

Application: Major Community Facilities Program

Olds and District Municipal Library: Facility Expansion

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Executive Summary

Situated along the Edmonton-Calgary transportation corridor, Olds is a vital service centre accessed by over 40 000 people. The Town of Olds community stretches far beyond its physical boundary, with residents from Mountain View County, and the surrounding towns having a long standing tradition of coming to Olds for much of their retail and business needs as well as many of their arts, culture, and recreational pursuits. Situated in this growing community is the Olds and District Municipal Library.

The Olds Municipal Library is a non-profit charitable organization. The mission of our library is to provide convenient access to resources that meet the lifelong information needs of the citizens of our community. We are able to achieve our mission through programming, collection development, and the provision of many different types of services. The Olds Municipal library has truly become a nucleus in the community over the past 5 years and we continue to grow in popularity. To this end, we have been planning a building expansion to better facilitate the needs of our growing, diverse, and ever changing community.

Our current building was erected over 25 years ago and is overdue for an upgrade. Planning work began for an expanded public library facility in 2001. Further study was done by Parkland Regional Library consultants in February 2004 when the concept began to move forward at a more accelerated rate. The final concepts for this expansion were done in October 2005 with an updated cost analysis done in the spring of 2008. Our plan is to begin the final planning and construction of the facility in the spring/summer of 2009 after securing funding for the project.

During our planning process, consultation was done with the community to identify the key areas that the library needed to have expanded. We talked to potential partners, key stakeholders, library patrons, and members of the community at large. Analysis of background information, committee meetings, as well as stakeholder and public consultation resulted in our final Concept Design Report, (see appendices). The report shows the exercises, methodology and processes we went through in deciding exactly how much space we would need for our building and which areas would need to be expanded. From this report there were 5 key objectives that shaped the design of the facility. These objectives include:

1. An *interior space* that creates an atmosphere that is open, friendly, welcoming, inviting, bright and comfortable. How the users and staff feel in the space is critical to its success.
2. *Technology* that is accessible and flexible and incorporated to address the ever changing future needs of a public facility. The computer area needs to be expanded to serve the increasing technology access needs of library visitors.
3. A facility that is a *sustainable* facility in the community. Energy efficiency and effective use of natural light will be a focus while incorporating sustainable design principles where appropriate.
4. A *variety of spaces* that address the needs of all users. These spaces include meeting rooms, separate children's program room, quiet study areas, and comfortable lounge spaces. Flexibility within the library is key to incorporating emerging trends, accommodating change, and producing a timeless design.
5. A facility that is designed to be *functional and efficient*. A number of factors that need to be considered include: good visibility, safety and security, space to accommodate expansion, consolidated staff work areas and storage areas, and efficient connection between the circulation desk and staff areas.

The appendices also contain copies of previous studies done that were considered in the creation of the final concept and a summary identifying the main areas in need of expansion which include, *Children and Youth areas, General Library Areas, Staff and Storage Areas, Technology Areas, and Meeting Rooms and Program Spaces*.

The library has experienced growth in use consistently over the past 5 years. Some of our main trends include an increased use of computers and technology in the library, of materials used in house, of programs, and in the number of people entering the library. These increases, as outlined in the Librarian's Annual Report (see appendices), show that libraries, particularly the Olds Municipal library, are no longer just places to come and borrow books. They are places to study, to converse, to meet, to share ideas, take courses, to find a job, and especially, places to raise families. One of our library users stated, *"I am so pleased to find such an excellent library system. I love being able to search and request books online. The staff of OML are always friendly and helpful. Plans for the new facility are exciting. Keep up the great work!"* More supporting statements from patrons can be found in our year end survey results found in the appendices.

Also, there are many economic benefits to a community and an expanded facility will only prove to enhance our ability to provide those benefits. As you will see from our Economic Benefits document, (see appendices), the library in 2007 saved the community of Olds over \$2, 000, 000 through basic programs and services alone. These measurements however, are only the direct measurable benefits. Our library also has many indirect benefits that have been demonstrated with letters of support (see appendices), from various partner organizations. We provide programming to a wide variety of users in the community including new Canadians, seniors, children, adults, families, persons with developmental disabilities, students, teachers, teens, and many more. The appendices will give you a look at some of the programs our facility currently offers and a look into some of the plans we have for our new facility once it is constructed.

Further, the library expansion project is a highly viable project. We have worked hard with our partners to ensure that continued operational funding is always available for the facility once it is constructed. Likewise, many of the changes we have proposed will enable us to be more energy efficient and will allow us to cut back on the maintenance currently required for our aging facility. The provincial government has shown its dedication to libraries through its ongoing per capita funding. Similarly, our municipal council has continued to see the value of the library in our community. Council has already increased capital funding in principle for the project and for operations in order to ensure that the project is a success. The following appendices and summaries should answer any questions you may have about our project but we would encourage you to call if you want more information about our project.

Project Details

Detailed applicant information:

The current mission of the Olds & District Municipal Library is to provide convenient access to resources that meet the lifelong information needs of the citizens of our community.

History:

The Olds Municipal Library first opened in October 1958, however, as early as May 1954, the Baron Tweedsmuir Chapter I.O.D.E. began to work to promote community interest in a public library and to encourage the Olds Town Council to provide accommodation and support for such a project. With the opening of the new Post Office in 1958, the old Bank of Commerce building became available. The Mayor was most supportive and cooperative in offering it to the I.O.D.E as a home for the Olds Municipal Library.

In 1982 the Kawanis Club of Olds worked toward relocating the building to a new expanded location. Since that time the library has been operating in its current location. In 1981 the census shows Olds having a population of 2425, which means that the population of Olds has increased by 198% since the building was first built. Likewise, in the past 25 years both the town of Olds and the library have undergone a number of important changes.

Need:

First, the population of Olds as of the 2006 census was approximately 7,200 with an addition of 1,000 Olds College students. The province of Alberta has seen unprecedented growth and is continuing to grow at a rapid rate. The province has been proactive in trying to deal with many of these resultant issues. In the *Draft Land Use Framework* released this spring it states that, "over the past 10 years, Alberta has enjoyed record prosperity. This prosperity, however, has brought new challenges and responsibilities. Today's rapid growth in population and economic activity is placing unprecedented pressure." The same statement applies to libraries who accept the challenge of welcoming, serving, engaging, and educating the community.

Olds is no exception to these changes, and not only has the number of people in our community grown but the demographics of the community have also changed dramatically. New Canadians have moved into our community to augment the workforce. We have seen an increase in English language learners, the numbers of persons with developmental disabilities, and growth in demand for services to seniors. The library added programs and services to these groups while maintaining traditional services. In the appendices you will see a sampling of a number of these programs and press releases for services we are currently providing. All of these programs require space for which our current facility is inadequate.

Another important historical change that was made to libraries in Alberta since the current building was erected was the introduction of computers and technical services to the library. The current facility was not designed to house computers, so the computer space available is limited, yet, since the installation of the technology area in our library it has been one of our fastest growing, most used services by students, teens, business people, and travellers. We provide free internet services via the SuperNet to the community as well as to those passing through our community on business or recreational travels. These services are also of great benefit to people who are temporary residents, such as temporary foreign workers and college students. As one of the largest libraries in our region, we also get a number of users from surrounding communities. The Librarian's Annual Report, (see appendices), for 2006 and 2007 will provide you with statistics that show the usage at the Olds Municipal Library. You'll note that from 2004 to 2006 alone we saw the number of users entering our library increase from

approximately 16 000 users to 50 000 users, which is a 212% increase. Combined with the 198% increase in population since our current facility was built, it's easy to see how essential an expanded facility is to our community.

A third important historical change since the current library was first built was the creation of the Alberta Library System. Not only is Olds a part of the Parkland Regional Library System, it is a member of the Alberta Library. The Alberta Library (TAL) is a province-wide library consortium that works with its members to promote universal, barrier-free access to the materials and resources in Alberta's diverse libraries. Since 1997, The Alberta Library has grown into an award-winning organization working with over 290 member libraries to promote barrier-free access to information, ideas and culture. Internationally recognized for collaboration and innovation, The Alberta Library is the result of the library community coming together to find better ways of providing services. With the support of the Government of Alberta, this investment of time, energy and resources has helped create one of the most progressive and dynamic library systems in North America. As a result of partnerships, Albertans at even the smallest rural library have access to more than 30 million resources. Locally, this means that the Olds Municipal Library now provides materials to a wider range of customers and sends books and other materials to libraries all over Alberta. The Librarian's annual report, (see appendices), outlines some statistics on the use of our inter library loan program. This service requires space to collect, sort, and process materials to be sent to other libraries across the provinces. Being a member of The Alberta Library network also means that users from any community in Alberta can stop and use our library as if it was their own which creates an all inclusive environment with many demands.

When looking at our building project we did not only look at the changes in libraries over the past 25 years, we looked at the community as a whole and identified strengths and opportunities. One such opportunity was the Town of Olds' commitment to a sustainable future. In Alberta, the Alberta Urban Municipalities Association (AUMA) began working on the challenge of developing a strategy for helping municipalities understand sustainability planning, providing a comprehensive guide outlining what a municipal sustainability plan should look like. The Town of Olds as an AUMA pilot community set out on the journey towards a sustainable community by drawing from existing strengths. The Olds Municipal library felt it was important to be a part of this project and gladly accepted the invitation by the Olds Advisory Group for Sustainable Living to sit on the committee and help in developing the plan. We felt that it was important to integrate our services and programs with the Olds Strategic Sustainability Plan, (adopted in February 2008), and have worked toward making our project sustainable in all five dimensions outlined by the AUMA. We have expanded our services to provide collections and programs to increase the education and knowledge about sustainability in our community. We have also looked at green standards and projects to ensure our expansion project helps to enhance the journey toward a sustainable future.

Further, the Olds Municipal Library Board felt it was important to explore all our options before proceeding with our project. Before proceeding with our Concept Design Report produced by Group2 we talked to many community partners to see if there would be a fit for partnerships. The library board was represented on the Community Facilities group, met with the Mountain View Museum, Mountain View Community Literacy, and the Community Learning Campus to see where there were similarities to avoid duplication of services. Through community consultation, consultation with our regional library system, and the research of reports including "Standards for Member Libraries", and "Public Libraries Housed in School Facilities Report", the decision was made for the library not to co-locate with any other facility currently under construction due to location, cost, and future financial sustainability. Instead a standalone facility for the Olds Municipal Library in the current location was agreed upon by all parties involved in the joint project discussions, (The Olds Agricultural Society, The Community Learning Campus, and The Olds College.)

Finally, if you look at the “Standards for Member Libraries in Alberta” document produced in partnership with Alberta Community Development and the regional library systems in Alberta, (see appendices); you will see that there are several standards that libraries are asked to meet in order to provide an adequate level of library service. The report shows, for example, that for a community of our size in order to build on just the essential services, (enhanced), we should currently have 6900 sq. ft. of library space. Our new facility proposed 9000 sq ft which will ensure that we have an adequate level of space for at least 10 – 15 years of growth in our community.

Benefits:

As stated above, The Olds Municipal library has become an integral nucleus of the community over its many years of service. The libraries services and collection benefit children, youth, families, seniors, new Canadians, business people, non-profit organizations, schools, and various programs in the community. Also, we strive to inform the members of our community about important municipal and provincial initiative through collection development, programs, and events. In this section you will be introduced to a cross section of programs and services that benefit our community as well as the many partnerships that we have formed in our many years of service. In the appendices you will find letters of support, and personal stories from patrons who the library has personally influenced. You will also be able to glean a special insight into the increased use of the library, the important programs of the library, and other partnerships by reading some of the other materials attached in the appendices.

As mentioned above the library prides itself in the many partnerships that it has been able to establish over the years. It is important for us as a public library to provide barrier free access to services. This means that we strive to eliminate financial, physical, and intellectual barriers for everyone using our services. We do this in many different ways.

Service Benefits:

The Alberta Library (TAL) Card participant and a member of the Parkland Regional Library

This program allows users walk-in access to over 290 participating TAL Card libraries in the province. Patrons can take out books from public, government, post-secondary libraries in Alberta with one card. This means that the citizens of Olds are no longer bound to what they can find between their library walls. Any materials that someone might need for research, business, or even just recreation are available to them. This has many benefits to our library patrons as well as benefits to visitors in our community and people wishing us to send our items to their library. This also allows us to be good stewards of the dollars we are given by our funders since it is literally impossible for one library to carry every book that may be needed in their community.

Multilingual Books and Welcoming Communities Services

It is no surprise that Olds has grown in the number of foreign born people we have in our community. We keep a number of different languages, including French, Spanish, and German, on hand as well as others that may be requested. We strive to ensure service to as many groups as we can in our community. Whether you have just immigrated to our country and wish to have some materials to read in your own language or have just learned a new language and want material to practice with, your educational and recreational needs can be met.

Further, Olds is proud to be one of the founding members of the Welcoming Communities committee in Olds. Born out of an initiative started by the Central Alberta Economic Partnership, the Olds Municipal Library sits on a committee dedicated to addressing the needs of immigrants, migrants, and temporary foreign workers. We have started an ESL mentorship program and continue to grow our multilingual collections.

In addition, the Olds Municipal library worked toward obtaining the Public Library Development Initiative grant in 2008. With this funding we partnered with the Didsbury, Sundre, Carstairs, and Cremona public libraries to create

Multicultural family literacy kits. The result of this initiative will provide kits to help patrons with English Language training while bringing their families together. Each kit will have a number of materials including but not limited to dual language books, adult readers, language learning games and DVD's, and dictionaries.

Finally, we have been fortunate through our partnership with TAL (The Alberta Library) to provide the Auralog Language learning software. In our expanded facility we have plans to create a special area dedicated to the use of this software with headset enabled computers. We have responded to the communication requests our foreign born patrons and hope to set up a computer dedicated to communication, such as Skype. With the SuperNet project many doors have opened up which allow for a high quality of communication opportunities. This will enable users to talk family and friends back home making the library a portal to the world.

Book Delivery Service

There are a number of citizens in our community that cannot access library services in the traditional way because of mobility limitations. In response, the library offers book mobile services to Mount View Lodge, Sunrise Village, and Legacy Village on a regular basis. Likewise, patrons may choose to have books delivered to their home by mail. This service helps ensure access to books and other materials for those unable to come to the library.

Free Membership Programs

Another challenge for some people is the cost of a library card. Though you do not need a library card to come in to the library, in order to use our services and materials from home, and borrow library materials, you do need a card. This fee can be sufficient to prevent some people from accessing services that may be very important to improve their literacy, learning opportunities, and recreational reading. We believe in complete and barrier free access for everyone in the community. We offer programs that allow people to obtain free memberships if they are unable to pay. The *Families In Need Program* provides free memberships to requestors at Olds Neighbourhood Place and the Mountain View Food bank. The *Healthy Families Program* provides free memberships to registered families in Olds through a partnership within the David Thompson Health Region. Finally, we partner with the Welcome to Kindergarten program with Chinooks Edge School Division to give every kindergarten child access to library books with a free library membership when they register for school.

Computers and Technology:

A key area of growth has been in the demand for technology. To meet this need and to improve computer literacy in our community, the library provides free internet access. Internet access, Microsoft Office 2007, and other specialized programs are offered on eight computers in the library. One station is dedicated to school or business related work, and includes a web cam and scanner. All stations have print capability. The computer courses that are offered in the library are designed for all levels of users and are always fully subscribed, and often a wait list is needed.

To address this demand for access to technology, an important part of the expanded facility is a new technology section, enabling the library to provide more stations, and offer more and larger computer classes, all in a more efficient space. This area is planned with fully integrated video conferencing capabilities, as we are currently in negotiations with the Olds Community Learning Campus to become a community site offering high school and college courses to citizens in a secure, comfortable learning environment.

Also, the library currently has one computer with touch screen technology to meet the needs of library users with developmental disabilities. In our expanded facility, with the help of PDD (Persons with Developmental Disabilities) funding, we plan to provide additional stations with further assistive functions.

Programs and Other Educational Opportunities

Providing a wide range of educational opportunities suitable for all walks of life is one of our essential services. Currently we run story hours, reading programs, book clubs, writer's groups, and a wide range of computer courses on a regular basis. We also hold many special events, author talks, writing seminars, and community courses such as glass painting, Pysanky, scrapbooking, Spanish, genealogy, yoga, and reader's theatre to name a few. Our roster of programs on a yearly basis is limited only to our imagination and the amount of space we have to provide those courses. A new facility will allow us space to run courses simultaneously saving overhead costs and in larger numbers saving the amount of times we need to run a course. The possibilities are endless. As fore-mentioned, with our new facility we will be able to offer video conferencing capabilities opening up learning opportunities and training opportunities with colleges and universities around the province and country. We will be able to partner with libraries across the nation to provide author talks, and courses which will again cut operational costs. It is easy to be excited about the possibility of the community members of Olds having access to author talks worldwide without the added cost of flying someone in.

Room Rentals and Facility

For a nominal fee organizations within the community can access our meeting room for various programs, courses and business meetings. We also make the room available at no charge to other not for profit organizations wishing to hold courses that help to further our own mandate. For example, Mountain View Community Literacy holds a weekly mother goose program in our meeting room, as well as ESL courses for the immigrants of our community. Our new facility will have an expanded meeting room for business use, board meetings and a dual purpose of being an art gallery for our traveling exhibition program, local artists, and ArtSparks program. This room will be available after hours in order to make it accommodating for all members of the business community. Our vision also provides a technology room that will be accessible in the evening. This will accommodate our own courses as well as members of the community that wish to use the computer lab after hours. The potential for social networking, learning, and business is very high. Finally, a children's program room will be of great benefit to our own programs as well as other community groups such as Olds Neighbourhood Place, ParentLink, Horizon School, ArtSparks, and Mountain View Community literacy to name a few.

Persons with Developmental and Physical Disabilities

The Town of Olds is home to over 150 residents with developmental disabilities. The town has three agencies that provide services to these residents with special needs, and also houses Horizon School, the special needs school in Chinooks Edge School Division. Olds Municipal Library provides specialized services, collections, and technologies to accommodate these citizens. An example of our programs for adults with developmental disabilities is the ArtSparks Project. This project initiated by the Red Deer Public Library is designed to connect the arts community with agencies that support persons with developmental disabilities with the goal of enhancing the lives of these special individuals through involving them in a broad range of artistic and cultural activities. Our plans for expansion include adding to the resources and services available to those with disabilities, and making renovations that will allow for wheelchair access to all parts of the library.

Partner Benefits:

The best way to make an organization viable is to create partnerships that enhance the quality of service, eliminate the duplication of services and maximize both human and economic resources. The library has fostered many such successful partnerships including the ones already mentioned with local seniors' lodges, the PDD organizations, Horizon School, David Thompson Health Region, and the Welcoming Communities initiative. In addition, the library has partnered with educational institutions in the community providing library service to two private kindergartens with these classes visiting the library on a weekly basis, and working cooperatively with the three public schools

enhancing the library resources available in the school libraries. The public library also works cooperatively with the school libraries in offering joint author talks, offering special school programs, and in displaying students' artistic works and literary compositions. **Through a reciprocal arrangement with the Olds College Library, college students and their family members are welcomed with no cost borrowing privileges at the public library.**

Beyond the local community, the Olds Municipal Library has partnered with the libraries in the surrounding area forming the Municipal Area Library Partnership (MALP) which includes all libraries in the County of Mountain View. Some of the successful joint ventures of this group include the development of the multicultural family literacy kits, and the celebration of literacy with the hosting of an annual literacy festival, the Word in the West Literacy Fest.

Status:

We are currently in phase one of the expansion project. The Concept Design Report (see appendices) outlines the steps that were taken before the study and the timeline evolved. The Concept Design Study was completed in October 2005. We are currently in the Fund Development and Approval stage. Once funding is secured we will move onto the start up phase of the project as outlined below.

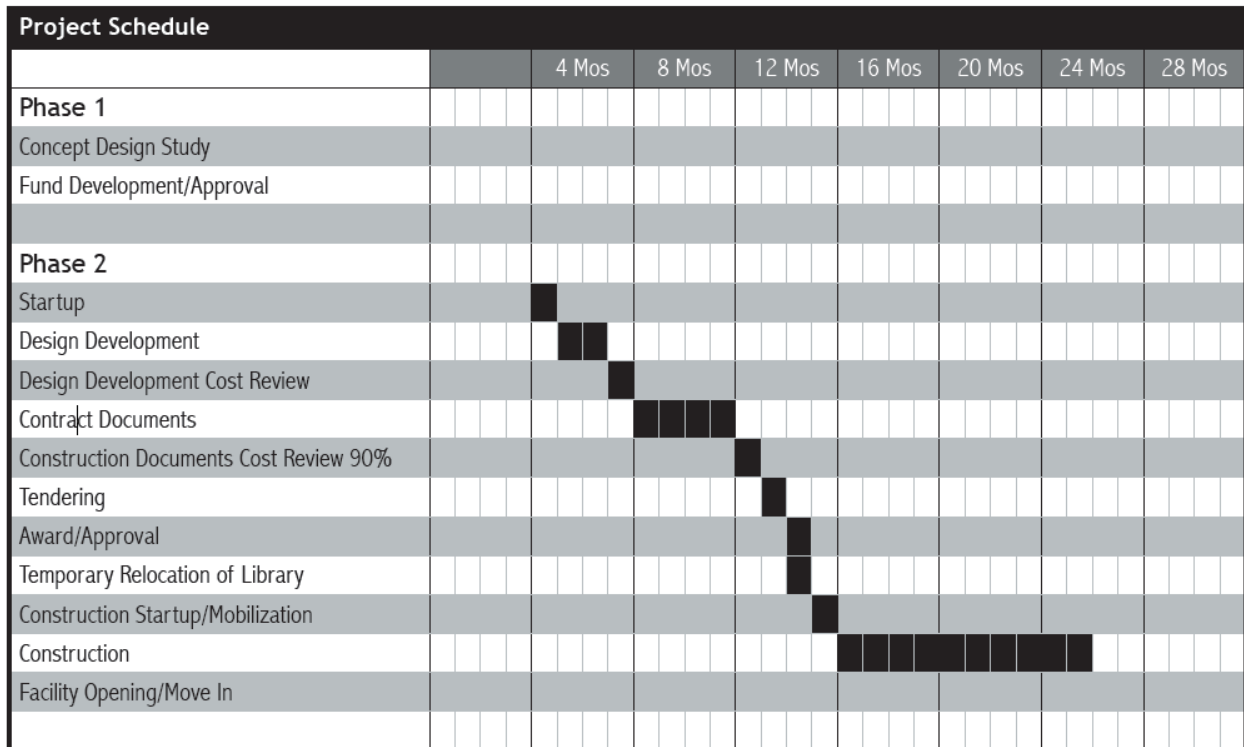


Figure 18: Project Schedule (Concept Design Report)

Finances:

See attached the audited financial statements for 2006 and 2007 as well as the budget for 2008 in the appendices that will illustrate our ability to meet the ongoing operational costs of the proposed facility.

Project Costs

A detailed outline of project costs updated spring 2008 can be found in the appendices.