



Volume 1:
Edson and Area
Community Services
Strategic Plan

Final Report

September 2017

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A. Introduction

In 2017, the Town of Edson and Yellowhead County initiated a project to envision and plan for Community Services' programs and facilities. This effort was undertaken to determine the most effective and cost-efficient way of providing services to their citizens, and was unique in its involvement of both municipalities.

Specifically, the municipalities requested:

- *"the development of a Community Services Strategic Plan for the Edson Service Area. The Plan will be **evidence-based**, rooted in **best practices** and a **comprehensive assessment** of residents' needs.*
- *The essential purpose of this project is to ascertain **what these needs are**, and to translate them into a **set of practical investment priorities** that will guide municipal decision-making in both **the short- and long-terms.**"*

Four focus areas were identified for research and analysis:

1. Parks and Recreation
2. Arts and Culture
3. Museums and Archives
4. Library Services

Western Management Consultants (WMC) was retained to assist in this project.

B. Key Themes

Citizens of the two municipalities have strongly formed opinions about the future of community-facing services. Key themes heard from participants include the following:

- **Good variety of existing opportunities:**
Most participants recognized that there was a good variety of activities available to them in the Edson area, and appreciated those opportunities.
- **Capacity has peaked:**
It appears that the communities have reached a critical juncture regarding the ability of existing facilities to meet citizen needs. Somewhat ironically, the buildings are so well used that they are unavailable for unscheduled or drop-in activities.

- **Winter presents the biggest challenge:**
There is limited capacity for indoor winter recreation. The Edson community is an active one and during the summer months walking, hiking and other outdoor activities are accessible to most. But in winter, the existing facilities are busy with scheduled, programmed activities, leaving little room for individual walkers, the youth wanting space for a pick-up basketball game, or for families to enjoy a leisure space together.
- **The community is at a key decision point:**
The municipalities find themselves at a crossroads of opportunity – a time when existing facilities are at or are approaching end of life and will need replacing or refurbishing, when solid growth is expected in the region and population requirements will increase, and when renewed co-operation makes it possible to join resources and plans.
- **And a Fundamental Choice:** The choice is whether to invest in maintenance of existing infrastructure, or use this opportunity to think broadly and reframe the offerings for future generations.
- **Strong support for a new community complex:**
Citizens are remarkably aligned in their comments, both in defining need and determining the next step. There is strong support for a new multi-purpose community centre and a recognition that there will be a need to develop and implement a reasonable funding strategy involving multiple partners.

C. Recommendations

Recommendations have been developed to deal with four areas:

- A multi-purpose community centre;
- Consolidation of existing facilities;
- Changes in programming; and
- Joint management of future facilities and programs.

The full recommendations of WMC can be found in in section 5.0.

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Introduction and Project Design

In 2017, the Town of Edson and Yellowhead County initiated a project to envision and plan for Community Services' programs and facilities. This effort was undertaken to determine the most effective and cost-efficient way of providing services to their citizens, and was unique in its involvement of both municipalities.

Citizen and user involvement was considered critical to an optimum outcome and much of the project activity focused on hearing from the community.

Comments and suggestions from interested residents were gathered in several ways. A web-based survey was placed on both municipal sites, and a communications program was developed to raise awareness about the project and to direct people to the survey tool. In addition, specialized participation opportunities were offered to key stakeholder groups, community partner groups, and municipal management. Several community information sessions were held, and written submissions were solicited. A telephone survey of key industry leadership was also conducted.

Several comparable communities were identified for a review of their approach to similar challenges, and a detailed literature review and a follow-up conversation were used to provide any useful guidance to this project.

Existing facilities were visited, and usage data collected. An engineering firm, Scheffer Andrew Ltd., was engaged to do a high-level assessment of existing building life, and development possibilities on existing land parcels.

While regular meetings were held with senior management from the Town of Edson and Yellowhead County, WMC also presented to the Councils of the two municipalities at an interim stage in the process, and made a final presentation to the Councils at the conclusion of the assignment.

WMC aggregated and analyzed the research results to identify key themes, gaps, emerging directions and appetite for change among respondents. These results are reported in this document.



1.0 Public Engagement

The public engagement process was designed to provide a variety of input channels for input and comment, and to suit both the general public and specific stakeholder groups.

1.1 Target Audiences

The engagement activities were focused on five defined groups:

1. Community Stakeholder Organizations

Key Stakeholder were defined to be groups that:

- Had a mandate to promote a broad area of activity;
- Located resources to make the activity available, including capital development;
- Attracted and trained interested individuals; and
- Had a long-term view.

The Stakeholders sorted into three groups: Museums, Arts and Culture Stakeholders; Park and Recreation Stakeholders; and Library Stakeholders. Each group was invited to a facilitated session.

2. User Groups

A User group was defined to be one that:

- Focused on delivery of a program;
- May not need its own facility to deliver the program; and
- Was a member of, and supports, an over-arching stakeholder organization.

The User Groups received an email inviting them to submit written documentation, and to complete the online survey.

3. Partner Organizations

A number of key partners were identified. These were significant contributors to the community, although not directly related to community service delivery. Examples include the school boards, major industry, and some social service groups.

These individuals were offered telephone interviews with a member of the consulting team.

4. Public-at-Large

A web survey was designed to gather information from the public at large. The survey was located on both municipal websites, and a communication program was designed to make the citizens aware of the project and direct them to the survey tool.

In addition, nine community meetings were scheduled in eight communities, and a member of the consultant team attended the annual Edson trade show in late April.

5. Staff, Facility, and Program Management

This group included key staff members who have direct experience in the delivery of community services programming and/or managing facilities.

Separate two-hour focus group sessions were held with staff working in each of the four focus areas.

1.2 Session Results

The results of stakeholder, partner and staff group sessions are outlined below. User groups and the general public were directed to the survey for comment, and their input is reflected in section 2.0 below.

1.2.1 Community Stakeholder Organizations

Process

Key stakeholders were invited to two-hour workshops to explore their perception of facilities and services in the Edson area, and give insight into needed investments and improvements. In a facilitated process, the participants moved through a series of questions and prioritization exercises. The results are summarized below, grouped by themes arising from the discussions.

Recreation Services and Parks

One focus group was attended by stakeholders in the recreation services and parks area. The following is a summary of their comments that are specific to their interest area.

Many of the observations related to the Edson pool. Water quality, water temperature and the number of lanes were the key points raised, and seen by several as being reasons for a new pool. The pool design also makes it difficult to do competitive swimming, both training and meets.

Availability of ice for hockey was identified as a major issue, as well as ice time for non-hockey or scheduled usage.

More outdoor trails were seen as a major requirement, as well as better maintenance and promotion of existing trails. Trails should be better connected to promote usability.

Fitness and open gym space were also identified as needed additions in Edson.

Galloway Museum and Library

One focus group was attended by stakeholders from Galloway Museum and the Library. The following is a summary of their comments that are specific to their interest area.

Many participants felt that services in the Library building are constrained by a lack of space, and the existing building is at, if not over, capacity. Examples of this included the difficulty of separating visitors into program groups, the constraints on the pottery and arts activities, as well as the quilters. It was suggested that the Library could be developed into a community hub for programs such as arts and pottery, a music lab, audio-visual activities and photography. This would require an expansion of the existing physical facility and plant.

It was also suggested by a number of attendees that a Library/theatre complex should be built, and some suggested the former hospital site as a possible location.

One person felt the library was fine, as is.

The Galloway Museum was described as well maintained and appropriately used. It is at capacity for the existing complement of support staff.

Arts and Culture

One focus group was attended by stakeholders from the Arts and Culture area. The following is a summary of their comments that are specific to their interest area.

There was considerable discussion about the Red Brick School, and the advantages and disadvantages of the building. Generally, the space is small which limits use of the facility for large functions. The theatre was described as well used, but with a number of challenges. These include: the lack of technology to aid productions, no backstage, lack of audience space, poor heating and air conditioning, limited accessibility, and inability to accommodate some activities; e.g., dancing.

The Arts Centre for Edson Society (ACES) representatives reiterated their position that more space is needed for arts and culture activities, and their support to build new or renovate facilities.

A small minority preferred to enhance existing facilities rather than developing new ones.

Adequacy of Services/Facilities Provided

The majority of participants felt that Edson is behind comparable communities in the provision of services and programs. They commented that most facilities are overused, and there is conflict between desired uses of existing spaces. Because of the over-capacity situation, there are few unscheduled and unstructured activities. This is perceived as being particularly difficult for children and youth; the lack of youth or family drop-ins are cited as examples. Transportation (especially for seniors in rural areas) and affordability were identified as barriers for many citizens.

A smaller number indicated they were satisfied, for the most part, with the opportunities available in the Edson area, and were pleased with the wide variety of services provided. This group, however, did also express concern about teens and pre-teens who are unable to access activities. The reliance on volunteers is a concern for many, since it is unclear whether this level of participation can be sustained.

A common concern was the lack of facilities in the in the winter months. While many citizens enjoy hiking and outdoor activities in the summer, they pointed out that there was no indoor place to continue this activity during the cold weather. The lack of indoor space for children was mentioned frequently, as was the absence of any non-programmed, non-registered activities for the citizens as a whole.

Since most recreational and leisure facilities in the Edson area are relatively old, major maintenance deficits were noted in a number of the buildings; e.g., the air exchangers and bathrooms in the Library building. Many participants said that the existing facilities need investment if they are to continue provide services.

Multiplex

The potential of developing a multiplex was raised frequently in these groups. Participants thought a multiplex could include:

- An aquatic centre;
- Ice surfaces;
- Courts for basketball, volleyball and racquet sports;
- A walking track; and
- Exercise rooms/fitness studios.

If developed, the multiplex should be family focused, available for daytime use, and support school programming.

Inclusive Programs

Affordability and accessibility were raised in these discussions. Participants wanted to ensure that any recreation or cultural activities were widely available to the residents, and not made inaccessible due to fees or location. Reaching the transient population was identified as being an important outcome, given the nature of Edson area's economic activities.

Funding

Attendees were asked to comment on how enhanced facilities and programs could be funded. Most felt that corporate sponsors/partners would be needed for any new facilities, but also commented that support from the two municipalities would be necessary. Many suggested a one-third from the Town, one-third from the County and one-third from the community breakdown of funding.

Several participants indicated they did not have a good understanding of the existing cost sharing between the Town and the County, and most thought that the development of a new funding model should be a priority.

Town/County Co-operation

A consistent comment was the expectation that the County and Town councils would develop a strong collaborative relationship, and work jointly toward providing services to all citizens of the Edson area. More inter-council public meetings were suggested as a good forum for discussion. Participants also noted that there was good interaction between the Town and County at the administrative level.

Other Places for Investment

Alternate areas for investment were also explored, and some suggestions were as follows:

- Better co-ordination of programs and events within the Edson area to avoid conflicts and make better use of existing facilities.
- Joint registration could be provided by both municipalities for all programs regardless of who provided them.

1.2.2 Community Partners

Fifteen interviews were scheduled with individuals representing key partner groups within the Edson and area community. These were defined as organizations or groups that had high influence over community health and activity, but did not play a direct role in the provision of community services.

Seven interviews were with major industries or employers; three were with associations representing specific groups (e.g., business, agriculture); three were with educational institutions; and two were with social services agencies.

The interviews were conducted by Joyce Tustian or Kent Stewart of WMC via telephone. A standard set of questions were used which were drawn from the more detailed questions of the online survey.

The following is a high-level summary of the comments received.

Adequacy of Services/Facilities Provided

Interviewees were evenly divided about whether Edson provided a diverse and accessible range of programs and facilities in the four study areas. Slightly less than half said that the programs were reasonable for a community the size of Edson and area. Slightly more than half found the selection to be lacking or having significant gaps.

These gaps were identified as a deficiency in unstructured/unregistered activities, a general shortage of space in almost every category, and an absence of any winter, indoor activity space that was not devoted to hockey.

Winter Activities

There were a substantial number of comments regarding the need for more indoor recreation space and activities during the winter. An indoor playground, indoor soccer, and a walking track were some of the desired enhancements. Several noted that other municipalities have wintertime facilities.

Maintenance

The age and maintenance standards of recreation facilities were mentioned by a number of interviewees. Participants suggested that upgrading the arenas and the pool is necessary, and several unfavourably contrasted Edson's facilities with those available in other communities.

Availability of Space

As noted above, several people commented that it is difficult to access facilities, since they are heavily booked.

Recreation Services and Parks

Generally, participants commented on indoor recreation opportunities significantly more than they mentioned outdoor ones.

More ice sheets and arena capacity were identified as key needs. Some interviewees said that Repsol arena needs to be updated, and that the pool was in need of renewal. A number of

comments related to the need for indoor facilities that were not just used for hockey. Exercise rooms, gyms, or indoor walking tracks were some of the ideas mentioned. Several people talked about provision for shooting sports, including archery.

Several mentioned geographically-accessible cross-country ski trails, and the need for more outdoor fields.

Museum and Library

There were few comments on the museum or library; those that commented were supportive of the present facilities and service levels.

Arts and Culture

There were few comments on arts and culture activities, but those received related to a facilities gap, especially in theatre.

Multiplex

Most interviewees raised the idea of a multiplex during the interview, and almost all supported the concept. A consistent theme was the need for a child-friendly space, and opportunities for the whole family to access different activities in one spot.

There were a number of suggestions about what a multiplex might contain, including:

- Fitness centre, dryland training, running track, floor hockey, basketball and volleyball courts, a climbing wall, pools, arenas.
- Others suggested including the Friendship Centre, an arts stage or theatre, and the library.

Several people emphasized that a multiplex would need to be centrally located, where the majority of kids can access it easily.

Inclusive Programs

The lack of unscheduled, indoor recreational opportunities impacts vulnerable groups more than the general population. There is very limited space for adults with disabilities, and few services for the homeless and mentally ill.

Some interviewees also noted that physical accessibility is an issue in a number of facilities; e.g., the theatre in the Red Brick School House.

Some school programs are focused on the individual learner; therefore, the Joint Use Agreement (which enables group or class use of recreation facilities) is not available to this different type of teaching structure.

Organizations that have a rural and/or outdoor focus (e.g., Agricultural Society/Fish and Game) find it difficult to access the usual municipal supports for their recreation activities. Ability to apply for grants was one example given.

Two business representatives reported no engagement of their temporary or transient workforce in the programs and facilities offered in the area.

Funding

A number of interviewees suggested that a designated tax for a specific facility (e.g., multiplex) would be acceptable to the community. Several commented that the County has considerable financial resources, and that they should be made available to this type of project.

While most participants agreed that a combination of funding methods would need to be used, they also thought that the fee structure should be minimal to ensure accessibility.

One person suggested establishing a Community Foundation to manage funds so only one group could fundraise on behalf of all.

Business Support for Investment in New Facilities and Programs

Most interviewees thought that the business and industry community would financially support investment in a new facility and/or extended programming. Key factors in engaging this sector were:

- A definite plan for a facility or other enhancement;
- Demonstrated benefit to a wide section of the community; and
- Maintenance of a competitive tax structure.

There was concern that the companies are in a restrained financial situation due to the downturn, and would have to be sure that their investments were going to bring benefit to the community.

Employee Attraction and Retention

Most of the businesses interviewed indicated that hiring and retaining employees in Edson is difficult because of the lack of facilities. Some had examples of employees choosing to live in communities that have done updates to their community facilities.

They indicated that their employee population is family oriented, and that potential employees are looking for quality of life for all family members.

Town/County Co-operation

A consistent set of comments in the interview process was the desire that the Town and County work more closely together. Several mentioned that their company pays taxes in the County, but most employees live in town, so sharing between the two municipalities is critical.

One person noted that the Town and County need to accept that growth is not a negative thing.

Other Places for Investment

In response to the question about where the best investment could be made, the following items were mentioned once.

- A broader study of what the community wants and what is feasible in terms of price;
- Increased number of post secondary programs in general;
- Support for the RCMP liaison officer in the schools; and
- More programs for seniors.

1.2.3 Session Results for Staff

Process

Interview sessions were scheduled with County and Town staff, with staff providing similar functions in the same group. A similar question framework to the citizen format, was used with staff.

Below is a summary of the results.

Adequacy of Services/Facilities Provided

Staff members felt that the variety of services provided was a little above average for a centre the size of Edson and area. However, they commented that citizens want more or different services, and have identified that there is a deficiency in certain types of programming (e.g., teens) and that most facilities are operating at capacity.

Participants believe that there is less investment in community initiatives in Edson and area, than in comparator communities.

Winter Activities

A major issue identified is the lack of available programs in winter. In the summer, there is a wide variety of outdoor activities, but in winter, there is very little available.

Maintenance

Edson and area's public-sector buildings are old and need renovations. Most are well serviced, but there is a limit to what staff can do. Updating existing facilities, or replacing them with newer, better designed buildings, would be a good option.

Recreation Services and Parks

The existing facilities have major shortcomings. For example, the level of hockey available is restricted because one arena is not designed to accommodate checking (boards are too close to the outside wall). The pool is not well designed for competition and mixed use and the gyms are fully booked. There is no walking track, so it is often impossible for citizens to maintain a walking program over the winter months.

Multiplex

Staff suggested that a multiplex might be a viable option, but commented that it would need to be well-designed and well-built. The following are suggestions for activities and spaces to be included in a multiplex:

- Rinks
- Pool
- Family centre
- Walking track
- Library
- Meeting rooms
- Event space
- Commercial kitchen

Funding

Most staff members felt that a 30% cost recovery ratio for operational expenses would be reasonable for any new facility.

2.0 Resident Survey

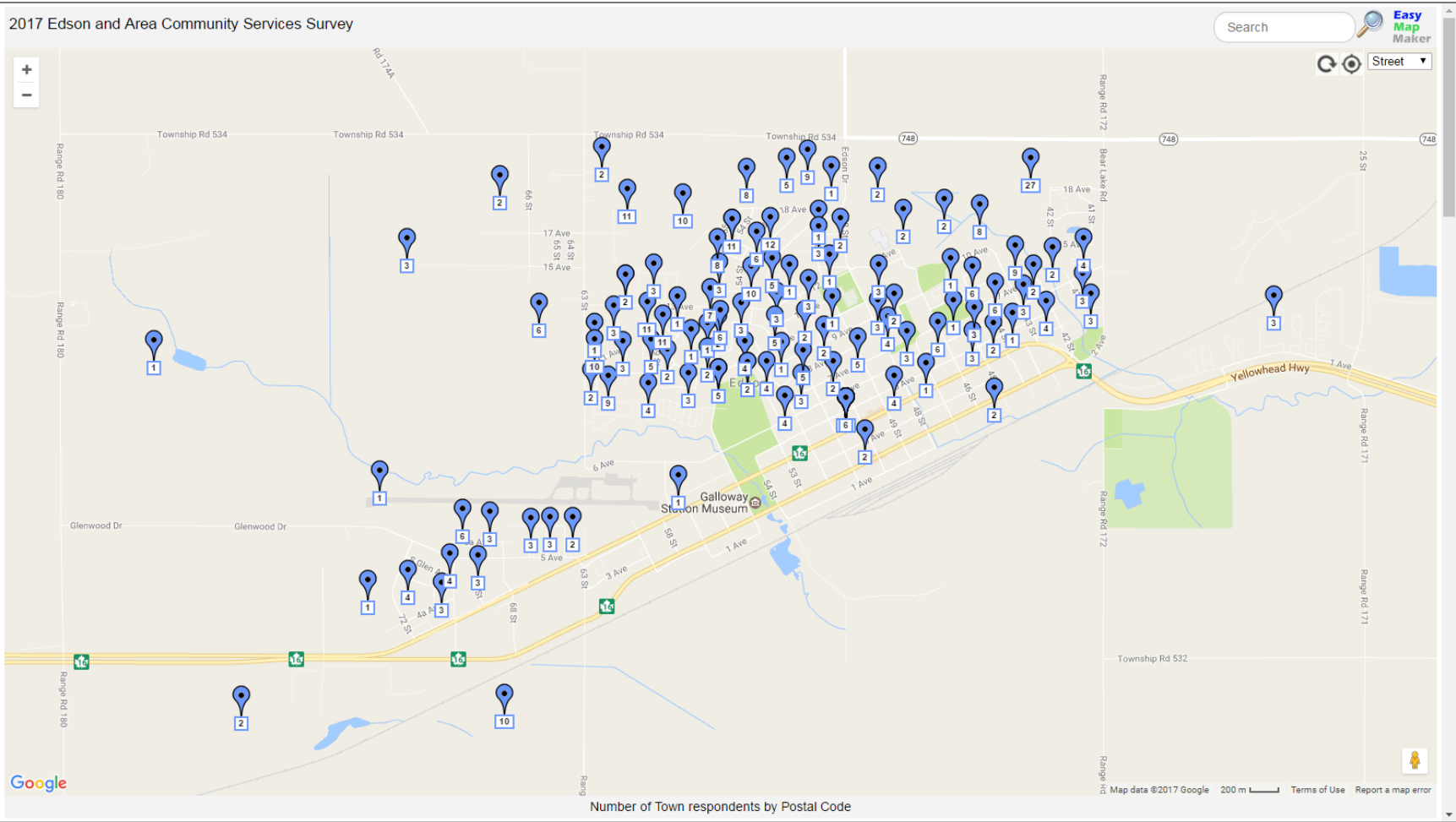
User groups and the general public were encouraged to use the survey as their input tool.

The survey was designed to collect information on activity levels in the four focus areas identified for the project, to identify priority areas for future investment, and to gather comments on how future investments might be financed.

The survey was based on households, and participants were asked to identify their postal code to determine where they lived. **Seven hundred eighty-nine households responded to the survey: 554 from Edson, 226 from Yellowhead County** and nine were from outside the two municipalities or unidentifiable.

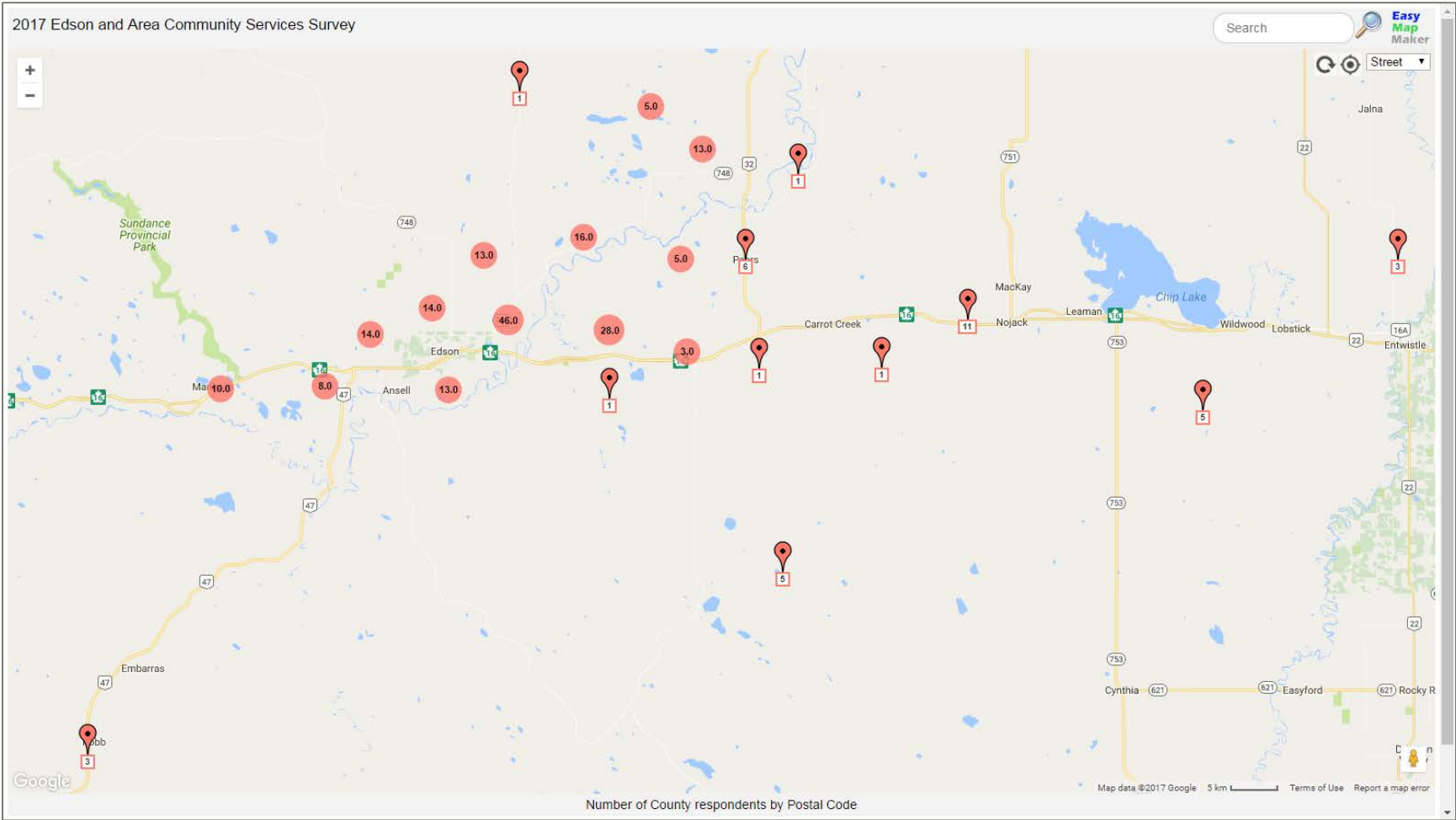
There was good distribution of responses from both municipalities. See Figure 1 and Figure 2 below for scatter grams from each municipality.

Figure 1: Scattergram of responses with postal codes identified as in Edson.



The numbers below the tag indicate the number of households represented for that tag.

Figure 2: Scattergram of responses with postal codes identified as in Yellowhead County.



Circles with numbers in them represent groupings of tags, with the numbers indicating the number of households represented.

A detailed summary of the resident survey results is covered in [Volume 2: Edson and Area Community Services Strategic Plan: Survey Analysis Report](#) (Volume 2).

2.1 Survey Design

The web-based survey was intended to reach as many citizens of the Edson area as possible. It was placed on both municipal websites, and all communications activities asked interested individuals to complete the survey.

The survey was designed to provide three types of information:

- Facility and program usage, including demographics of the users;
- Preferred places for future investment; and
- Suggestions for funding this investment.

The survey was a household survey; that is, one survey would be completed per household. Respondents were asked to give their postal codes, and this data was used as an approximation of the volume of responses from the County and the Town¹. *

Seven hundred eighty-nine surveys were completed, which is a very positive response rate. Five hundred fifty-four were from the Town of Edson, and 226 from Yellowhead County. Nine were from outside the two municipalities or unidentifiable.

The survey was designed for use on SurveyMonkey, and initial analytic data was received directly from Survey Monkey.

2.2 Demographics

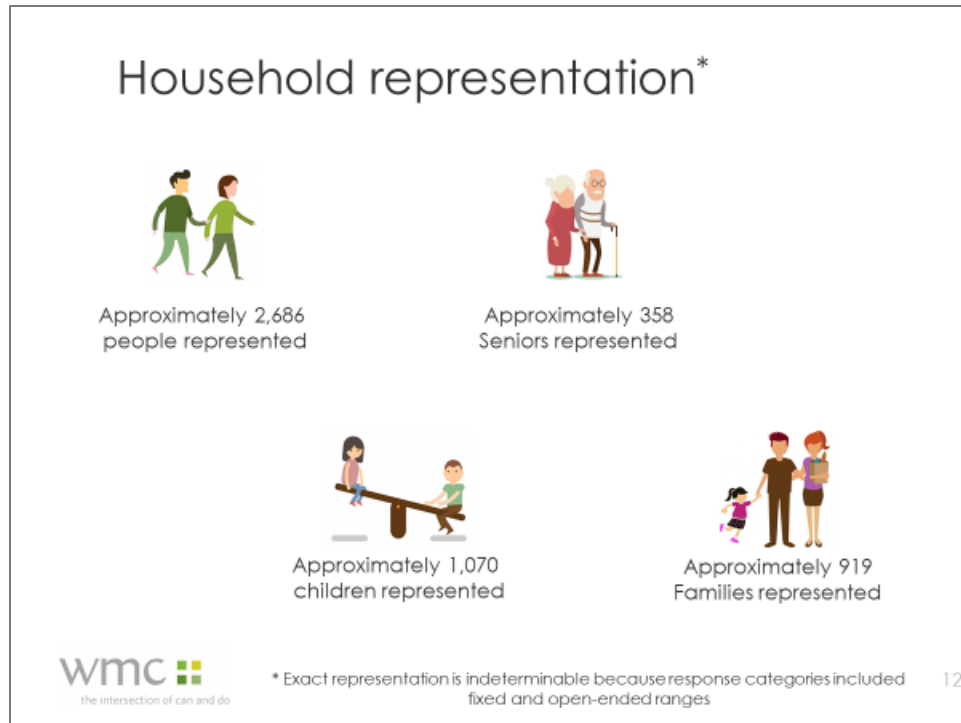
2.2.1 Town or County

Five hundred fifty-four responses were identified as coming from the Town of Edson, while 226 responses were from Yellowhead County. This represents an approximate Town to County postal code representation ratio of 5 to 2. However, as noted above, the County number is under-represented since several County residents have town mailboxes, and therefore, town postal codes.

¹ Some county households have mailboxes in the Town of Edson, so this calculation is useful as an indication, but is not statistically accurate.

2.2.2 Number of Respondents

A calculation based on reported numbers provided the following analysis of the approximate number and groupings of people represented in the survey results:



For more information regarding the demographics, please see Volume 2, Section C.

2.3 Use of Activities, Facilities, and Services

One of the key desired outcomes from the survey was reported use of facilities and programs. Participants were asked to respond in the areas of Recreation Activities; Recreation Facilities; and Library, Cultural and Historical Facilities. A high-level summary is provided below. More detail is in Volume 2, Section D.

Our analysis led to the generation of a comparative statistic that provides an approximate representation of the monthly usage of the respondents that do participate in the activity. More detail on this calculation is in Volume 2: Appendix 2.

2.3.1 Reported Attendance at Library, Cultural and Historical Facilities

Arts & Culture Services (1/2)					
Facility	# of Households (% Town / % County)		# of People		Est. Monthly Usage
 Edson & District Public Library	477 (72/27)		1,256		3,323 
 RED BRICK ARTS CENTRE AND MUSEUM	457 (73/26)		1,122		1,411 
 Galloway Station Museum & Travel Centre	272 (72/26)		690		639 
 CRAFTS CENTRE	81 (70/28)		143		198 
 Niton Public Library	25 (32/68)		56		172 

The highest attendance rates were reported for the following (in order):

1. Edson Public Library

- Calculated monthly usage: 3,323
- Respondents: 477
- Household members: 1,256
- Average usage response: 2.46

2. Red Brick Arts Centre and Museum (Chautauqua performances/school plays/concerts in the theatre)

- Calculated monthly usage: 1,411
- Respondents: 457
- Household members: 1,122
- Average usage response: 1.81

3. Galloway Station Museum

- Calculated monthly usage: 639
- Respondents: 272
- Household members: 690
- Average usage response: 1.56

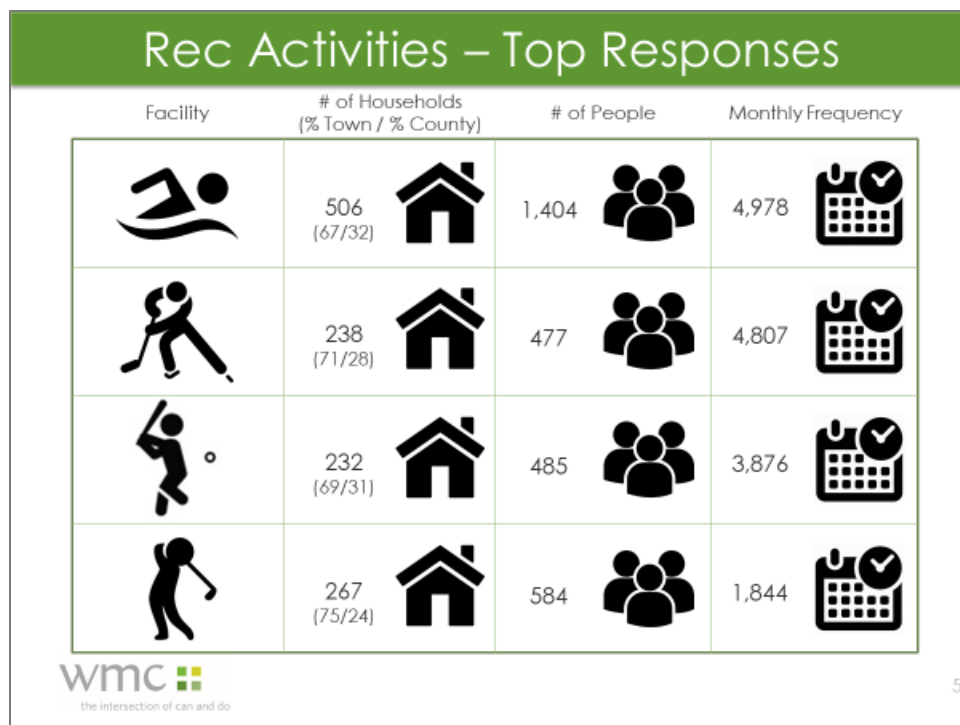
4. Craft Centre (Potter's Guild located in the Edson Library)

- Calculated monthly usage: 198
- Respondents: 81
- Household members: 143
- Average usage response: 1.38

5. Niton Library

- Calculated monthly usage: 172
- Respondents: 25
- Household members: 56
- Average usage response: 2.63

2.3.2 Reported Participation in Recreational Activities



The highest participation rates were reported for the following (in order):

1. Swimming

- Calculated monthly usage statistic: 4,978
- Respondents: 506
- Household members: 1,404
- Average usage response: 2.82

2. Hockey

- Calculated monthly usage: 4,807
- Respondents: 238
- Household members: 477
- Average usage response: 3.61

3. Baseball/Softball/Slow Pitch

- Calculated monthly usage: 3,876
- Respondents: 232
- Household members: 485
- Average usage response: 3.40









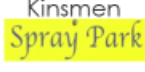











4. Golf

- Calculated monthly usage: 1,844
- Respondents: 267
- Household members: 584
- Average usage response: 2.66

Walking and *Cycling* had high frequency of mentions through the 'Other' category and the open-ended questions.

2.3.3 Reported Attendance at Recreation Facilities

Rec Facilities – Top Responses (1/2)

Facility	# of Households (% Town / % County)	# of People	Est. Monthly Usage
 REPSOL	561 (70/30) 	1,648 	7,896 
 WILLMORE PARK	487 (73/26) 	1,477 	3,668 
 Kinsmen Spray Park	354 (68/31) 	943 	3,296 
 Edson OUTDOOR ICE RINK	257 (74/26) 	752 	2,000 
 Edson Golf Club	298 (76/24) 	663 	1,951 

The highest attendance rates were reported for the following (in order):

1. Repsol Place (hockey, skating, swimming)

- Calculated monthly usage: 7,896
- Respondents: 561
- Household members: 1,648
- Average usage response: 3.08

2. Wilmore Park

- Calculated monthly usage: 3,668
- Respondents: 487
- Household members: 1,477
- Average usage response: 2.39

3. Kinsmen Spray Park

- Calculated monthly usage: 3,296
- Respondents: 354
- Household members: 943
- Average usage response: 2.80

4. Edson Outdoor Skating Rinks

- Calculated monthly usage: 2,000
- Respondents: 257
- Household members: 752
- Average usage response: 2.46

5. Edson Golf Course

- Calculated monthly usage: 1,951
- Respondents: 298
- Household members: 663
- Average usage response: 2.58

See Volume 2: Appendix 3 for more information.

2.4 Priorities for Expansion or Development

Respondents were asked to identify their top three priorities for expansion and/or development.

2.4.1 Key Word Analysis

A sample of Priority One responses are shown below; the bolded words were selected for use in the key word analysis.

- "New swimming **pool**"
- "Getting an **indoor** arena that provides proper **facilities** (washrooms) and spectator seating"
- "**Fieldhouse**"
- "More **arts** culture activities, shows and courses."
- "Sports **facility** like Allen Jean Centre in Whitecourt"
- "Swimming **pool**"
- "Multiplex /**fieldhouse**"
- "Performing **arts** centre"
- "Modernization of **facilities**. Clean energy with more green products or recycled materials used in the buildings and **facilities**. Futuristic and cutting edge."

For each mention as a number one priority, the key word was given a weight of three points. Each priority two mention was given a weight of two, and each priority three mention, given a weight of one. An analysis of the responses showed the following trending areas (in order).

Key Word Indicator	Weighted Score
Indoor	397
Pool	369
Arts	338
Field House	310
Facility/Facilities	288
Theater/Stage	275
Trails	251
Library	195
Recreation	176
Park	171

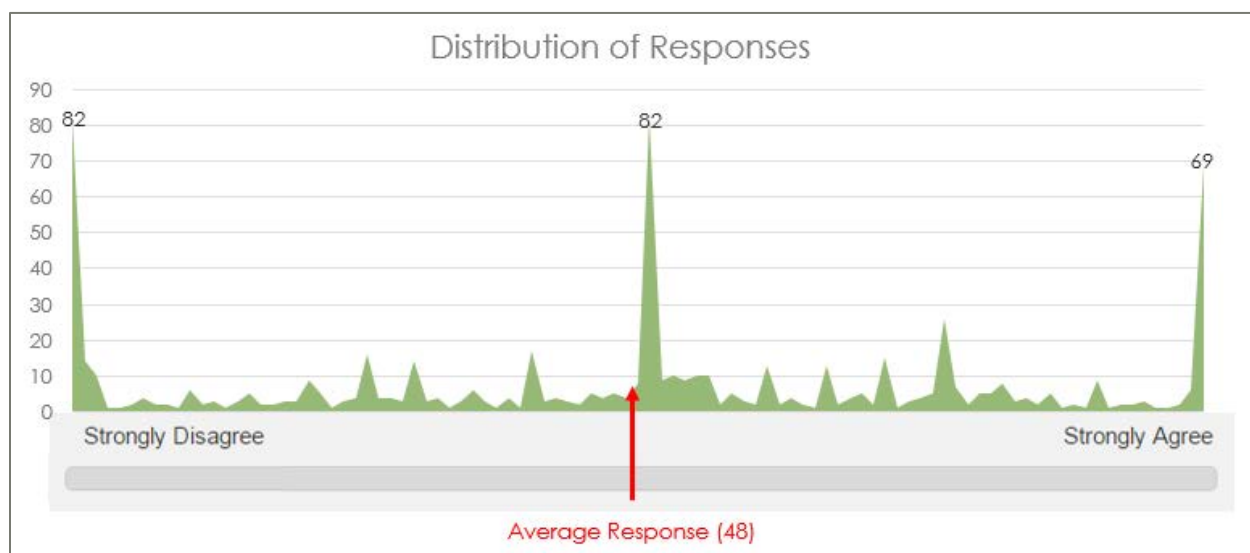
See Volume 2, section E for the list of key words/phrases and sample responses for each priority.

2.5 Suggestions for Funding Sources

Respondents were asked about how expansion and development priorities should be funded by indicating their level of agreement/disagreement on a sliding scale. Their responses are charted below.

2.5.1 Property Taxes

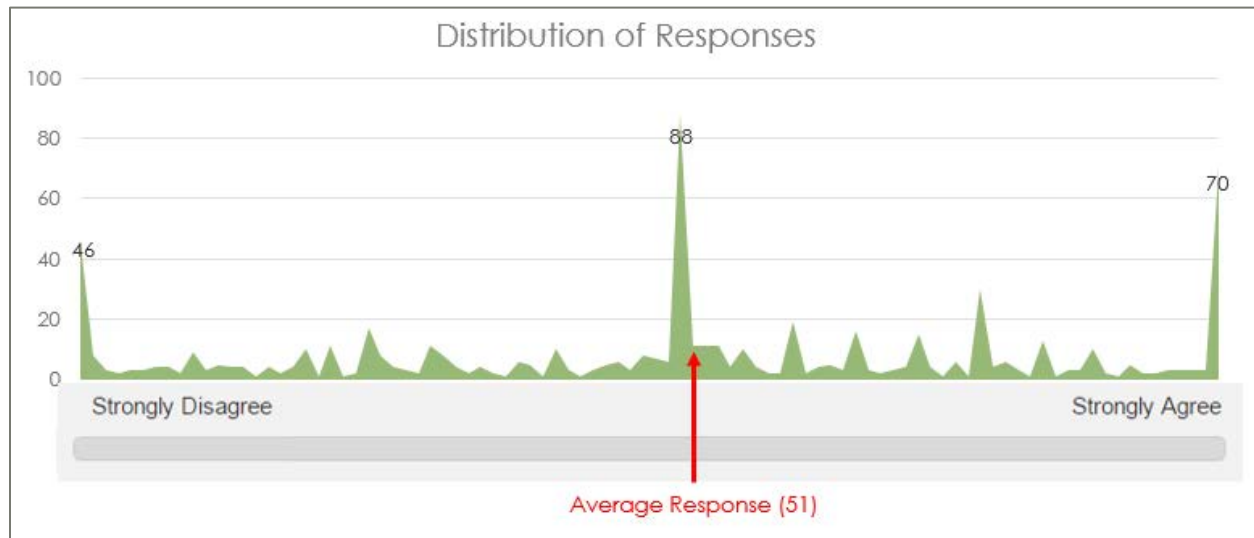
“Do you agree that increased property taxes should be used to pay for your expansion or development priorities?”



385 out of 678 responses were neutral or supported the use of property taxes for the expansion of development priorities. That is 57% of all respondents. If the 82 responses in the middle of the graph are removed from the analysis, there is a very even split of the remaining answers. 303 responses are between 51 and 100, while 293 are between 0 and 49.

2.5.2 User Fees and Charges

“Do you agree that increased fees and charges should be used to pay for your expansion or development priorities?”



There is more support for the use of fees and charges than for the use of property taxes. Otherwise the general pattern of responses is similar to that outlined in 2.5.1.

2.6 Other Funding Suggestions

Respondents were asked for their additional suggestions about how to pay for increased investment in community service facilities.

There was a wide variety of responses to this question, many of which refer to the need to seek grants from other orders of government, sponsorships from industries, municipal tax increases and community fundraising.

A common theme was the need for the two municipalities to work together collaboratively and use resources for the benefit of all citizens of the region.

A full listing of the comments can be found in Volume 2: Appendix 5.

3.0 Comparison Communities to Edson

3.1 Introduction

To better inform the Councils on considerations and experiences with community infrastructure, a short list of comparative communities that had upgraded or developed their recreation and cultural infrastructure in recent years was prepared.

Criteria for selection of communities was based primarily on advice from stakeholder organizations, but included recognition of community size, types or recreation, and cultural upgrades and whether funding was shared.

Interviews were conducted with senior community officials in each community to develop a picture and story of each facility and its history. The descriptions following reflect these findings. They are presented as “representative” examples of Alberta community experience. They are not presented as “best practice” or exemplary, but rather as real-world experiences of like communities.

The following table provides a high-level comparison between the five communities and their facilities and costs related to the major facility. Data has been presented as current (i.e., year of construction) and also inflated to 2017 dollars using the Alberta Inflation Calculator.

Summary of Comparator Findings			
Community	Facility Components	Capital Cost <i>(current and 2017 Dollars)</i>	Annual Operating Cost
Grande Cache	Multiplex (47,000 sq ft): arena, upgraded aquatics centre, outdoor recreation, preschool programming, variety of scheduled and drop-in programs, and indoor climbing wall.	\$22 M (2015) \$22.5 M (2017) \$468 per sq ft (2015) \$480 per sq ft (2017) Share of Cost: Federal and MD - \$6 M Debenture - \$5.63 M	\$3.3 M \$1.226 M from reserve fund to cover operations in 2016.

Summary of Comparator Findings			
Community	Facility Components	Capital Cost (current and 2017 Dollars)	Annual Operating Cost
Town of Athabasca	<p>Multiplex (70,000 sq ft): arena, curling, fieldhouse, walking track, fitness centre, and meeting rooms. Existing pool not included.</p> <p>Other Facilities: theater, library and archive, pottery, and FCSS on a second site.</p>	<p>\$17 M (2008) \$19 M (2017) (no land cost)</p> <p>\$242 per sq ft (2008) \$261 per sq ft (2017)</p> <p>Share of Cost: County – \$6.5 M (60%) Town – \$5 M (40%) Minor Soccer - \$0.5 M Minor Hockey – \$0.3 M Prov Grant - \$2 M Rotary - \$0.4 M Corporate sponsor approximate - \$2 M</p>	<p>N/A Operating funded 50/50 between Town and County</p>
Town of Drumheller	<p>Multiplex (89,000 sq ft): meeting/banquet rooms with servery, fieldhouse and ice surface, running track, fitness centre, library, art gallery, and art studios.</p> <p>Other Recreation facilities: arena, aquatics exist on same site.</p>	<p>\$23.5 M (2012) \$25.3 M (2017)</p> <p>\$264 per sq ft (2012) \$285 per sq ft (2017)</p> <p>Share of Cost (planned): Town reserves - \$5.5 M Fundraising - \$6 M Debenture - \$6 M Grants - \$6 M Fundraising fell well short of plan.</p>	<p>N/A Facility is not yet at break even as of 2017.</p>

Summary of Comparator Findings			
Community	Facility Components	Capital Cost (current and 2017 Dollars)	Annual Operating Cost
Whitecourt	<p>Multiplex (74,000 sq ft): fieldhouse, aquatics, fitness centre, children’s play space, and community rental spaces.</p> <p>Other Recreation and Cultural Facilities: many other recreational and cultural facilities in Whitecourt.</p>	<p>\$28.5 M (2008) \$32.1 M (2017)</p> <p>\$385 per sq ft (2008) \$434 per sq ft (2017)</p> <p>Share of Cost: Debenture – \$8.5 M (29.8%) Grants – \$4.7 M (16.5%) Town – \$1.5 M (5.3%) + \$6.5 M balance (22.8%) Sponsorships – \$1.6 M (5.6%) Woodland County – \$5.7 M (20%)</p>	<p>\$3.5 M actual against \$2.25 M budget</p> <p>Woodland County share is 25%</p> <p>Town makes up difference from its reserves</p>
Yukon Arts Centre (Whitehorse)	<p>Yukon Arts Centre (25,000 sq ft): theater, art gallery, and multi-use spaces.</p> <p>Other: a wide variety of facilities offering recreation, entertainment, Indigenous peoples’ interpretation, retail and other experiences.</p>	<p>\$5 M est max (1992) \$8.5 M (2017)</p> <p>\$120-\$200 per sq ft (1992) EST. \$204-\$340 per sq ft (2017)</p>	<p>\$2 M estimated.</p> <p>Share of Op Cost: Yukon Gov’t - \$1 M Project funds (gov’t) \$0.5 M Earned revenue - \$0.5 M</p>

3.2 Grande Cache

With a population of approximately 3,300, which declined 14% between 2011 and 2016, Grande Cache was able to upgrade the community pool and arena sites to a multiplex facility in 2015.

3.2.1 Facilities

Components of the multiplex are as follows:

Arena

- NHL size ice surface
- Spectator seating for 700
- Four dressing rooms with showers and washroom facilities
- Referee room
- Overhead door entry for large equipment
- Ice generally ready at the end of September until March
- Arena surface available for weddings/rentals in the summer months



Aquatic Centre

- 6 lane 25m pool
- 2 dive boards (1m and 3m)
- Wheelchair lift
- Leisure/Wave Pool
- Lazy River
- Zero beach entry
- Hot Tub
- Sauna
- Steam room
- Offers Red Cross Swim Lessons, Fitness Programs and Lifesaving Society course



Central Park

- Spray Park
- Changeroom/washroom facility
- Paved Basketball Court
- Green Gym with a full range of fitness equipment
- Paved walking trails
- Amphitheater

Creative Kids Preschool

- Preschool for ages 3-5 located in the Grande Cache Recreation Centre.
- Preschool program where they love every child's uniqueness and their ability to explore, play and learn. Through facilitated play, games, crafts and songs we explore the world around us. We introduce children to a classroom environment – setting the stage for a love of learning.
- Our licensed preschool introduces children to a classroom environment, setting the stage for an easy transition to kindergarten. The preschool features certified Early Childhood Educators and an outdoor classroom.
- Additional drop off and parented programs are available year-round. These programs provide opportunity to connect with other parents, enhance development in all developmental domains and designated to be affordable fun.

Grotto Climbing Cave

- An indoor climbing cave fun for the whole family
- Call about special programs and birthday parties

Programs

- The Grande Cache Recreation Centre houses the Department of Community Services that offers a variety of community programs and events for all ages that include registered programs, drop in programs and fitness programs.

The 47,000-square foot space included and upgrade of the aquatic facility (39,000 feet) originally constructed in 1970. The new space was integrated with the old recreation spaces, and the entire development is located very centrally in the community.

3.2.2 Financial Considerations

Recreation plays a large role in the municipal financial picture in Grande Cache:

- Total capital cost for the improvements was about \$22 million.
- Federal and Municipal District contribution was \$6 million, received in fiscal 2015.
- Annual operating net revenue for recreation and culture is about \$3.3 million
- Council allocated \$1.226 million from its reserve fund to recreation and culture in 2016.
- Recreation costs represent 25% of budgeted expenses for Grande Cache in 2017.
- Debenture borrowing from Alberta Capital Finance Authority was \$5.63 million, with principal budgeted at \$1,012,191 in 2016 with interest budgeted at \$198,516 in that year.

- Debenture debt is paid out of general taxes in Grande Cache.
- Long-term loan principal payments are 5% of budget in 2017.

While there was a financial commitment to capital from the private sector initially, this funding did not materialize.

The complex did not receive a lot of grant funding other than the original Federal and MD capital commitment.

Overall capital costs are estimated to be \$468 per square foot in 2015.

3.2.3 Considerations and Advice

Grande Cache management offered the following suggestions:

- A good deal of design oversight is required to manage an integration of buildings as they did in Grande Cache. A clear assessment of issues in this regard should be done at the planning stage.
- A good building management system is critical to success.
- Adequate parking for multiple events should be factored in, as this will be the hub of the community.
- Maintenance agreements for the new building(s) should be negotiated at the outset.
- If building new aquatic centre – Life Savings Society should be consulted – so they can ensure design is optimal from staffing (lifeguard) perspective (i.e. line of sights to all areas)

3.3 Town of Athabasca

Athabasca has a population of 2,965 (2016), having declined marginally between 2011 and 2016. A recent study shows that the Town serves a market area of an additional 8,000-11,000 people who call Athabasca "their town" and reside in Athabasca County (2016 population of 7,869) or the surrounding Villages and lakeside communities. Highway 813 connects the Town to Calling Lake and the Wabasca-Demarais region and is the higher order service centre for its population.

The local economy builds upon a strong small-business sector and a permanent employment base at Athabasca University, Alberta-Pacific Forest Industries, and public sector jobs in health, education, and social services. As a gateway to the new industrial north, Athabasca is also a centre for employment in oil and gas exploration and services, forestry and supporting services, agricultural, food, hardware, and retail services.

The Town of Athabasca and Athabasca County embarked on construction of a major facility called the Athabasca Regional Multiplex. With a 60/40 commitment from these jurisdictions, the partners raised significant government and corporate support to ultimately open the large regional multiplex in March 2008.

The Town of Athabasca Recreation Department is part of the Athabasca Regional Multiplex Society which is a shared partnership with the County of Athabasca. The Athabasca Regional Multiplex Society acts as a liaison between community groups within the Town and Athabasca County. The Multiplex staff act as administrators for most of the town facilities

3.3.1 Facilities

The community is very well matched to Edson and Area, offering residents:

- The Athabasca Regional Multiplex;
- Nancy Appleby Theatre (Centre for the Performing Arts);
- The Alice B. Donahue Library and Archives; and
- The Old Brick School.

These facilities are organized in two “pods”. The recreational pod contains many recreation facilities in a single area, while the Cultural Complex is centered around the Old Brick School. A high-level description of each facility is provided following.

The Recreational Complex

The Athabasca Regional Multiplex, constructed in 2008, contains over 70,000 square feet of recreation:

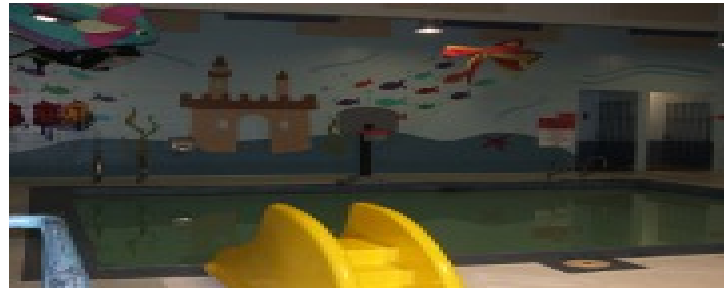
- **Athabasca Landing Swimming Pool** (public swim, family swim, hot tub, sauna, lane swim and swimming fitness programs).
- **Cenovus Arena** (public skate, Shiny Hockey)
- **CNRL Curling Rink** (drop-in curling)
- **Rotary Field House Courts** (including the use of the use of sports equipment for volleyball, badminton, tennis, basketball, floor hockey, soccer and other activities.



- **Rotary Field House Track** (walking track)
- **Stone Fish Rental Fitness Centre** (cardiovascular equipment, strength building equipment, free weights, rowing machines, etc.)

Rotary Field House

- 26,000 sq. ft.
- Holds up to 1,600 people
- Venue for large events such as sports tournament, weddings, banquets, conferences, trade shows, etc.



- Equipped with dividers for smaller events or multiple events happening at the same time.

Buy Low Lounge

- 2,400 sq. ft.
- Suited to smaller events such as banquets, weddings, meetings, business or social functions
- Can hold up to 175 people with tables and chairs

Perpetual and Scotia Bank Meeting Rooms

- The rooms combined are 1,800 sq. ft.
- Each meeting room can accommodate 25-30 people
- Divider wall separates the meeting rooms or the two meeting rooms can be combined
- Space includes white board, cupboards, sink, tables, chairs and wireless internet
- Screen, coffee or projector can be provided

CNRL Curling Rink

- 12,000 sq. ft.
- Can hold up to 400 people
- Lounge venue suited to weddings, banquets, conferences, social or business gatherings

Cenovus Arena

- 26,000 sq. ft.
- Perfect setting for large events, such as trade fairs, sports tournaments, community dinners or other similar events

Stonefish Rentals Fitness Center

- Equipped with the latest fitness equipment

Each facility within the multiplex has a business' name in its title (corporate sponsorship).



Cultural Complex

The Theatre, Library, and old brick school are located near each other on the school site.

Nancy Appleby Theater (Athabasca Performing Arts Centre)

- 780 sq. ft. stage
- Ideal for any type of performance
- Features 280 seats, green room, fully equipped lighting and sound board technology



- The Nancy Appleby Theatre has served as home to numerous local, national and international productions. It is currently home to the Athabasca Arts Alliance, Heartwood Folk Club, E.P.C. Drama Club, PAPA (Performing Arts Presenters of Athabasca), and Athabasca and District Music Festival.

Alice B. Donahue Library and Archives

Programs

- All programs are free
- Story Time 1x/week

Services

- Free public access computers/internet
- Wireless access
- Assistive technology work station
- Photocopying/printing
- Archive: to preserve and make available for research, materials containing historical evidence about the Town of Athabasca, County of Athabasca, and related regions.

The Old Brick School (Athabasca Public School)

- Historic Athabasca school, built in 1913 and originally designed with four classrooms, and used for all grades until the 1950s
- Was reported as one of the 25 most significant historic resources in Athabasca
- Today it's home to:
 - Athabasca and Area Family and Community Support Services (FCSS); and
 - The Athabasca Pottery Club.

The Nancy Appleby Theatre is located at the rear of the building and the library is adjoining on the south side.

3.3.2 Financial Considerations

The capital budget for the Multiplex was under \$17 million in 2008. A 99-year lease for \$1/year on the Athabasca University lands ensured joint use by the University community and removed land acquisition as a factor. Funding partners:

- Primary funding: 60% County (\$6.5m) and 40% Town (\$5 million)
- User group fundraising – Minor Soccer (\$500,000) and Minor Hockey (\$300,000) and Others (\$200,000).
- Alberta Centennial Grant from Province of Alberta – \$2 million
- Rotary funding and naming sponsor of the Field House – \$400,000.
- Corporate naming sponsor contributed the remainder (estimated at approximately \$2 million).
- Operating budget is split 50/50 between the Town and County.
- The Athabasca Regional Multiplex Society manages all jointly-owned facilities

Overall costs are estimated to be \$242 per square foot in 2008.

3.3.3 Considerations and Advice

- If you are going to spend this amount of money, don't look for ways to cut corners; the long-term gain will outweigh the headaches faced due to corner cutting. Even those who disagree with it are likely to want it "done right."
- It won't be a success without community buy-in and investment.

- The Town and County have approved the construction of a new \$16 million aquatic centre:
 - Capital funding split of 60/40 - \$9 million County; \$6 million Town to cover \$15 million
 - \$650,000 in provincial grants;
 - Raising \$350,000 in corporate naming sponsorship and fundraising.

The Town and County provide 50/50 funding to the multiplex, whose staff also act as administrators for all other town facilities. The multiplex has a field house, arena, fitness centre, curling rinks and a number of lounges/meeting rooms.

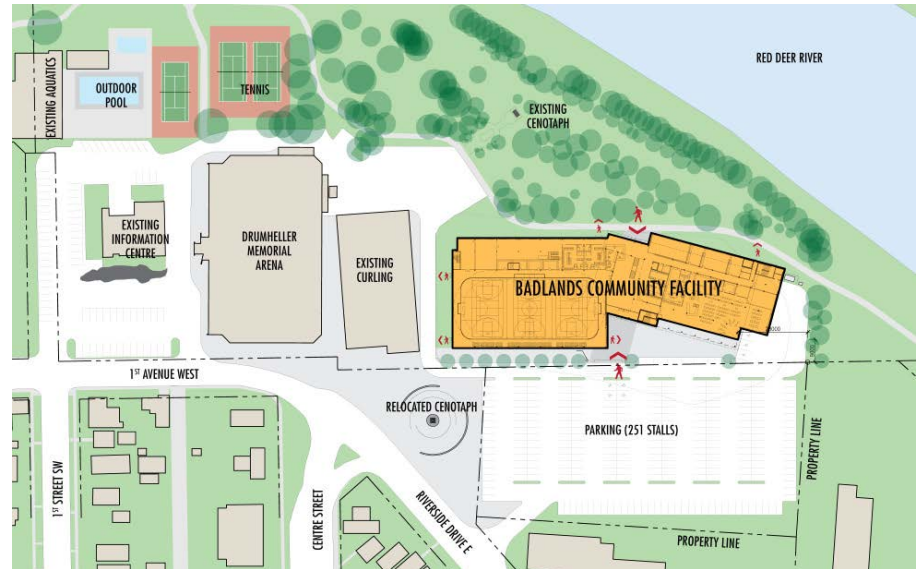
3.4 Town of Drumheller



The Badlands Community Facility (BCF) is a 7,700-square metre facility developed in 2012 as a final part of a “recreation node” in central Drumheller and on the banks of the Red Deer River. This regional node comprised the new BCF facility, and existing curling centre, the existing Drumheller Memorial arena, and outdoor pool and spray park, and tennis courts.

This node is also the location of the Drumheller information centre with its major Dinosaur attraction, serving as information source and stopping point for some 500,000 visitors annually to this community of about 8,000 people.

While the Town of Drumheller has a population of 8,000, the service area is estimated at 14,000 people. With Royal Tyrrell Dinosaur Museum of Palaeontology located near town, the impact of 500,000 visitors annually supports very significant hospitality and retail infrastructure beyond what most communities of similar size might enjoy.



3.4.1 Facilities

The town is home to a number of major tourism facilities, including:

- The **Royal Tyrrell Museum of Palaeontology**, a 122,000-square foot facility recognized as the centre of dinosaur interpretation and a world scale dinosaur bone area.
- The **Canadian Badlands Amphitheatre**, a large outdoor site that hosts the Canadian Badlands Passion Play, music festivals, live performance and other events over the summer period.



An extensive paved trail system along the river provides an additional amenity in this community.



The **Drumheller Memorial Arena**, home of the Junior 'A' Drumheller Dragons, also serves minor hockey, Figure skating, adult hockey and fun team schedules. It is configured to support major events with media coverage:

- Seating capacity of 1,800 with extra 444 standing room
- Single ice surface is 85 ft. 200 ft. and 18 ft. high
- Centre ice has tunnel between two change rooms with an outside door to an alley
- 6 dressing rooms and 2 referee rooms, one with a shower
- Press box can seat 5-6 people and is at center ice on the west side and has telephone access
- Audio and video lines can be easily run along the open rafters
- Commentary is usually done on a 4x8 platform about 7 ft. off the ice surface off the east side
- PA system can be accessed from the press box and the time keeper station at ice level just below the press box

The **Drumheller Aquaplex** includes an indoor and outdoor pool and a spray park:

- The **indoor pool** consists of a 6-lane shallow (1.1 m to 1.8 m) area great for all ages to enjoy a fun splash in the pool or for a great workout.
- The deep end (3.6 m) has a diving board and a swinging rope
- Hot tub and steam room, located in the indoor pool area.
- 150-foot waterslide
- Our heated **outdoor pool** has 6 lanes with a shallow (1.1 m) and a deep area (2.6 m).
- During those months, both pools are available on the same swim schedule.

Rotary Spray Park is in front of the world's largest dinosaur and the Aquaplex:

- The spray park normally operates from the May long weekend through to mid-September with exceptions being because the weather and maintenance.

The Drumheller Badlands Community Facility

This 7,700-square metre (89,000 square foot) facility, designed by GEC Architecture, was constructed at an estimated cost of \$23.5 million. The facility is comprised of:

- Meeting and banquet hall – 7,700 square feet – seating 500 people and divisible into 3 rooms;
- Pre-Function Space – 2,600 square feet



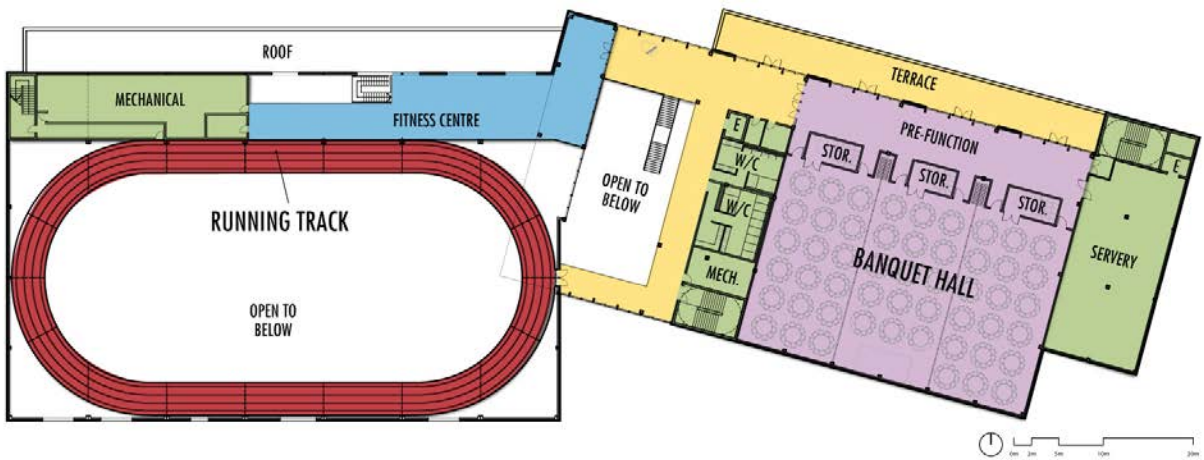
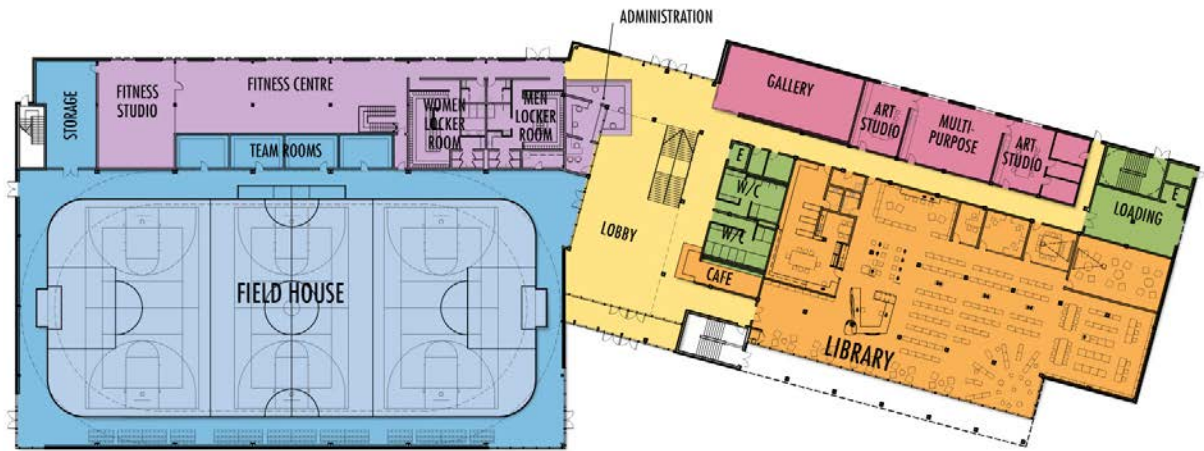
- The community library – approximately 7,000 square feet
- An art gallery
- A clay studio
- Small spaces for art studios, multi-purpose rooms;



- Servery/kitchen- 2,300 square feet
- A multi-use fieldhouse and ice surface – approximately 14,000 square feet
- A raised indoor running track
- A fitness centre and fitness studio – approximately 2,300 square feet



- Building lobby, common areas, and service functions.
- Parking for 250 cars.



B.4.2 Financial Considerations

Built in 2012, the proposed funding for the \$23.5 million project included:

- \$5.5 million from Drumheller existing reserves;
- \$6.0 million from fundraising;
- \$6.0 million from debenture borrowing;
- \$6.0 million from grants.



The building program raised only \$2.5 million from fundraising and small contributions from surrounding Counties.

Cost per square foot is estimated to be \$264 per square foot in 2012. This was for the Multiplex exclusive of the aquatic centre and existing arena on the site.

The aquatic centre is scheduled for a 1.2 million upgrade in 2017.



Operational Information

- Operating budget not provided.
- The facility is not yet at 100% cost recovery, they are close to break even.
- Definitely best amongst all recreational facilities in the area.

3.4.3 Considerations and Advice

- Flexibility in use of space has been key to outperforming projections (e.g. they didn't plan to host funeral/memorial services)
- Built with a certain sport in mind (lacrosse) but it diminished in the area
- Event facilities are competitive with hotels that have opened in the area
- Built as part of a recreation hub (i.e. close to other recreation facilities and connected by pathways). This "hub" approach is effective for the Drumheller community
- Overbuilt on kitchen facilities were overbuilt compared to demand and underbuilt on office space for community service personnel.

3.5 Whitecourt

The Town of Whitecourt had a 2016 population of 10,204 which grew 6.2 percent between 2011 and 2016 according to Statistics Canada. It has a young population, with an average age of 33.4 and some 22.9% aged 14 or under.

In 2008, Whitecourt opened a regional Multiplex with a field house, aquatic centre, fitness centre, running track, Go Zone, table tennis, courts, and kids corner. This multiplex complemented the community arena, library and interpretive centre.



3.5.1 Facilities

Including the Allan and Jean Millar Centre, a signature facility, Whitecourt has a number of recreational and cultural attractions of note.

Forest Interpretive Centre and Heritage Park

- 7,300 square foot facility that features meeting spaces, Whitecourt's Visitor Information Centre and multi-media gallery. Multi-media gallery explores role of the forest in Whitecourt's growth and development
- Located on the grounds surrounding the Forest Interpretive Centre, Heritage Park features three visitor accessible buildings, a barn and a number of assorted antique vehicles and farm machinery.
- 800-metre interpretive trail winds through the forest
- All public areas of the facility are wheelchair accessible
- Accredited Visitor Information Centre open year round
- Local, provincial and national visitor information is available
- RV parking available
- Meeting rooms available to rent



- Public washrooms and picnic area
- Sani-dump station located on grounds

Scott Safety Centre

- Houses two ice rinks and a restaurant
- McLeod Rink opens in August for summer ice time and stays open until the end of March
- Athabasca Rink is available from October to the end of March
- The following user categories are listed in determining order of priority:
 - Tournaments and special events such as hosting provincial sporting tournaments and minor and adult pre-booked tournaments, upon the approval of the Community Services Department
 - Town-sponsored programs, such as public skating
 - Junior Hockey playoff commitments
 - Junior Hockey league commitments
 - Minor Sport playoff commitments
 - Minor Sport league commitments. This may include minor hockey, figure skating, fun hockey and ringette. Minor sport shall develop a schedule for use that is mutually acceptable to all groups. In the event of conflicts, the Community Services Advisory Board shall arbitrate and make decisions. Town Council will be the last venue for appeal of Board decisions
 - Female hockey that uses the facility as their home rink and that play 75% of their games with competition not based in Whitecourt
 - Adult recreational hockey – will be allocated a minimum of three start times between Monday and Thursday, no later than 9:45pm and will receive all Sunday times available after 6:30pm
 - School activity



Whitecourt Rotary Park

- Features picnic areas, sport fields, playground, asphalt trails, beach volleyball courts and a pond that is stocked for family fishing in the summer and cleared for winter skating.

Rotary Park Playground



- Features a mega tower with tall towers and tube slides that provide 30 feet of sliding thrills; a typhoon spiral slide; as well as a monkey bar climber
- Rocks and ropes adventure course
- Little Tikes play structure
- Electronic ICON component

Whitecourt River Slides

- Open during summer months, includes two man-made creeks with a series of pools and drops for tubing and play, with a shallow basin and beach at the end of the creeks
- Slides will be open when outside air temperature is 16+C, weather permitting



Whitecourt Splash Park

- Contains various interactive play areas for children of all ages.
- Open throughout spring/summer month

Whitecourt Curling Rink

- Operated by the Whitecourt Curling Club
- Offers men's, women's, mixed and junior curling league from mid-October to end of March

Whitecourt Skateboard Park

- For skateboard and bike enthusiasts
- Plaza-style design includes many street skateboarding features including: stairs, rails, hips (two ramps placed together at an angle), and hubbas (a ledge running alongside a set of stairs)
- Layout has left room for a second phase of the skatepark which will feature a concrete bowl for skaters to fine tune their tricks

Carlan Services Community Resource Centre

- Boys and Girls Club of Whitecourt and District After School Care and Teen Centre
- Whitecourt Early Learning Child Care Centre
- Whitecourt Food Bank
- Whitecourt Gymnastics Club
- Town of Whitecourt Family Community Liaison Program
- Multi-purpose activity room and meeting space available for rent
- This facility houses 400+ people at a sit-down banquet with full kitchen facilities.

Whitecourt Golf and Country Club

- 18-hole golf course with clubhouse facilities and pro-shop

Eastlink Park – Ski and Snowboard

- Beginner ski and snowboard hill
- Features a terrain park for the more advanced and tubing runs
- Park amenities:
 - 6.18 acres of skiable area
 - 92 feet of vertical drop
 - Terrain Park with rails, boxes and jumps
 - Parent and Tot learn to ski run
 - 2,580-foot-long tubing runs
 - Snowmaking capability

Whitecourt Heritage Park

- Located on the grounds surrounding the Forest Interpretive Centre
- Features three visitor accessible heritage buildings and a number of assorted antique vehicles and farm machinery

- Old Blue Ridge Church often used for weddings
- 800-metre interpretive trail winds through the forest

Whitecourt Trail System

- Over 50 km of walking trails.
- Whitecourt and surrounding area have hundreds of kilometres of designated trails for off-highway vehicles (including snowmobiles and quads) within Town boundaries and only allows for seasonal use from December 1 to March 3.

Allan and Jean Millar Centre

The Allan and Jean Millar Centre offers recreation and leisure activities for all ages and skill levels. It provides a venue for tournaments, trade shows, and cultural events and will become Whitecourt's community meeting place.

The centre totals 74,000 square feet and is located on a 10-acre site occupied with the arena and curling centre. The major components of the facility are supported by named sponsors. Each facility is summarized following.

ATB Financial Fieldhouse

- A multi-use sport area that can be configured for a variety of sports, including: soccer, volleyball, basketball, badminton, and other indoor activities and events.
- Second floor running/walking track
- 2 Gannett Publishing and Alberta Newsprint Company Courts with one that can be converted for racquet ball
- Squash court
- Dressing rooms
- A second floor viewing area with seating for approximately 188 people

After school youth drop-in sports and evening adult drop-in sports are offered Monday through Thursday.

Alliance Pipeline Aquatic Centre

- 25 metre main pool
- Tot pool
- Zero depth entry leisure play pool with Infrastech Water Play Park
- "Lazy river" water feature

- 34-person hot tub
- Whitecourt Transport Water Slide
- Steam room
- Meeting room and classroom area for programming and parties
- Change rooms, including a family change room
- Second floor viewing area with seating for approximately 175 people

ASAP Heating and Well Servicing Fitness Centre

- State-of-the-art cardio equipment
- Weight training area
- Bright fitness studio
- Spacious change rooms
- Registered fitness classes and complimentary member fitness classes

McDonald's Whitecourt Go Active Zone

The designated drop-in indoor play area provides supervised children under the age of 8 with a host of fun activities and opportunities to play with other children. The Go Active Zone contains a permanent indoor playground structure and climbing wall.

Community Rental Spaces

The meeting room and classroom areas offer a variety of opportunities for parties, special events, business meetings, conferences and community programming.

3.5.2 Financial Considerations

The 2008 capital budget for the facility was \$28.5 million, with financing as follows:

- \$8.5 debenture (29.8%)
- \$4.7 million in grants (16.5%)
- \$1.5 million + balance from Town (5.3%)
- \$1.6 million in sponsorships (5.6%)
- \$5.7 million from Woodland County (20%)
- \$6.5 million (the balance) funded by Town (22.8%)

Overall costs are estimated to be \$385 per square foot.

Operating costs approximate \$3.5 million annually against a budget of \$2.25 million. Woodland county contributes 25% of the budget, and the Town of Whitecourt makes up any shortfall from its reserves.

3.5.3 Considerations and Advice

- The minute they moved into the space, they had to plan how to maximize their (limited) storage and office space.
- Parking has been inadequate.
- There is anecdotal evidence that their centre has supported economic development: prospective people and companies are being brought to the multiplex and are a reason people and companies choose to move into the area.
- As one more general observation – definitely build the “lazy river” and the hot tub as a part of the pool plan – they are very popular.

3.6 Yukon Arts Centre

Constructed initially in 1992, the Yukon Arts Centre (YAC) was envisioned as a centre to celebrate the range of artists from across the Yukon to the benefit of both Yukoners and visitors.

The Yukon Arts Centre provides programming in the performing and visual arts and art education. The centre also administers Yukon government programming such as Culture Quest, the Cultural Industry Training Fund, artist residency opportunities and Culture Days.



The YAC is governed by a policy governance Board, the Yukon Arts Centre Corporation, appointed by the Legislature and the Minister of Culture and Tourism in consultation with the Yukon arts community.

Mission Statement

The Yukon Arts Centre (YAC) is a not-for-profit charitable organization dedicated to the development of the arts as an important cultural, social and economic force in the Yukon. We intend to be a model for the development of the arts in the North and a stimulus for a vibrant and creative territory. YAC is the territory's premier venue for performing and visual arts.

Ends Statements

The Yukon Arts Centre exists to provide access to the arts for all people in the Yukon so that:

1. All have experiences that awaken, educate, challenge and transform in welcoming venues and settings;

2. All have meaningful and inclusive dialogue among people of diverse cultures and backgrounds;
3. There is cultural understanding, development, promotion and preservation;
4. All engage our creative and innovative spirits;
5. There is expression of artistic potential for artists of all ages (inclusively defined); and
6. There is the development and sustenance of a vibrant cultural and creative sector (including artists, organizations, small commercial businesses).

Functional Focus

The YAC focuses on a number of key areas:

- **Arts Presentation** – The YAC is the Yukon’s premier venue to experience art in all its forms, from visual arts to dance, drama and music of all genres, to hands-on workshops and talks.
- **Performing Arts** – The YAC showcases cutting-edge performances from the national arts scene, primarily in its 428-seat proscenium theatre boasting outstanding acoustics and top-of-the line technical support. The Old Fire Hall, located in the city centre, also presents live performing arts.
- **Visual Arts** – The 4,200 sq. ft. Public Art Gallery presents exhibitions all year long, showcasing exciting contemporary art from the North and across the country.
- **Public Programming** – The YAC offers and administers educational programs for children, youth and adults, including government-funded programs.

Cultural Development

Part of the mandate of the YAC is to deliver or facilitate cultural development. To this end, the YAC works closely with community arts organizations, groups and artists for the development of the arts and a cultural economy in the Yukon. This involves providing support for groups such as ArtsNet, Partners in Arts Education, Artspace North and Arts Underground.

The Yukon Arts Centre also administers Culture Quest, an art creation program funded by Yukon Tourism and Culture, the Cultural Industry Training Fund, and manages The Old Fire Hall.

3.6.1 Whitehorse Facilities

Whitehorse, Yukon, has a wide variety of facilities offering recreation, entertainment, indigenous peoples’ interpretation, retail and other experiences for its population of 25,000 people. In addition to its residential population, Whitehorse receives hundreds of thousands of tourist visitors, primarily over the sort summer season. This tourism market bolsters the hospitality, attractions,

tourism operator, and retail economies of this community. Total visitation to Yukon in 2016 was estimated to be approximately 300,000 visits.

3.6.2 Yukon Arts Centre Facilities

The YAC operates the YAC theatre, the YAC Art Gallery, and the Old Fire Hall venue. The main facility is approximately 25,000 sq. ft.

The Theatre

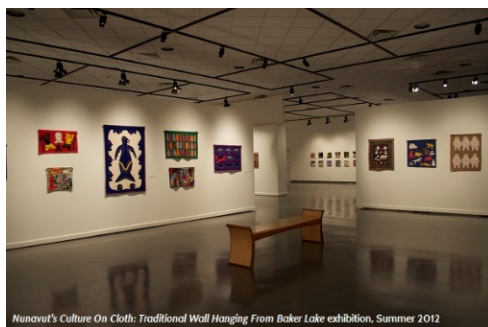
The Yukon Arts Centre Theatre is a proscenium stage with raked audience chamber and balcony. Our capacity is 428 seats, including space for 10 wheelchairs. It offers the following:

- **Backstage** – 2 large dressing rooms and 2 individual dressing/costume rooms.
- **Studio Theatre** – a rehearsal studio or small presentation venue seating 40.
- **Green Room** – lounge, kitchen, quiet meeting space for small groups.
- **Foyer** – a large meeting space for groups of up to 250.
- **Coat Check** – by donation.
- **Bar and Concession** – licensed service during performances.
- **Accessible Venue** – the Theatre is wheelchair accessible on the main floor.



The Theatre is about 90% occupied in 2017.

The Gallery



The YAC Public Art Gallery is the only Class-A facility in northern Canada. The Gallery hosts exhibitions all year long, and showcases northern, national and international artists. The gallery is located on one level with 370 ft of running wall over 4200 ft² of floor space. The space is divided by semi-permanent partitions, creating three distinct gallery areas.

Nunavut's Culture On Cloth: Traditional Wall Hanging From Baker Lake exhibition, Summer 2012

- Drywall over 3/4-inch plywood on steel studs.
- 14 ft. suspended ceiling
- Marmoleum on concrete slab on grade.
- Stable 20° C and 40% relative humidity.
- Incandescent track light fixtures range from 50 lux to 500 lux. No natural light.

The Old Fire Hall

Located in the Whitehorse downtown core, within walking distance of hotels, shops, restaurants and bars. The Old Fire Hall's intimate space has offered theatre, live music, dance, and visual art exhibitions, film screenings, book launches, conferences and retreats, and other community cultural programming. Specific venue within the Old Fire Hall include:



- **Gallery** – visual art gallery in eight-foot ceiling space with available wall panels.
- **Performance** – a stage/screening room with row seating accommodating up to 100 persons. Can also be configured to theatrical setup for 72 patrons.
- **Meeting/Conference** – The rooms handles maximum 120-person theatre style, 80 persons in the round, and 30 persons in U format.
- **Outdoor spaces** – one space with tent anchors and one informal space add to the available spaces.

The Old Fire Hall experiences about 50% occupancy in 2017.

Yukon Arts Centre Programming

The YAC offers and/or administers a number of programs supporting arts and cultural development in the Yukon. A short list includes:

- **Public Programs** – gallery tours, the art library, talks at the Old Fire Hall, and culture days programming
- **Artists Programs** – Culture Quest, Cultural industries Training Fund, Chilkoot Trail Artists Residency, Art House Carcross, Culture Quest 150
- **Youth Education** – Kids Create Classes, Atco Electric Yukon Youth Gallery, Gallery Tours

- **Yukon Arts Audience Awards** – administered by YAC
- **Jenni House Artist Residency** – an emerging Northern artist residency



3.6.2 Financial Considerations

The 1992 capital budget for the 25,000 sq. ft facility was approximately \$3-5 million, with financing coming almost strictly from the Yukon Government.

Overall costs are estimated to be \$120-\$200 per square foot in 1992 dollars, or about \$240-\$400 in 2017 dollars.

Present day operating costs approximate \$2 million annually against a revenue budget about the same. Approximately 75% of the revenues received are from government: Funding

- \$1.0 million in base public funds (mostly Government of Yukon)
- \$0.5 million in project funds provided by government (mostly Government of Yukon)
- \$0.5 million in earned revenues

The YAC recently signed a further three-year agreement with Government of Yukon.

3.6.3 Considerations and Advice

- Theaters are not easy to run for municipalities – better run by a non-profit (e.g. Yukon Arts Foundation)
- Cutting costs in the capital project leads to costs later.
- Having excellent kitchen facilities supports a greater number of events (increase revenues) and creates more of a cultural centre (people gather and have events where there is good food)
- Create a sense of ownership in the community who can then become a huge driver – community input is required.
- Location and Accessibility cannot be underestimated

4.0 Existing Facilities Assessment

4.1 Introduction

WMC was taken through a visual inspection of the Edson facilities that are referenced in this document. City staff provided access to back areas of each facility and discussed maintenance and operating requirements and issues. On the basis of this site inspection and WMC experience, we have made comments on these facilities in relation to the future.

The firm of Scheffer Andrew Ltd., Planners and Engineers, was retained to conduct a similar and high-level review of the facilities and to comment on the basis of its experience. This section also summarizes those high-level comments of Scheffer Andrew Ltd. A letter detailing the Sheffer Andrew Ltd. recommendations is available in Appendix A.

The nature of this review should be clearly stated. In both cases the consultants conducted a “walk-through” of the facilities. They reviewed past material, and in particular, the more detailed work of Paul Conrad and Associates reported in 2006 (see Appendix B). To the extent that buildings have not received major renovation since that time, their age and condition has deteriorated from that time.

In the section following, WMC summarizes our observations with respect to each facility:

- Repsol Place;
- Edson and District Recreation Complex;
- Edson and District Public Library;
- Galloway Station Museum;
- Red Brick Arts Centre & Museum; and
- Boys and Girls Club.

4.2 Repsol Place

Ice Arenas

Located centrally in Edson, and walkable for many citizens, Repsol Place provides both ice sport and aquatic services for Edson and Area Residents. The centre includes two indoor ice surfaces, a 25-metre indoor pool, a wading pool and associated facilities. The site is approximately 7.5 acres with some 4.4 acres occupied by existing facilities and parking.

The “old arena” has many issues, primarily issues of age. The oldest part of the building, the Centennial Arena is 50 years old, having been constructed in 1967. While it received upgrades in 2007, there remain significant issues with space heating, plumbing and drainage.

The Memorial Arena, while newer, suffers from a low ceiling height and boards built against the structure and therefore having little flexibility. Both issues reduce desirability from a competitive hockey perspective.

Spectator capacity is about 950, so it cannot handle large tournament crowds.

Aquatic Centre

While the aquatic centre was recently given a facelift, the physical plant needs replacement. Further, the pool does not offer the eight lanes that are standard for competitive swim events, making it a less desirable venue than other communities offer.

4.3 Edson and District Recreation Complex

Constructed in 1982 on 4.9 acres of County land, the recreation centre offers curling (4 surfaces), meeting rooms, a bar/lounge area and acts as the golf clubhouse for the local course.

The building has significant roof leakage issues, interior plumbing issues. No major upgrades have been done to furnaces, lighting or the ice plant since 1982, and the effects of age are evident. Frost heaves have caused damage to walls, brickwork and posts, and the poor soil conditions in the area (muskeg, swampy conditions), cannot realistically be remedied.

In our view upgrading this facility with modern roofing and interior services and to present building codes would be a very expensive undertaking.

4.4 Edson and District Public Library

This 12,000-sq. ft. facility was constructed in 1979 of masonry block faced with brick. It presently houses the library, visual arts room and pottery studio. Outdoor tennis courts are located to the east of the structure.

The facility has seen no major upgrades since 1979. Drainage issues and roof leakage have been identified. The central location is ideal for walk-in users.

Expansion plans to the library have been proposed for the site based on the high usage level and community support identified in past studies.

4.5 Galloway Station Museum

The Galloway Station Museum is a modern facility constructed in 2012 as a museum, visitor centre and small meeting space. It serves the tourism industry, provides archive and presentation space, and offers expandable meeting space for small gatherings. The facility is located on a central park space.

This facility is in good condition.

4.6 Red Brick Arts Centre and Museum

The Red Brick is an historic building constructed in 1913. While a tour of the facility was conducted and it appears to be well-maintained and functioning to support community culture, arts and social services programming, further investigation was not conducted on this structure. As it is an historic asset for Edson and Area, careful and ongoing maintenance of the facility is required.

4.7 Boys and Girls Club

While this concrete block building was not specifically part of this assessment, a guided tour was provided and the programming on the site was discussed.

Housing a small gym/gathering space and informal indoor play spaces, this facility is less central than other spaces in Edson. It provides important programming from an old, if well-maintained building. A maximum 60 children at a time are served in the facility.

4.8 Facility Hierarchy Rationale

The WMC consulting team combined the building tour/assessment with findings from the demand and stakeholder research to develop an initial prioritization of facilities for action. In the table following, facilities are ordered in terms of priority for attention, based on their scores (H/M/L) against four criteria – facility usage, estimated demand, development opportunity, and location. WMC scoring is based on our assessment of research results in this study. The final column refers to our assessment of the need for facility upgrade attention, again based on our review.

Ranking of Facilities According to Priority for Action					
Facility	Facility Usage	Estimated Demand	Development Opportunity	Location	Upgrade Need
1. Repsol Place	HIGH See survey results	HIGH Stakeholder focus groups indicated not enough ice time available and lots of complaints about pool temps would suggest it could get greater use	HIGH Undeveloped land adjacent to building; stakeholder focus groups indicated issues with facilities	HIGH In town Easily accessible for all ages	H

Ranking of Facilities According to Priority for Action					
Facility	Facility Usage	Estimated Demand	Development Opportunity	Location	Upgrade Need
2. Edson & District Public Library	HIGH See survey results	HIGH Stakeholder focus groups indicated overcrowding during events	MID Building is currently being shared with other groups	HIGH In town Easily accessible for all ages	H
3. Red Brick Arts Centre & Museum	MID-HIGH See survey results	MID Stakeholder focus groups indicated high demand during shows	HIGH Building is currently being shared by a number of different groups	HIGH In town Easily accessible for all ages	N/A
4. Recreation Complex/ Curling	MID-LOW See survey results	LOW Interviews and the facility tour indicated that only half the curling sheets were set up this past season	MID Interviews and facility tour indicated that the building was recently refurbished but may have some issues and is under used.	MID Outskirts of town Main accessibility is by vehicle	N/A
5. Galloway Station Museum	MID-LOW See survey results	LOW With low usage and no indication otherwise, the demand is assumed to be low	LOW A relatively new building with minimal undeveloped land near by	HIGH In town Easily accessible for all ages	L
6. Boys & Girls Club	LOW See survey results	LOW	MID Undeveloped land adjacent to building	HIGH In town Easily accessible for all ages	N/A

4.9 Conclusion

A high-level assessment of the condition and impending requirements for maintenance or upgrading of key facilities was conducted by WMC and by Scheffer Andrew Ltd. The independent letter report prepared by Scheffer Andrew Ltd. can be found in Appendix A. As noted above, a complete analysis of building issues and costs should be conducted in the context of implementation of WMC findings.

5.0 Findings and Recommendations: A Strategy for the Edson Area

5.1 Introduction

In this section of the report the consulting team addresses “What we found” at a higher and more strategic level. Based on these high-level findings, we then suggest a strategic pathway for Edson and Area to realize its goal of providing sustainable, high quality services on a collaborative basis in the long run.

5.2 What We Found

We address our overall findings in relation to facilities, usage, condition, community goals and other matters in this section.

5.2.1 Most Major Facilities and Services Operate at or Near their Capacity

Of all the organizations consulted in this process, the view was that operations at existing facilities are at or near capacity.

Input received suggested the Library requires more programming space and is one of the few drop-in services in the community where youth are able to go for informal activity after school hours.

Input from theatre interests was that the existing theatre was inadequate to support significant productions and was very limited in terms of audience size.

Input from ice users was that ice time is limited, that time for figure skating interests is difficult to obtain and that informal indoor skate times are very limited.

Pool capacity is also an issue. For example, for Edson to compete in recognized swimming competitions, additional lanes are required.

Some implications of issues with programming being at capacity is disadvantaged populations are more highly impacted than others.

In addition to major facility capacity issues, outdoor recreation activities were flagged as requiring focus.

5.2.2 Major Facilities are at a Late Stage of their Lifecycle and Costs Will Escalate

Except for the Museum and Visitor Centre site, all major facilities reviewed are at a late stage in their lifecycle. Even with regular maintenance over that lifecycle, costs can be anticipated to increase significantly in the coming decade or more.

The Recreation Centre in particular, requires significant work to bring it back to a functioning level, and to bring it up to current building code standards. Consensus is also that the Recreation Centre is not meeting the needs of the community based primarily on its location.

Given the expectation of escalating costs in the future and operations at capacity, it is timely to consider strategic alternatives for these facilities that will resolve major issues today and in the longer term.

5.2.3 Perceived Lack of Indoor Recreation Space for Desired Activities

A groundswell of support for indoor recreation space was evident from many different sources. While this may be based in part on past initiatives and media coverage in the community, there is a perceived lack of facility supply in this category. Some call this the “Fieldhouse”, while others refer to the need for indoor winter activity space and “informal” indoor recreation space.

The basic additions referred to specifically by respondents was for indoor walking track. However, the nature of the input underlined the need for an indoor activity space for many indoor activities enjoyed in the community. The particular need was for indoor activity space that could be available during the winter.

The recreation centre was not considered suitable as an indoor activity space, and is particularly unsuitable for children and youth activity due to its location.

5.2.4 Edson and Area Respondents Share Particular Values in Relation to Community Services

Certain values were evident in the research:

- **Provision of a high Quality of Life in the community and the area** is closely tied to its ability to attract and support economic growth. Indoor and outdoor recreation, museum and library, cultural offerings, and community services programming boost Quality of Life and differentiate this community and area from others.
- **Accessibility is Critical.** Town of Edson respondents feel that walking access to major facilities for youth in the community is a critical decision driver. A safe, secure community with walkable facilities provides a higher quality of life for residents.
- **Informal and Drop-In Programming is desirable**, again especially for youth. There is a perceived lack of such programming in the community at this time. Again, this is a major contributor to quality of life in a small community setting.
- **Equitable Investment in Programs and Activities.** While program demand should remain a major factor in driving supply, a systematic approach to addressing program and activity support by the two municipalities would give more equitable recognition of smaller, less visible programs.

- **Paths, Trails, Circulation.** Trails linking the recreation and cultural core to area communities is desirable and will create a more walkable and bikeable community in the future. The value of having central recreation space accessible to children in the area is realized by increasing non-motorized circulation to that central recreation/cultural space.

5.2.5 Town and County Residents are Users and they Support Collaboration

The research confirms that town and county residents are users of and rely on these facilities as part of their recreational and cultural lives. This supports the quality of life they experience in the area.

Respondents supported the efforts of the two municipalities to work together, confirming that boundaries were less important than the user demand for services and facilities.

5.2.6 Major Industry Supports Community Services as a Quality of Life Offer and to Attract and Retain Talent

Respondents from industry support enhancements to community services to differentiate the area from other communities. This makes it easier to attract and retain talented employees and their families.

5.2.7 Edson and Area Will Grow at a Modest Rate

While the downturn in oil and gas has impacted Edson and area, its growth rate remains positive going forward according to the Intermunicipal Development Plan (IDP) now underway. The Edson population is projected to grow from 8,646 in 2016, to 9,197 in 2026, and to 10,346 by 2046, based on the projected trend growth rate of 0.6% annually. A more aggressive projection of 1.2% annually would see the population grow from 8,646 in 2016, to 12,366 by 2046.

In the same IDP, Yellowhead County fringe area population is forecast to grow from 1,035 in 2016, to 1,480 in 2046.

Overall growth to 2046 is estimated to be an increase of 4,165 residents.

The implications of this forecast are the expectation that regional recreation resources (facilities, services, programs) now operating at capacity, will experience excess demand in the foreseeable future.

5.3 Strategic Opportunity

Two findings drive the strategic opportunity Edson has at this time and place:

- An ageing recreation and cultural physical infrastructure will require renewal in the foreseeable future; and

- A community of mind supports creation of a central, family-oriented, all season multiple activity facility that will provide the range of services desired for the long term.

After all the research conducted, WMC finds there is an appetite for the Councils of the Town of Edson and Yellowhead County to proceed with a centrally-located community facility in the immediate future. The path toward this outcome is outlined in the section following.

5.4 The Future: Edson and Area Multiplex

The Town of Edson and Yellowhead County should jointly develop and operate the Edson and area Multiplex. The family-focused centre will have three focus areas:

- **Recreation Services:** arena, pool, fitness centre, outdoor courts, nexus of trail systems;
- **Cultural Services:** library, multi-use rooms; and
- **Community Services:** Boys and Girls Club, FCSS, others.

The Multiplex should be located on the Repsol site and include adjacent lands as required for parking and circulation.

In addition to the Multiplex, Edson and area should develop a theatre attached to a high school in Edson. If this is not possible, the theatre should be integrated into the Multiplex to serve convenient and meetings markets, as well as a regional entertainment venue.

- The existing field house should be abandoned, sold or torn down and the land sold.
- The visual arts (painting) facility in the library should move to the Red Brick site and into appropriate rooms in that building/cultural centre.
- The pottery centre should be relocated to a suitable industrial site in the area.
- The library site and tennis court should be sold for development.
- The tennis courts should be migrated to Repsol and outdoor raquet sports should be developed on that Repsol site.
- The Boys and Girls club site should be sold for development. The Club will move to the Multiplex.

The Multiplex could be developed in a structure of approximately 100,000 square feet and at a cost of about \$30 million to \$35 million.

6.0 Recommendations

1. That the two municipalities develop and operate a major community complex on the existing Repsol site to focus on:
 - a. **Recreation Services**, specifically an arena, indoor courts, pool and fitness centre. Outdoor courts and nexus of the trail system to be on site.
 - b. **Cultural Services**, specifically the Library and Multi-use rooms.
 - c. **Community Services**, specifically the Boys and Girls Club, FCSS and others if identified.

2. That the municipalities undertake a consolidation of their existing facilities to improve operating efficiencies and citizen access, as well as to capitalize on the value of land holdings. This will include:
 - a. A **Theatre** to be attached to a high school in Edson, jointly funded by the municipalities and the education system.
 - b. The **Pottery Centre** to be relocated to a suitable industrial site in the area.
 - c. The **Visual Arts and Quilting Centres** to be relocated to the Red Brick School House.
 - d. **Tennis Courts** migrated to Repsol, with both tennis and pickleball provided at that site.
 - e. The existing sites of the **Library and Boys and Girls Club** to be sold for development, with proceeds used to help fund the new community complex.
 - f. The **Recreation/Curling** to be sold or demolished and the land sold with proceeds used to help fund the new community complex.

3. That programming be adjusted to reflect the identified need for:
 - a. Adequate accommodation of drop in and casual usage;
 - b. Agriculture-related outdoor activities; and
 - c. Balanced support for both indoor and outdoor recreation activities.

4. That the programs and facilities serving the citizens of Yellowhead County and the Town of Edson be managed and delivered jointly using expanded intermunicipal agreements; and that value-added services be considered such as:
 - a. A centralized communication tool which provides information on all programs and activities; and
 - b. A common program registration capability.

APPENDIX A: SCHEFFER ANDREW LTD. OBERVATIONS



September 1, 2017

File No.: 1394-01

WMC
10609 – 124 Street
Edmonton, AB
T5N 1S5

Attention: Joyce Tustian

Dear Joyce:

RE: Edson and Area Community Services Strategic Plan

On July 27, 2017, I made a site visit to The Town of Edson and met with Dan Kuzmic, Facilities Manager at The Town of Edson. The primary focus was on the Repsol Place site and in addition we also visited the other following listed facilities:

- Repsol Place
- Edson and District Public Library
- Red Brick Arts Centre & Museum
- Recreation / Curling Complex
- Galloway Station Museum

The following Table summarizes observations from the site visit and information provided through my discussions with Dan Kuzmic regarding existing issues:

Facility	Observations and Discussions of Issues
Repsol Place	<p>The majority of the facility was constructed in stages from 1967 to 1987 and is therefore 30 to 50 years old, the Centennial arena dressing rooms and Ice plant replacement were constructed in 2007. Considering the age of the facility and constraints, it is likely that examination of the lifecycle costs will favor replacement of the facility rather than upgrading the facility to provide the desired level of service.</p> <p>Centennial Arena:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - South exterior wall of the dressing rooms that were added has cracking and experiences frost and ice in the winter. - The dressing rooms do not have floor drains and are therefore required to be mopped frequently - The in-floor heating in the dressing rooms in combination with the air handling units do not appear to be effectively heating the space in the winter. - Dressing room plumbing freezes in the winter. <p>Memorial Arena:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Arena ceiling height is only approximately 14 feet. - The arena boards are directly on the exterior block wall and therefore limits the uses for this ice as the boards have no flexibility.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Extremely small dressing rooms. - Small spectator capacity. <p>Pool:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The pool pump system is old and outdated and likely requires updating.
Edson and District Public Library	Built in 1979, no major updates have been done to the facility. Some roof leakage is occurring.
Red Brick Arts Centre & Museum	A historic building that was constructed in 1913 and is assumed that will be continued to be maintained.
Recreation / Curling Complex	Constructed in 1982, contains curling ice, meeting rooms, change rooms, golf course club house and banquet facility. Exterior issues are some roof leakage, structural columns heaving and some rust on stairs. No major updates have been done to the building including the ice plant, furnaces and lighting that are all original, and therefore significant updates would be required to modernize the facility.
Galloway Station Museum	The majority of the facility was constructed in approximately 2012 and appears to be in good condition.

Note: The most recent comprehensive Facilities Condition Report was done in 2006.

It is my understanding that the potential to redevelop or expand the Repsol Place facility as a more comprehensive multi-use facility is being reviewed and the desired components of the facility need to be determined.

The existing Repsol Place site is bounded by public roadways on all four sides (10 and 12 Avenue to the south and north respectively, 48 and 49 Street to the east and west respectively). The site is approximately 7.5 acres with the existing structure and parking area utilising approximately 4.4 acres.

As previously identified in the 2006 Indoor Facility Study by Paul Conrad and Associates, the expansion of the existing facility into the NE open space on the site poses some constraints in maintaining a main entrance, and the flow patterns could be blocked by the existing pool and arenas and may result in a compromised design.

In discussions with the Town, it has been identified that they also own the site to the northwest of the Repsol Place site, on the west side of 49 Street. The Town water tower used to be located on this site and has now been removed. Expansion of the facility in this direction would require the closure of the section of the existing 49 Street. If any part of a proposed structure is to be located on the closed roadway, it is likely that some relocation of existing water, power and gas utilities would be required, but would not pose a constraint.

With the existing facilities at Repsol Place being highly utilised, it is necessary that they remain open throughout an expansion or redevelopment. Figure A shows the potential redevelopment area available for a staged construction approach. Assuming that the existing facility and southern portion of the site remain in service, the Stage 1 development area has 3.1 acres available on the current site and an additional 2.8 acres if expanded to the west for a total of 5.9 acres. Stage 2 would then redevelop the southern 4.4 acres and therefore the total development area would be 7.5 acres or 10.3 acres if expanded to the west of 49 street.

Further analysis will be required regarding the potential costs versus level of service resulting from an expansion or complete staged redevelopment of the site. The desired components of the facility will also

have to be analysed to determine if the identified staged development areas are adequate to allow for an uncompromised buildout.

During our site visit, we also met with Dawit Solomon, Director of Engineering for The Town of Edson. We discussed the existing utilities that service the Repsol Place site and did not identify any constraints in the water or sewer system that would pose a major restriction to the redevelopment or expansion of the facility. A detailed engineering analysis would be required once the parameters of a proposed development are known and then any necessary upgrades would be identified.

Sincerely,

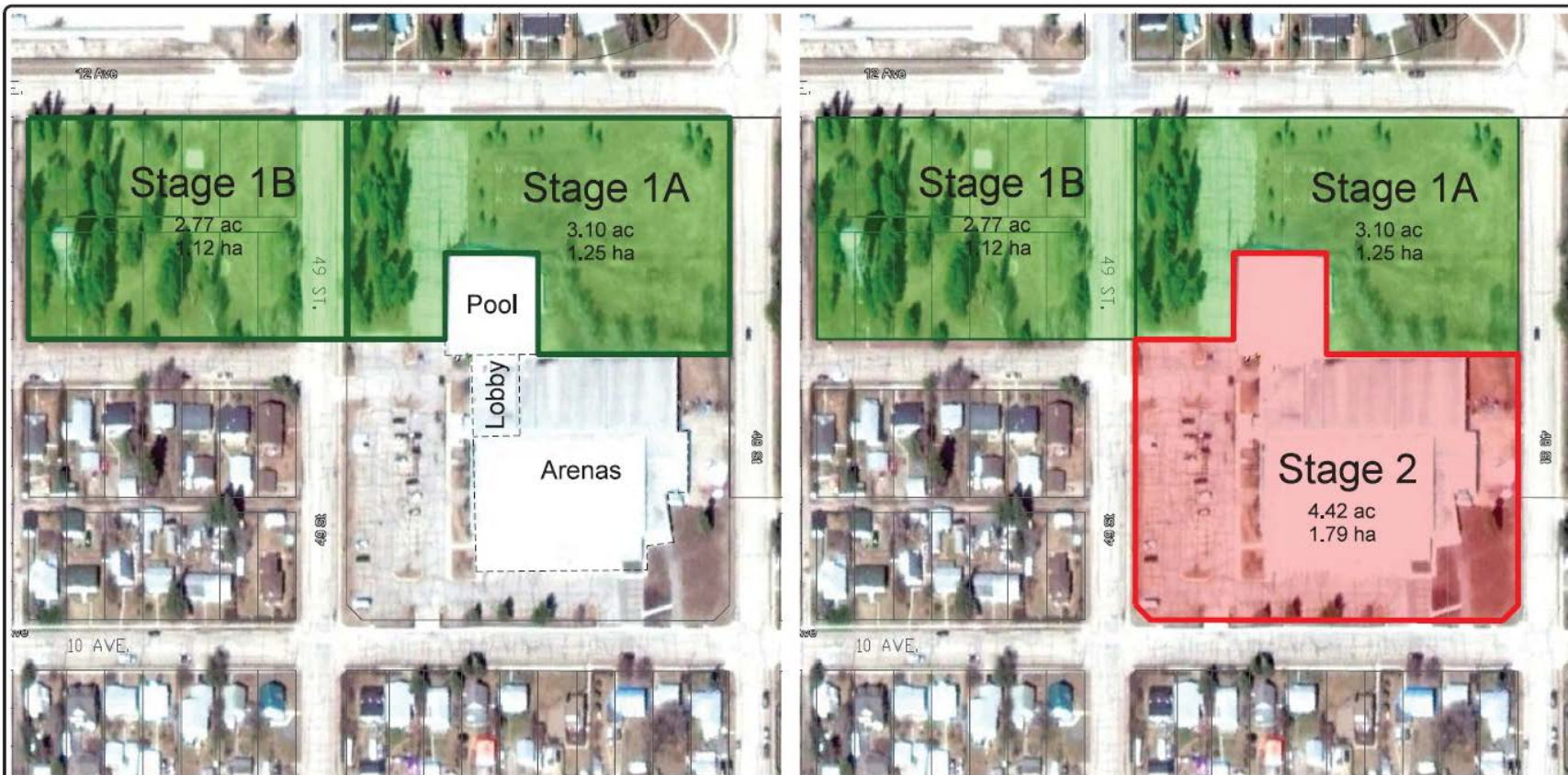
Scheffer Andrew Ltd.



Jason Maurer, P. Eng.
Vice President, Operations

Direct: 780.732.7775, Cell: 780.720.7159
Email: j.maurer@schefferandrew.com

End: Figure A



Potential Redevelopment Area - Stage 1

Potential Redevelopment Area - Stage 2

FIGURE A
REPSOL PLACE SITE
POTENTIAL REDEVELOPMENT
EDSON AND AREA COMMUNITY
SERVICES STRATEGIC PLAN

APPENDIX B: COMPARISON OF 2006 AND 2017 FACILITY STUDIES



Comparing 2006 Indoor Facility Study Findings with this 2017 Study

A team of consultants led by Paul Conrad and Associates Ltd. conducted a comprehensive recreation facility study for Edson and area, reporting in August 2006. The table following compares the 2017 WMC study and findings with that of the 2006 study.

Comparing 2006 and 2017 Studies		
<i>Factors</i>	<i>2006 Study</i>	<i>2017 Study</i>
Mandate	Public consultation area residents Research trends, carriers Gap assessment Community needs Detailed Building Assessment Facility recommendations and costing Funding and Implementation	Public consultation and engagement area residents Gap assessment Comparable communities Community needs High level building assessment Facility recommendations
Consultation	20 community organizations 2 focus groups 219 resident surveys 54 consultations/interviews	20+ community organizations represented in 4 focus group input sessions 9 public input sessions in Edson and area 1 trade show representation 4 internal focus groups with management 789 resident survey household respondents (554 Town, 226 County) 10 industry leader interviews 30 consultation interviews 2 site visit tours 5 comparable facility interviews and profiles
Consultation Findings	Increasing demand anticipated Facilities near capacity Facilities aging/declining Residents support regional, family-focused facility Public demand for expanded indoor space and programs, larger, better equipped library, indoor active use area	Increasing demand anticipated Facilities near capacity Facilities aging/declining Residents support regional, family-focused facility Public demand for expanded indoor space and programs, larger, better equipped library, indoor active use area Public need for "informal" space for recreation

Comparing 2006 and 2017 Studies		
Factors	2006 Study	2017 Study
Facility findings	Develop field house, arena, fitness and wellness, child care, library Shared use – schools	Develop field house, arena, fitness and wellness, child care, library, upgraded and expanded pool Design for town and County resident usage
Payment	76% were willing to pay more in taxes 78% preferred 50/50 cost share between taxes and user fees	Anticipate shared costing of Town and County. Sources: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Taxes ▪ Grants ▪ User fees
Facility Recommendations	Single site Arena, library, fieldhouse, fitness centre, offices, program spaces Site 20 acres Total building 107,000 square feet Future pool addition Est cost \$23 million	Single site Arena, library, fieldhouse, fitness centre, offices, program spaces Aquatic centre expansion and modernization Arenas upgraded/renovated On expanded Repsol site (10.2 acres) Building about 100,000 sq ft Cost: Approximately \$30- \$35 million
Funding	Recommended: Town \$9m Fed/Prov \$3m Community fundraising \$6m Local government \$6m	Single site Arena, library, fieldhouse, fitness centre, offices, program spaces Funding: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Shared Municipal funding by Town and County ▪ Federal/ Provincial funding ▪ Community fundraising ▪ Corporate sponsorship ▪ User Fees

In short, the two studies have very similar findings:

- Community desire for a centrally-located, family-oriented community recreation and cultural facility;
- Willingness to share in the cost of such a facility;
- Significant agreement on the components of the facility;
- Significant agreement that the Repsol site (central, adequate size) should be considered as the site for this community facility; and
- Encouragement for the Town and County to work together to realize this goal.