

EDMONTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

December 12, 2000

TO: Board of Trustees

FROM: E. Dossall, Superintendent of Schools

SUBJECT: Victoria School Redevelopment

ORIGINATOR: B. Maskell, Principal Victoria School
A. McBeath, Department Head

RESOURCE

STAFF: Jennifer Allen, Bob Clark, Robert Craig, Beatrice Denboer, Greg Dowler-Coltman, Tami Dowler-Coltman, Michael Ediger, Brian Fedor, Rochelle Heidt, Ray Jorgensen, David Morris, Faye Parker, Jan Sawyer, Conrad Schmidt, Wendy Spratt, Judy Sills, Nico Van Der Kley

RECOMMENDATION

That the submission of a request to Alberta Infrastructure for the re-development of Victoria School based on the Alberta Infrastructure Value Management Workshop be approved.

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This report describes the status of the concept development work on the Victoria School re-development project and recommends that Alberta Infrastructure be asked to approve a request for the re-development of the school.

The goal of this project is to create a facility that will be a centre of excellence in academics and the arts for Canada. Victoria School is a major centre for instruction in the arts that serves students from throughout the capital region, the province, and beyond. The uniqueness and the arts programming focus of Victoria School have been recognized by Alberta Learning and Alberta Infrastructure. The school is envisioned to become an extension of the city's downtown arts district, providing a focal point for the arts community in the capital region.

The largest school in the district, Victoria School has a floor area of 43,000 square metres and has an enrolment of 1,840 students in kindergarten through grade twelve. Victoria School was originally designed as a vocational school, and there is general agreement amongst the project team that the existing building does not serve the programming needs required in an arts centre. The province's audit identified deficiencies in the building including structural, heating, ventilation, electrical, plumbing, and site condition concerns. Of particular concern were problems in the 1956, 1963 and 1964 additions as well as the old kitchen. Alberta

Infrastructure staff acknowledge that additional funds beyond the amount indicated in the audit are needed to address the programming needs of the school.

The following outlines a chronology of this project to date:

- In 2000, Alberta Infrastructure completed their assessment of the condition of all school facilities in the province. The province's assessment identified Victoria School as the district school most in need of upgrading.
- Edmonton Public Schools received \$50,000 from Alberta Infrastructure to complete a concept development plan for an innovative approach to the re-development of Victoria School under year 2000 innovation funding.
- The district retained Barr Ryder Architects and Planners to assist in the development of a concept for the school. Infrastructure staff provided advice and expertise throughout this study. The concept development study produced three scenarios: addressing the provincial audit only, addressing the audit and some programming requirements within the existing facility, and the preferred option of demolition and replacement of the vocational wings of the school with a central arts hub. The consultant's report indicates that "the unique Arts Program requirements from a spatial and program perspective demand configurations and environments that do not exist in the present school." The results of this concept development study were shared with Alberta Infrastructure staff.
- After reviewing the results of the concept development study, Alberta Infrastructure requested that a Value Management study be undertaken to determine the approach that would result in the best overall value for money including long term capital, operation, and maintenance costs. Infrastructure staff committed to providing an additional \$35,000 for the three day workshop to define a preferred concept. This is a unique approach to a school modernization project and involved extensive consultation between the administration and Alberta Infrastructure staff.
- The workshop, facilitated by a Certified Value Specialist, included staff from Alberta Infrastructure, Victoria School and district administration, parent volunteers, and consultants working in the design, program, planning, costing, and catalyst roles. The workshop followed a structured sequence of phases including Information and Analysis, Creativity, Judgement, and Recommendations. The workshop concluded that, from a Value Management perspective, the most effective approach to addressing audit upgrade requirements and realizing the vision of an arts centre is through a phased replacement of the facility with construction of academic and arts hubs as a central focus in the building.

The approach generated by the Value Management workshop would see a phased-in replacement of the facility. Attention was given to ensuring that all spaces would have a programming use and that the concept stays within Alberta Infrastructure guidelines. The plan is to reduce the overall square footage of the building. Key elements of this approach, outlined in Appendix I, include the retention and modernization of the Eva O. Howard Theatre, and replacement of existing wings of the school in phases with the construction of an arts hub, academic hub, and a consolidated physical education program space. This

approach reflects extensive consultation with school staff, students, and parents. Alberta Learning supports this approach from a curriculum standpoint.

The arts hub would include spaces for instruction in music, dance, visual arts, video/broadcast studies and theatre. The academic hub would include an information technology centre and spaces for instruction in the core disciplines. The current building spreads over three blocks and the current outdoor space is insufficient for the needs of the kindergarten to grade 12 program. The compact design would reduce the overall building footprint, reducing travel times and resulting in the additional open space on the site that is required for physical education programming. The plan would locate the physical education component adjacent to the outside sports fields. The concept also has the advantages of a centralized administration, library and student services, improvements to student drop-off areas, and retains adjacency to the theatre.

Upon approval of the project, it is likely that all of the capital funds would be provided to the district in the first year. This would allow the district to implement the project over a three-year period. This approval would act as a catalyst to further explore partnerships with the city, business sector and arts community regarding the vision of the role of this facility as a focal point for the larger community. Because of this focus, it is expected that the facility would operate beyond traditional school hours. The school principal will actively seek financial commitments from the community and other supporters of Victoria School, which will contribute significantly to the project.

Alberta Infrastructure staff have indicated that a funding approval for Victoria School will not adversely affect funding for the district's other capital needs.

Given that the submission of a request for re-development is the first step of a larger process, more details regarding the accommodation of students during construction and specifics on phasing of the project will follow provincial approval of the concept. Once the project receives approval from the province, designs, budgets and schedules will be developed and presented to board.

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APPENDIX I - Victoria School Re-Development Project Part A: Initial Concept