

EDMONTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

February 10, 2004

TO: Board of Trustees

FROM: A. McBeath, Superintendent of Schools

SUBJECT: Victoria School Revitalization Status Report

ORIGINATOR: A. Habinski, Executive Director

RESOURCE  
STAFF: Brian Fedor, Ingrid Neitsch, Larry Schwenneker

INFORMATION

The Victoria School of Performing and Visual Arts is approved for a facility revitalization project with an all-inclusive capital budget of \$35 million. The district received formal approval from Alberta Infrastructure for the project in August of 2003. Since that time, the school and district administration and architectural consultants have been evaluating options with respect to the best approach to take with the revitalization in order to derive the optimum benefits for the school. Emphasis is being placed on maximizing program availability and school capacity and utilization. Together with the program and project development, the district is also discussing partnership opportunities with the Capital Health Authority.

The available funding presents the project team with two major options, both of which will require the use of a refurbished Eva O. Howard Theatre:

- develop a new stand-alone building
- re-develop the existing facility with a combination of new construction, modernization and demolition.

Detailed examination and costing of the two options has provided the following information:

- develop a new stand-alone building: the development of a new building would include the necessary new spaces and the demolition of the existing building. Unit costs for a new space suggest two alternatives:
  1. a new building that would accommodate approximately 1,600 students, but with no or limited arts program availability
  2. a new building with the necessary arts program that would accommodate approximately 1,200 students.
- re-develop the existing facility: the redevelopment of the existing facility would involve a combination of new construction, modernization of existing and demolition of selected portions of the building. This option would provide for the maximum number of students, approximately 1,700, and will ensure that the needed programming opportunities are available.

The project development team consisting of Sandy Fisher, Alberta Infrastructure; Brian Fedor, Gary Holroyd and Larry Schweneker, Facilities; Roland Labbe, Planning; Ingrid Neitsch, Principal, Victoria School; and Dave Ryder, Barr Ryder Architects is re-evaluating the program needs of the school and how the needs might best be addressed within a re-developed facility. In conjunction with the programming re-evaluation, a project schedule will also be developed. The preliminary intention is to schedule the project in phases so as to minimize the impact on students and staff, and to make upgraded or new areas available as soon as possible. At this point, the project team is hopeful that some of the new and/or upgraded areas will be available for the commencement of classes in the fall of 2006. As soon as the project schedule and scope of work are defined, they will be communicated.

An issue facing the development team is accommodating the maximum number of students, within budget. In order to ensure that as many students as possible are accommodated, the redevelopment will have a variety of options. For example, some classes may be able to accommodate more students than is common in a traditional classroom. Other alternatives may include access to satellite spaces, although this option is in the very early stages of consideration.

Partnership opportunity:

As the redevelopment of the school project proceeds, the administration is also pursuing partnership proposals with the Capital Health Authority with respect to the development currently underway at the Royal Alexandra Hospital. The hospital is engaged in a number of major projects and two offer significant potential for partnership. The Glenrose Energy Center provides heating to the Royal Alexandra site and is being upgraded to accommodate expansion on the site. Since the site serves critical care needs, the utility services must meet high standards of reliability and availability. It is within these standards that opportunity exists for the school to access heating supply for the redevelopment project. Preliminary analysis and costing indicates that an economic pay-back is present that would pay back the costs of tying-in through savings over time. The administration is in the final stages of determining how best to proceed.

The second main opportunity for partnership tied directly to the project is the development of the parkade. An opportunity exists for the district to participate in the parkade development as a partner and to have access to two levels of parking. The use of the parkade would relieve site pressures on the current site and make more green space available for the school and community. Under current development bylaws, a significant area would have to be devoted to surface parking on the existing site. A key requirement of using the parkade would be the installation of an elevated pedway by which parkade users could cross Kingsway Avenue in safety. While the parkade access can be accommodated through a combination of capital contribution and off-set capital savings, the pedway is problematic in terms of the economics. The administration is working with Capital Health to determine the options that might be available.

Another opportunity that exists for partnership with the Royal Alexandra Hospital is in the mutual exchange of programming opportunities. Preliminary discussions between the Chief Operating Officer of the Hospital and the school principal have indicated the potential for career path experiences and volunteering for students of the school. In exchange, the hospital and its patients could benefit from the presence of students, student art and student

presentations. There is a strong belief that the opportunities for a formal exchange will evolve as the two organizations experience each other's potential.

Additional opportunities that will provide mutual benefit will be access to lecture, public meeting and conference spaces in the school and potentially the Centre for Education. While these areas are still being defined, they present great potential.

**Timelines:**

The current timelines for project development and decision-making are:

- review program needs of school - underway
- evaluate partnership opportunities with Capital Health Authority and determine options/viability - February 27, 2004
- confirm scope of work and project timelines - May 3, 2004

Once the key milestones are achieved with respect to the partnership opportunities and the school programming, the project will proceed as rapidly as possible into the next phases of design, tendering and construction.

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