, it will be forwarded to the respective Property Transactions regional office for processing of the application to purchase.

5. How long will it take to process my application?

A standard application takes at least 18 -24 months to process to completion.

However, the timeline may be extended depending on the complexity of the application. For example: if neighbours have encroached onto the property or if subdivision is required, then additional time may be required to resolve boundary issues.

6. How will I be updated on the progress of my application?

CACD will confirm receipt of your application via email and be in contact if further information is required for verification of the minimum criteria. Once confirmed, the application to purchase is handed over to the Regional Property Transactions office for processing.

Once received, the Regional Office will provide a letter of acknowledgement of the application via email. The property will then be checked for any technical issues that may affect sale or require further information. Once the investigation is completed the applicant will be provided a case number and contact details for queries related to the application.

Subsequently the applicant will receive notification at the following stages of the process:

- Once the application has been circulated for comment to relevant City departments and those comments have been processed;
- Once it has been determined whether a competitive process is required or a deviation has been approved (see following section for further information);
- An in-principal approval letter once the application has been approved by Council.

Please note, each step in the process can take several months to complete. Updates may be up to six months apart, even though the application is still progressing.

7. If I submit an application, can someone else buy the property?

The sale of City property must follow a competitive process, unless exceptional circumstances permit the City Manager to allow a direct transaction. If the ECD centre can demonstrate that it provides an exceptionally beneficial social service to the community, the City Manager may approve a deviation from the competitive process. Determining whether there are exceptional circumstances is assessed on a case-by-case basis.

In such cases, a direct sale may be permitted, and no other buyers would participate in that specific transaction process. It is therefore critical that the applicant provide a motivation indicating:

- How long the ECD Centre has operated from the property
- Evidence of community support
- Services that the centre is providing and the number of students
- Whether the operator invested in maintenance/upgrade of the property
- Any form of historic agreement with the City for the property

It should be noted that approval of a deviation is not guaranteed. As discussed in number 6, the applicant will be notified once it has been determined whether a direct deal is possible or if a competitive process is required.

8. Do I require land use approvals to purchase the property?

Some ECD centres located on City-owned land require land use approvals to operate. Land use management (LUM) requirements may relate to regularising zoning or subdivision of property.

Here is a breakdown of the current position regarding zoning rights:

- ECD centres can operate without any zoning-related approvals, as the use is permitted as of right, where the property is zoned CO1, CO2, GB1, GB4, LB2 and MU1.
- Some ECD centres are located on land where ECDs are permitted as an additional right, but certain conditions must be met. These include properties zoned R1 and R2. No land use management (LUM) application is required if the conditions are met.

- Key conditions for additional rights where ECDs are located on properties zoned R1 include having less than 34 learners, no more than three employees and the dominant use must remain for residential purposes. Additional conditions can be read in the City of Cape Town Municipal Planning Amendment By-law, 2025 available on the City's [Planning By-law website](#). Where these conditions are not met a LUM application for consent use will be required.
- A small number of properties require a consent use application to the City to operate legally. In these instances, a LUM application will be required for properties zoned GR3 and OS3.
- Some properties will require rezoning, which is a lengthy and potentially costly process. This applies to properties where a LUM application is required for rezoning to an appropriate use i.e. those located on properties zoned AG, GI2, OS2, TR2, and UT.
- The remaining properties will require a LUM application for rezoning to an appropriate use unless it is confirmed the operations/use were in effect prior to 2015 i.e. properties zoned LU.

Where rezoning or consent use applications are required, it will be contractually required that these be completed, either pre or post transfer. A reversionary clause will further ensure usage of the property is limited to being that of an ECD centre in future. LUM applications will also be required where the properties are to be sub-divided off from the parent properties. These applications must be completed by the applicant, at their own cost, and within a specified timeframe.

9. Are building plans required for transfer of the property?

No, approved building plans are not required for the transfer of the property at the Deeds Office and therefore are not required upfront. However they are required to obtain an Occupancy Certificate, which will be a condition to be fulfilled after transfer. Approved building plans are also required for full registration with the Western Cape Education Department (WCED). The ECD operator will need to undertake this process at its own cost.

10. What costs are involved in purchasing the property?

In recognition of the role ECDs play in providing a vital social service in communities, the City has taken steps to reduce the costs of purchase, as far as possible. These include discounted sale prices, waiving of transaction and land use application fees, as well as reductions in applicable development charges. However, the applicant will still be responsible for a number of costs which must be budgeted for.

Purchase price: the City of Cape Town will sell the properties on which qualifying ECDs are currently operating, at a discounted rate equal to 10% of their market value. The sale will be subject to a reversionary clause in favour of the City restricting the use of the property for ECD purposes. To qualify for the discounted sale price ECDs must be a not-for-profit service provider, providing a critical social service in low-income communities, on a non-commercial basis.

The market value is based on a number of factors including location and size of the property and potentially the value of buildings or infrastructure located on the property. It is therefore not possible to provide an estimate up front of the market value of the property. This will only be determined once an application has been submitted and undergone initial verification.

Compliance certificates: the other main costs will be for obtaining clearance certificates for water and electricity installations, as well as beetle and gas compliance, if applicable. If upgrades to the property and/or installations are required to meet these compliance requirements, it will be undertaken at the cost of the applicant. ECD operators may be able to obtain quotes from registered professionals for such work in order to determine costs. The City of Cape Town maintains a list of registered plumbers, available on this page: [Find a qualified, registered plumber in Cape Town](#).

Conveyancing fees: applicants are responsible for conveyancing fees to register the transfer. These fees vary depending on the property value. A detailed guideline on determining these fees is available from the [Law Society of South Africa](#).

Additional costs may apply for Surveyor General closure endorsement fees if the ECD is located on a property zoned for public space or transport. Advertising fees for the closure of these properties are also required as part of the public participation process in the print Media and Provincial Gazette.

11. When is purchasing the property not an option?

Purchasing City owned land is not possible in the following cases:

- If the property is needed for municipal purposes or if its sale would negatively impact municipal service delivery. This is determined during the technical investigation and internal branch consultation phases of the application process.
- If the ECD centre operates within a broader City facility (e.g. a room in a community hall or library), the property cannot be sold. In such cases, only a lease may be considered, as the property is not legally divisible for sale purposes.

12. What happens if I am unable to purchase the property?

If purchasing is not possible, an ECD operator may apply to lease the property instead. However, for a lease to be considered, the Community, Arts and Culture Development (CACD) Department must first reserve the property and accept responsibility for it. This is considered on a case-by-case basis and the property will need to meet the following criteria of the City's CACD Department:

- Facility must have a water meter installed
- Facility must have a pre-paid electricity meter installed
- The facility must be fenced
- Certificates of compliance must be in place
- Conforming land use must be in place
- The facility must have approved building plans
- Confirmation that all repairs and maintenance will be the responsibility of the applicant

If these criteria are not met, and CACD is unable to reserve the property, the ECD operator will not be able to lease the property. For further information on these requirements contact CACD.ECD@capetown.gov.za.