

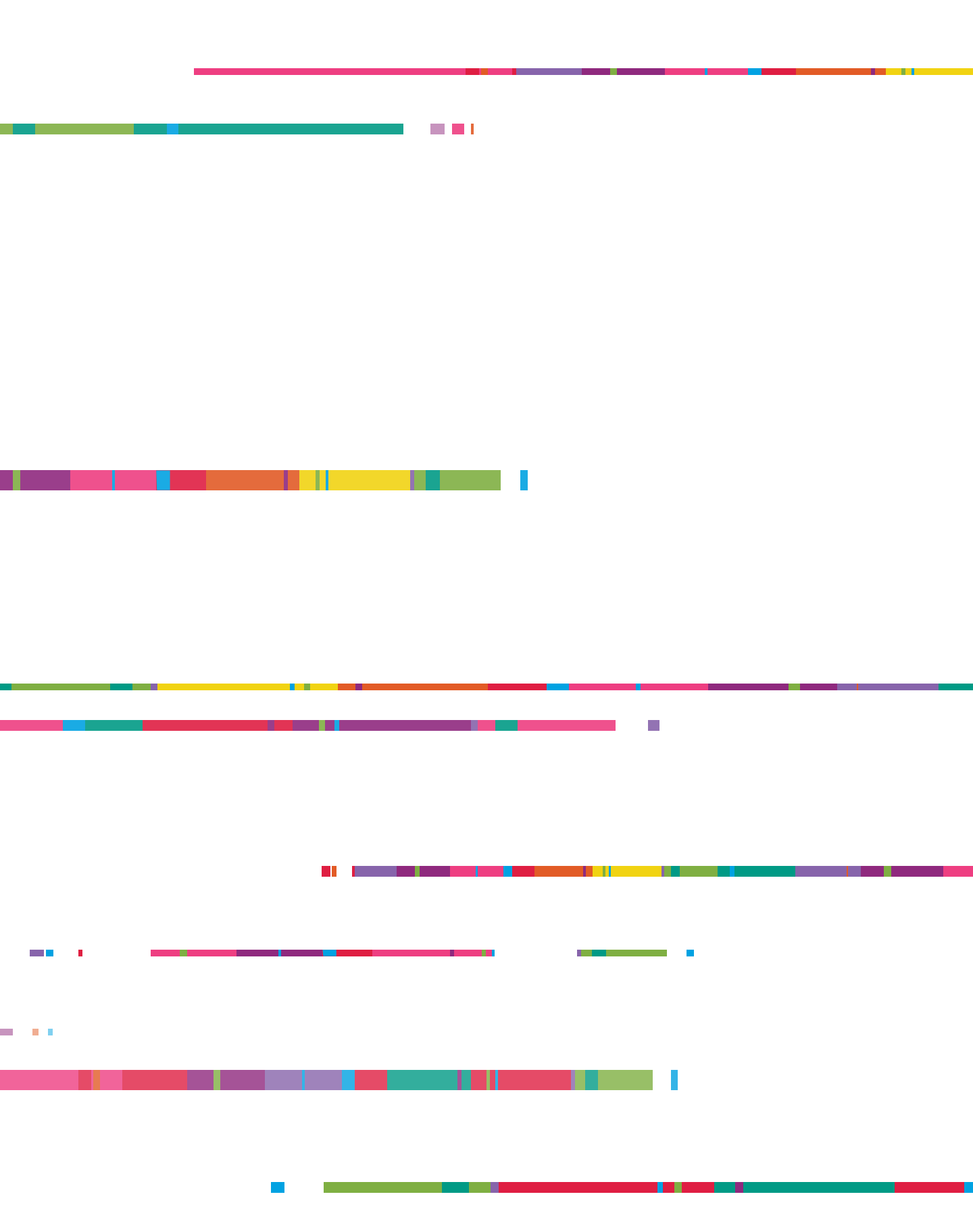


MAC^EWAN UNIVERSITY WEST CAMPUS PRELIMINARY BUSINESS CASE

Consultation Report

SEPTEMBER 6, 2012







MACEWAN UNIVERSITY WEST CAMPUS PRELIMINARY BUSINESS CASE Consultation Report



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1.0

INTRODUCTION

In order to develop the preliminary business case regarding the City's purchase of MacEwan University's west campus a program of public involvement was designed and implemented. This program had two thrusts: individual stakeholder interviews and several community visioning sessions. The information gathered through these exercises has been used to develop the facility's program and operating model.

A list of key individuals to interview was developed in conjunction with the Project Committee and the consulting team. Individuals on the list offered a variety of perspectives and included representatives from the Project Committee, the Mayor's Arts Visioning Committee, the arts community, the multicultural community, the business community, and the surrounding neighbourhoods. (See Appendix A for the list of people interviewed.) The conversations addressed the facility, its potential uses, and the possible purchase by the City of Edmonton.

The second public involvement element was a series of visioning sessions. The three sessions provided a venue for participants to discuss their vision for the facility. Specifically participants discussed:

- » A purpose for the facility, including potential tenants;
- » The relationship between the facility, the business community, and the neighbourhood community;
- » Operational issues such as hours of operation, ownership, and lease rates; and
- » Ultimately, whether the City should purchase the facility.

A synopsis of interviews and the visioning session is presented in section two.



2.0

STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS

A series of interviews conducted illuminated a variety of perspectives regarding the potential purchase of the MacEwan west campus. The intent of the interviews was to discuss issues inherent with a potential City purchase of the MacEwan facility. In total seventeen interviews were conducted (Appendix A). One organization provided a written submission.

2.1. Interview Synopsis

While the interview subjects are identified in the Appendix, the specific comments they made are not attributed to individuals directly. In some instances specific comments made might lead directly to an individual; the intent is to provide an overview of the discussions without singling out individuals. An overview of the interviews follows.

Currently MacEwan University delivers arts programming from its west end campus. The facility has numerous multipurpose classroom spaces; it also has purpose built rooms which enable specialty arts programming. Interview subjects spoke about the **emphasis the building should have on the arts** due in part to these purpose-built spaces. From work completed by the Mayor's Arts Visioning Committee the need for creative and presentation / display space is needed in Edmonton. The purchase of the campus could address these needs. While the provision of space for the arts community (and individual artists in particular) was seen as important, perhaps as critical is the need to ensure this **space is affordable**.

Providing space for the arts community would simultaneously address some multicultural issues. The arts community does include a variety of different cultures. Therefore providing support for the arts will simultaneously provide support to multicultural artists.

The creative city concept was also brought up during some of the interviews. While much has been written about creative cities, in this context it was suggested that **the community as a whole would benefit from the City's support of the arts community**. The arts, it was commented, is a significant driver of economic development. The arts also help enhance the quality of life in a city which in turn can be instrumental in attracting individuals and businesses.



Those interviewed also spoke about the ability of the MacEwan **campus to address space needs of cultural organizations** in Edmonton and many other **not-for-profit groups**. The facility was also seen as being an important element in its local community.

In fact the facility **should serve the needs of the public** and serve as a destination to bring people in. References were made to the provision of retail opportunities and services in the building. Comments were made that any retailers interested should be included in the building. This range could include multinationals and local micro-businesses. Professionals could be tenants in the building as well. These professionals could offer services to the public but could also provide services to the tenants. There was some discussion about limiting private sector tenants to those that support an overall theme for the facility. The notion of including social service organizations as tenants did receive mention as a means of providing the services many in the local community require, in a single location.

The **building itself** was not viewed as being inviting to the public but rather being **inwardly focussed**. While this might be particularly suitable for a university, for a City owned building there is a need to enhance its presence. While the building is considered move-in ready, improvements to the entryways are needed.

Related to the infrastructure improvements to improve the ability of the facility to **draw people in, a need for programming was mentioned**. Programming emanating from the building would help make the building one that welcomes the public. Programming could also help create a community amongst the tenants.

While there was **strong support expressed for the City owning** the building, most commented on the need for the facility to be **operated / managed by some other entity**. There was even the suggestion that the tenants themselves could manage some aspects of the facility — theatre groups managing the theatre space was offered as an example.



3.0

VISIONING SESSIONS

3.1. Overview

Visioning sessions were convened to provide a mechanism for the diverse perspectives of the community to provide input into the City's potential purchase of the facility. The sessions would also provide a venue in which participants could hear the varying perspectives of the community. Three different visioning sessions were convened to accommodate the greatest numbers of participants. The session times were:

- » Monday June 18th 1330 – 1530 hrs;
- » Thursday June 21st 1700 – 1900 hrs; and
- » Tuesday June 26 1900 – 2100 hrs

Several City of Edmonton mailing lists were used to promote the sessions and extend invitations. A mailing list, developed through the Mayor's Arts Visioning Committee was utilized, as was a stakeholder list utilized by the City in consultations regarding the future of the Rossdale site. Finally, a mailing list developed through the Jasper Place Revitalization Project was utilized. Comments made by some session participants confirmed that the notice had been fanned out beyond only those receiving the notification. Potential participants were asked to RSVP.

The three sessions were very well attended. Session one included approximately 70 participants; session two had approximately 35 participants, and session three had approximately 25 participants. A broad array of interests and sectors were represented including residents from the surrounding neighbourhood, local businesses, arts organizations, individual artists, multicultural groups, and provincial government services. (See Appendix B for a partial list of organizations / interests that attended the sessions.)

3.2. Session Output

Participants addressed a number of issues during the sessions. (See Appendix C for the presentation material, including the questions posed.) A synopsis from the three sessions is included on the next page.



3.2.1. WHAT SHOULD BE THE PURPOSE OF THE FACILITY?

There was good discussion about the purpose for the facility should the City purchase it. Expectedly much discussion centred on the need to continue with its arts focus. This was mentioned due to the variety of specialized spaces in the building. It was also mentioned because many participants cited the need for affordable space for the arts community in Edmonton. Considering the arts focus a number of more specific purposes were cited including: creative space; exhibition / performing space; live and work space for artists; bringing art to the public; and arts incubation space (in which artists learn and are inspired by each other).

The facility was also seen as a **community facility**. It would be a focal point of the neighbourhood and would serve as a neighbourhood hub. The building should serve as a destination drawing people in from the local neighbourhood but also from beyond. As a community facility, services that appeal to and serve the community would be needed. This could include retail and professional services as well as health, leisure, and social services.

The needs of **multicultural groups** in Edmonton could be served with this facility as well. Bringing these groups together (and considering the other uses for the building) would create good opportunity for learning and synergies amongst these groups. Social enterprise stemming from the multicultural groups (and from the arts community) would be well served in the facility as well.

3.2.2. WHAT TYPE OF TENANTS WOULD BE INCLUDED IN THE FACILITY?

Following the discussion of the building's purpose, session participants were asked to identify specific tenant types. A wide range was named including:

- » Umbrella arts organizations and smaller arts groups
- » Individual artists
- » Multicultural groups
- » Businesses (retail and professional services) that support the tenants
- » Retailers (independent primarily)
- » Not for profit organizations
- » Community associations
- » Social services organizations
- » Health organizations
- » Heritage and historical groups

3.2.3. WHAT IS THE ROLE OF THE BUSINESS COMMUNITY IN THE FACILITY?

While the majority of participants did see a role for the business community in the facility there were some that felt business has no place. The role of business was considered primarily through two perspectives: 1) businesses will help draw people into the facility beyond the tenants; and 2) businesses should serve the tenants primarily.

It was mentioned that the individual artists are businesses themselves as they “peddle their wares”. The notion of including only those businesses that strengthen the brand of the building was mentioned as well. In this light references were made to independent cafes (The Carrot along 118 Ave was cited several times), yoga studios, galleries, and gift shops.

The role of business as a source of funds was also discussed. This included business as facility sponsors and businesses as tenants where their lease rates would help subsidize the other building tenants.





3.2.4. WHAT IS THE BALANCE AMONG TENANT TYPES?

Session participants described a variety of tenant types in the facility. They then discussed the balance of tenants in the building. Generally specifics were lacking beyond comments that suggested the arts community should be the primary tenant. Other comments included:

- » Tenants that will serve the neighbouring community should get preference over those with solely other purposes.
- » Flexibility is important in this regard. Applications for space should be solicited — this will drive the building's composition.
- » A balance is needed amongst the various tenant types. In fact the amenities in the building itself will help determine this.
- » Consideration must be given to the ability of the facility to be financially sustainable. In other words, if some tenants have lease rates that will not cover all costs and others will pay "full fare" a balance between the two will that achieves break even will deliver the proper mix.
- » Mechanisms to decide the mix of tenants should be developed. It could be a board represented by each tenant type, the surrounding community could decide, or an existing organization (Edmonton Arts Council) could decide.

3.2.5. HOW WILL THE FACILITY INTEGRATE WITHIN THE COMMUNITY?

The importance of the west end facility to the surrounding neighbourhoods had been discussed earlier in the sessions. Physically it does have a presence in the community. The discussion, however, centred on the actions needed to **ensure the building serves the neighbourhood** itself.

Services within the building would help make it pertinent to the neighbourhood. These services could include the business association, library, child care, health services, social services, and community associations. The inclusion of cafes and restaurants are examples as well. These services would serve as a draw to bring people into the building.

Infrastructure changes would help draw in the community. Improvements to the entry ways would make the building more inviting. The development of drop-in, spontaneous spaces would be beneficial. Consideration should be given to spilling indoor places outdoors. This might mean cafes with outdoor terraces or even windows into the building.

Programming was identified as well. Ideas discussed included community classes being offered in the building, the inclusion of community outreach responsibilities into individual lease agreements, connections between the arts community to the local schools, and having community events bridging the building's tenants to the public (including open houses).

The public needs to be included throughout all steps of the planning and operation. The public should be **involved** in subsequent **planning** for the building. Communication about the process and about the centre and its tenants should be ongoing. The community needs to feel that it is considered a partner in this facility.

3.2.6. HOW WOULD THE FACILITY OPERATE?

Safety and security are important aspects when considering the operation of a public space. As such zoning of the building was suggested. This refers to separating studio and office space from public spaces. This type of set up can be found in buildings such as Commerce Place in downtown Edmonton. While the studio space would not be readily accessible by the public it should be accessible to the tenants on a 24/7 basis.

Public spaces would have limited hours of operation / availability. This however would depend upon the events or programs.

3.2.7. WHO SHOULD OWN AND MANAGE THE FACILITY?

Almost unanimously participants identified the City as the owner of the building. While some also suggested that the City manage the facility, the majority of participants felt some other entity should operate the facility. Ideas included; a tenant coop, City appointed board; a private management company, the Edmonton Arts Council, Arts Habitat Edmonton, or some other not-for-profit organization.

3.2.8. SHOULD LEASE RATES COVER CAPITAL AND OPERATING COSTS?

During the discussion of lease rates, session participants spoke about the need for affordable space in Edmonton for the arts community (in particular) and for not-for-profit groups. As such the notion that lease rates for these groups include all capital costs was not supported.

There was some discussion about groups trading services for lower lease rates. This might include some maintenance or management types of tasks that an organization could do in exchange for lower lease rates.

Generally **lease rates were thought to cover operating costs** with some funds allocated to general, regular maintenance. Lease rates for the **private sector**, however, should be full **market value** and should include all costs.

3.2.9. SHOULD THE CITY CONSIDER PURCHASING THE FACILITY?

Session participants were asked outright whether the City of Edmonton should pursue the purchase of the facility. Overwhelmingly participants said, **“Yes”**. There were some people not in favour of the purchase citing the high cost. There were even a few comments that referred to the province’s development of the building and the fact that the taxpayers already have paid for the building. While most favoured the City’s purchase of the building, there was some discussion that the purchase price and condition of the building may influence their support. Concerns about the disposition of the building should the City not purchase it were expressed. Others cited the City’s support of recreation facilities throughout Edmonton and commented that City Council needs to show similar support for the arts.

Should the City purchase the building, recognition needs to be given by Council of the long term commitment needed with a project like this. The opportunities to do something great were discussed and it was suggested that a long term view needs to be taken with this.

4.0

CONCLUSIONS

A number of conclusions can be drawn from the consultation.

1. There is support for the City purchasing the facility.
2. The focus should be on the arts community but the inclusion of multicultural groups is appropriate. The facility is considered a great support for the not-for-profit community.
3. The building should serve as a destination for the public and draw people into the public space and not be limited to invitation only, scheduled events.
4. Lease rates charged to the arts community and not-for-profit organizations should not include capital costs. While the lease rates should cover operating / regular maintenance costs only, the notion of affordability of space for the arts community is paramount.
5. The private sector's (commercial and retail space) involvement in the space is to draw people into the building (e.g. cafes) and to subsidize the other tenants through the lease rates charged.
6. The City's purchase of this facility is a great opportunity for the arts community specifically and the city generally.





APPENDICES





Appendix A: Interview Subjects

Appendix B: Visioning Session Participation

Appendix C: Visioning Session Presentation Material



APPENDIX A: INTERVIEW SUBJECTS

1. **John Mahon** — Executive Director, Edmonton Arts Council
2. **Brian Webb** — Brian Webb Dance Company / Mayor's Arts Visioning Committee Co-Chair
3. **Diane Kipnes** — Mayor's Arts Visioning Committee Co-Chair
4. **Crystal Graham** — Kasian / Mayor's Arts Visioning Committee
5. **Linda Huffman*** / **Katherine Kerr** — Arts Habitat Edmonton / *Project Steering Committee
6. **Paul Specht** — Director Infrastructure Services, City of Edmonton / Project Steering Committee
7. **Duane Boos** — Jasper Place Revitalization Coordinator, City of Edmonton / Project Steering Committee
8. **Randy Phillips** — Director Property Acquisitions, City of Edmonton / Project Steering Committee
9. **Tesafaye Ayalew** — Executive Director, The Africa Centre
10. **Diane Kereluk** — Executive Director, Stony Plain Road Business Association
11. **Ruth-Anne French** — City Arts Centre Programmer, City of Edmonton
12. **Yvonne Chiu** — Executive Director, Multicultural Health Brokers
13. **Cheryl Whiskeyjack** — Executive Director, Bent Arrow Traditional Healing Society
14. **Kate Gunn** — Director Community Strategies & Development, City of Edmonton / Project Steering Committee
15. **Marian Bruin** — Planner Community Strategies & Development, City of Edmonton / Project Manager & Project Steering Committee
16. **Catherine Keill** — Deputy Chief of Staff, Mayor's office / Project Steering Committee
17. **Russ Dahns** — Executive Director, Edmonton Chamber of Voluntary Organizations

Written Submission

1. **Jennifer Faulkner** — Alberta Ballet (written submission)

APPENDIX B: VISIONING SESSION PARTICIPATION

The following list includes a sampling of the organizations represented at the visioning sessions.

- » Alberta Parapalegic Association
- » Art Gallery of Alberta
- » Bent Arrow Traditional Healing Society
- » Centre for Recreation and Culture
- » CKUA radio
- » City of Edmonton — City Arts Centre; Community Services Department
- » Edmonton Arts Council
- » Edmonton Arts Habitat Society
- » Edmonton City Council
- » Edmonton Community Foundation
- » Edmonton Northlands
- » Edmonton Opera
- » Edmonton Philharmonic
- » Edmonton Public Schools
- » Edmonton Russian Club
- » Events Edmonton
- » Fringe Theatre
- » Individual artists
- » Individual businesses
- » Government of Alberta — Infrastructure; Tourism, Parks and Recreation; Health Services
- » Government of Alberta — Legislative Assembly
- » Harcourt House
- » Latitude 53 Gallery
- » Live Local Alberta
- » NextFest
- » Polish Canadian Society
- » Rapid Fire Theatre
- » Residents of the area
- » Shumka Dancers
- » Seniors Assisted Transportation Society of Greater Edmonton
- » Sexual Assault Centre of Edmonton
- » Society of Northern Alberta Print-Artists
- » Stony Plain Road Business Association
- » The Works Festival
- » University of Alberta
- » Visual Arts Alberta
- » Walterdale Playhouse
- » West Jasper Place Community League

APPENDIX C: VISIONING SESSION PRESENTATION MATERIAL



The slide features a dark grey background with a vibrant, multi-colored border at the top and bottom. The border is composed of various colored rectangles and lines in shades of green, yellow, orange, red, pink, purple, blue, and teal. The main text is centered in a white, sans-serif font.

Business Case for Grant MacEwan University West Campus

Visioning Session

Welcome & Introductions

- Welcome
- Introductions
- Session Agenda & Logistics
 - Agenda
 - Background & Context (15 min)
 - Visioning – small group discussion (90 min)
 - Synopsis & Conclusion (10 min)
 - Logistics

Background

- The Issue

Will / should the City purchase the west campus from MacEwan University for a multi-purpose, multi-cultural, arts, community facility?

- University is consolidating programming at City Centre campus
- Innovative opportunity
- City is in the early stages of assessing the purchase
- City is conducting a facility assessment
- Purchase decision will be made in the fall of 2012
- Potential purchase in 2015

Background

- Where did the notion originate?

- Mayor's Task Force – Arts Visioning Committee 2011
 - Furthered the efforts of the City's 10 year vision "Art of Living"
 - Recommendations in 4 themes including space opportunities that referred to raising the profile of the arts in Edmonton through partnerships between the arts and business communities
 - One recommendation:
The City of Edmonton acquire and convert MacEwan west into a multi-use, multicultural arts incubator

Context

- Campus is in the heart of the Jasper Place revitalization zone
- 4 neighbourhoods
- Total pop'n of 15,808 (2009)
 - Average annual growth 0.8% ('06-'09)
 - Glenwood experiencing most growth, Canora stable, Britannia Youngstown and West Jasper Place experiencing declines ('06-'09)
 - Slightly older than Edmonton average (2006)
 - Immigrant proportion of the population slightly less than Edmonton average (2006)
 - Aboriginal proportion of the population approx. double the City average (2006)



Examples

- Torpedo Factory Art Center (Alexandria, VA)
 - 3 floors with 82 artists' studios, 6 galleries, 2 workshops, museum (houses 165 visual artists)
- Distillery District (Toronto)
 - 63 work and retail studios, offices, rehearsal and performance space for artists and creative entrepreneurs



Edmonton Assets

- Arts & Culture
 - Avenue Theatre, City Arts Centre, Art Gallery of Alberta, Edmonton Public Libraries, etc
- Community Facilities
 - Community League halls, Jasper Place Fitness & Leisure Centre, etc

The Facility

- Built in 1980; 210,000 ft²
- Centre for Arts and Communications
 - High ceilings
 - Wide hallways
 - Freight elevator and loading dock
 - A number of purpose built rooms



The Facility

The Facility

North

First Floor
(Lowest level)

Legend

- Elevator
- Washroom
- Stairwell

Rooms and areas labeled on the floor plan include: Washroom, Program Space, Exhibitions, and Stairwell.

Visioning Discussion

- “Rules for Engagment”
 - Not looking for agreement nor consensus
 - Interested in hearing from all
 - Respect the perspectives of others
 - Dissenting viewpoints are okay
 - Facilitators will manage the discussion and will monitor time

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 - Not looking for agreement nor consensus
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Visioning Discussion

1. What should be the purpose of the facility?
What will it accomplish?
2. What types of tenants would be included in the facility?
3. What is the role of the business community vis-à-vis the facility?
4. What is the balance between multi-cultural groups, arts organizations, artists, businesses, community, not-for-profit organizations?

Visioning Discussion

5. How do you see the facility integrating into the neighbourhood?
6. What do you see as the hours of operation for the facility? Should there be someone to run programs with the tenants? Programs for the public?
7. Who should own the facility? Would space be leased? Who should manage the facility?

Visioning Discussion

8. Tenant rent / lease rates – Should tenant fees cover the cost of purchasing and maintaining the building? Should they cover the operating expenses (e.g. utilities, regular maintenance)?
9. Should the City consider buying the facility?
10. Other thoughts?

Wrap

- Session Synopsis
- Conclusion & thanks
 - Thank you
 - Next steps
 - Adjournment

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