

**DEVELOPMENT PERMIT 104-20  
ARTS AND LEARNING CAMPUS PHASE 1**

**Issue**

A Development Permit application has been received for Phase 1 of the Arts and Learning Campus, which is designated Direct Control and Council is the Development Authority.

**Motion Proposed by Administration**

That Development Permit application 104-20 for Public and Quasi-Public Buildings, Facilities and Installations (Arts and Learning Campus – Phase 1) and associated signage be approved subject to the following conditions:

1. Prior to the release of the Development Permit, the Developer shall:
  - a. Provide a Development Site Servicing Plan Package, including among other things any proposed/required regulatory signage such as stop signs, handicapped parking signs etc., in accordance with Section 4.3.9(a) of the Land Use Bylaw;
  - b. Provide a Site Lighting Plan for the entire development area (7, 15, 23, 31, & 35 Riverside Drive and the parking lot on the east side of 43 Riverside Drive) in accordance with Sections 3.2.1(n), 9.21.0 and 17.0 of the Land Use Bylaw;
  - c. Provide detailed elevation drawings of all proposed waste and recycling enclosures, including doors;
  - d. Revise all site plans clearly indicating all areas of coloured concrete paving;
  - e. Revise all relevant drawings of the new parking lot located at 35 Riverside to indicate the proposed sidewalk to be raised above the height of the parking surface to form a continuous pedestrian connection;
  - f. Revise all site plans showing the location of electric vehicle charging station(s) and provide detailed drawing of electric vehicle charging signage.

Conditions 1a through f above to the satisfaction of the Town.

2. Development Conditions:
  - a. The Developer shall construct the development in accordance with:
    - i) All conditions of this approval;
    - ii) The site plan to be revised in accordance with the conditions of approval;
    - iii) The site plan, floor plans and elevation plans approved by Council on April 27, 2020; and
    - iv) Any other plans to be submitted and approved as a requirement of this approval;
  - b. Prior to commencement of landscaping, the Developer shall:
    - i) Provide a detailed Landscaping Plan prepared by a qualified Landscape Architect in accordance with Sections 3.2.1(m) and 9.5.0

of the Land Use Bylaw. The Landscape Plan shall employ water conservation techniques such as grouping of trees and shrubs in mulched beds, use of xeriscape plants, etc.;

- i) Revise landscape plans to add a second species of tree to the sidewalk trees along Riverside Drive. White Ash is a recommended species;
- ii) Revise landscape plans to relocate the planting bed at the southwest corner of the building directly against the building; and
- iii) Revise the Tree Planting Detail to show a topsoil depth specification of 300mm.

b. The Developer shall:

- i) Develop the site in accordance with Section 9.11.0 Land Subject to Flooding;
- ii) Provide documentation to the satisfaction of the Municipal Engineer that all buildings have been flood proofed. The main floor elevation must be a minimum of 0.5m above the 1:100 year flood elevation [minimum elevation 1053.30];
- iii) Construct all development in accordance with the Town of Okotoks General Design and Construction Specifications;
- iv) Screen all roof top apparatus with building parapets;
- v) Provide vertical face concrete curb between all driving surfaces and landscaped areas;
- vi) Pave all required parking surfaces and associated driving lanes, delineate all paved parking spaces with painted lines and sign the barrier-free parking spaces with freestanding signage;
- vii) Provide documentation showing that Lots B, C and D, Plan 2512 HF have been consolidated;
- viii) Provide documentation showing the registration of a mutual access agreement for Lot 8, Block 3, Plan 091 3935 and Lot 1, Block 4, Plan 031 2387; and
- ix) Provide documentation demonstrating registration by caveat of agreements between the Town of Okotoks and the owner of Lot 8, Block 3, Plan 091 3935 for shared parking on Lot 8, Block 3, Plan 091 3935 and Lot 1, Block 4, Plan 031 2387, benefiting Lot 2, Block 3, Plan 021 0286; Blocks B, C and D, Plan 2512; and Lot F through I, Block A1, Plan 6250A;

to the satisfaction of the Development Officer;

- c. The issuance of a development permit by the Town of Okotoks does not relieve the permit holder of the responsibility of complying with all other relevant municipal bylaws and requirements, nor excuse violation of any regulation or act, which may affect this project.

## **Report, Analysis and Financial Implications**

### **Background**

The Town is proceeding with the Arts and Learning Campus in order to meet a number of Council strategic objectives. These include fostering economic vitality, providing quality infrastructure, capitalizing on partnerships, and managing community growth. The benefits to the community include the opportunity for the project partners to co-locate, share resources, and create a vibrant Arts and Learning Campus that strengthens the downtown and provides a shared asset for the community. Anchoring the downtown, securing post-secondary education, and enhancing the economic development potential of the downtown are some additional benefits of this project. Finally, by locating a number of non-taxable properties together on the campus, more taxable square footage will be made available in the downtown.

The Arts and Learning Campus is a partnership between the Town of Okotoks, Christ the Redeemer School Board, Foothill School Division, the Okotoks Public Library, and Community Futures Highwood. Responding to the space and locational requirements of the partner organizations, the Arts and Learning Campus provides a unique opportunity to leverage economies achieved through co-location. In addition to providing vibrant education and learning spaces, the campus will also provide opportunities for indoor and outdoor community events. The project reflects the foundations established in the Economic Development Master Plan and the Roger Brooks Action Plan to achieve a vibrant space that strengthens the downtown.

### **History**

The Okotoks Economic Development Committee and Okotoks Post-Secondary Education Committee identified an Arts and Learning Campus as a key priority and developed strategies to see its realization.

On January 8, 2019, Council requested the development of a preliminary conceptual plan for the Arts and Learning Campus.

On February 25, 2019, Town Administration brought forward a report to Council presenting the preliminary concepts for the Arts and Learning Campus. Council supported the general massing and scale of the concepts presented and directed Administration to proceed with public participation and to continue discussions with potential stakeholders.

On May 27, 2019 Council approved funding for Phase 1 of the two-Phase Arts and Learning Campus Project.

On March 9, 2020 Council passed Bylaw 13-20. Bylaw 13-20 redesignated lots 7, 15, and 23 Riverside Drive West from Public Service District and Restricted Development District to Direct Control District to accommodate the Arts and Learning Campus.

### **Proposed Development**

This proposal is Phase 1 of the two-Phase Arts and Learning Campus. The site is located on the south side of Riverside Drive West between Veterans Way and Riverside Gate. Phase 1 includes the construction of a new building which will accommodate the Okotoks Public Library, Christ the Redeemer School Board offices,

Community Futures Highwood, St. Luke's Outreach School, and renovations to the existing library building to accommodate Bow Valley College, Cameron Crossing School, and retail space. Phase 1 will also include two public plazas, a surface parking area, and modifications to Riverside Drive to accommodate additional on-street parking. Phase 2, which is not part of this Development Permit application, will include a performing arts centre and parkade, both to be located within the area known as the Creamery site (35 Riverside Drive West). A commencement date for Phase 2 is tentatively scheduled for 2027 and beyond in the Town's Ten-Year Capital Plan.

#### New Okotoks Public Library and Christ the Redeemer School Board Building

A new three storey, 4,800 square metre building will be located west of the existing library on the north portion of Ethel Tucker Centennial Park and the west portion of the current library parking lot. The building has been sited to meet the setback requirement from the floodway, to reinforce the urban street edge along Riverside Drive, and to ensure the stands of mature trees on the south and east sides of the site are retained.

The building is broken into two masses, the east volume aligns with the street to reinforce the continuity of the street edge and relate to the existing library building. The other volume opens to the south to create a plaza on the west side and maximize the retention of mature trees. This plaza will create a second public space that will be further defined by the future performing arts building. The plazas have been carefully designed to allow permeability and a stronger connection between the river and the downtown area.

The ground floor of the building is raised to protect against possible flood events. This level change has been addressed by either landscaped berms adjacent to the building or, in the case of the more urban, street-side of the building, a raised planter. The concrete block cladding at the lower portion of the building is a necessary robust material that can withstand floodwater, but in this case will have a refined honed finish, and a random pattern composed of two slightly varying shades of gray.

Above the ground floor level, the first two storeys of the building are clad in a lightly textured buff/beige brick, a colour that is sympathetic to the natural wooded landscape beyond. Brick provides a finer grain texture to the facade and gives the building a more intimate scale. While also highly durable, the brick is a direct reference to the material utilized in some of Okotoks' historical structures, such as the Stockton Block.

While the first two storeys of the building are clad in brick, the third storey is clad in high pressure laminate panels. These panels consist of real wood veneer laminated on a composite panel. The wood siding reduces the apparent height, and massing of the building while referencing the natural river valley setting.

#### Flood Risk and Mitigation

A determining factor in siting the new building was ensuring compliance with the Okotoks Flood Plain Policy. The policy requires new development to be setback a minimum of 10 metres from the floodway. The building meets this setback requirement and meets the Land Use Bylaw requirement for the main floor and all

electrical and mechanical equipment in a building to be located at least 0.5 metres above the 1:100 year design floor elevation. The proposal does not meet Land Use Bylaw section 9.11.2(d) which requires the area surrounding the foundations of all new habitable buildings to be raised to at least the 1:100 year flood level. In areas where it is possible to raise the grade next to the building, such as the south and west building elevations, a sloped landscaped berm is proposed. Raising the grades next to the building on the north elevation is not possible, as the building has to tie into the elevation on Riverside Drive, which is slightly below the 1:100 year flood elevation. To minimize damage should flooding occur, the building has been designed with durable materials such as concrete and block masonry at the lower level. The building has also been designed with a main floor that is above the 1:200 year flood elevation.

#### Renovation of Existing Library Building

The existing library building will be renovated and divided into three separate tenancies to accommodate Bow Valley College, Cameron Crossing School, and a retail space with a tenant yet to be determined. In addition to the interior changes, exterior renovations will include additional entrances, additional windows, and tenant signage all on the north elevation. Exterior finishing material will remain the same.

#### Ethel Tucker Centennial Park, Landscaping, and Public Plazas

Although reconfigured, the park space on the site will continue to be known as Ethel Tucker Centennial Park. With the removal of the library parking lot, the total area of soft landscaping in the park will remain unchanged at approximately 1.5 acres, while approximately 0.55 acres of new multi-purpose plaza space will be added.

The site has been designed to preserve as many existing mature trees as possible. All of the trees on the south side of the site will remain as will the large stand of mature trees on the west side of the site.. The area between the new building and the environmental reserve parcel to the south will be grassed with existing and newly planted trees and shrubs organized into several planting beds. The sidewalk adjacent to Riverside Drive has been widened substantially and will include tree planting and benches. Raised concrete planters accommodating a variety of shrubs and grasses will be located on the north and west sides of the new building. New plantings will consist of 79 trees and 422 shrubs.

The site provides two public plazas, one on either side of the new building. Both plazas are framed by existing and proposed built form and serve as gateways from the Town centre to Ethel Tucker Centennial Park, the river valley trail network, and the Sheep River. The east plaza will become the link between Riverside Drive and the natural landscape surrounding the Sheep River. In addition to serving as a connection to the river valley, the plaza has been designed with a central open area to accommodate passive and programmed events. The plaza will include treed landscaped areas with integrated benches and pedestrian scaled lighting throughout. Tree species for the plazas have been selected to provide shade for plaza users in the summer, allow for sunlight during the winter months, and have a high enough canopy to allow for clear lines of sight through the plazas. The plaza area on the west side of the building will be similarly finished with landscaped areas, benches, and pedestrian scaled lighting. To increase the utility of the plaza, electric receptacles will be provided in each of the planters.

### Parking

Parking for Phase 1 of the Arts and Learning Campus will be provided in a new surface parking lot to be developed on the former Creamery site (35 Riverside Drive West) and in a shared parking arrangement with the Okotoks United Church (43 Riverside Drive West).

Presently, Riverside Drive consists of one westbound lane and two eastbound lanes from Riverside Gate to the existing library parking lot. East of this point, the road is reduced to one eastbound lane, and the curb lane transitions to parallel parking. By expanding parallel parking on Riverside Drive to the east and reconfiguring the existing 90 degree parking adjacent to Ethel Tucker Centennial Park to 60 degrees, 21 parking spaces will be made available along on Riverside Drive.

The new parking lot will provide 84 parking spaces. Reconfigured angle and parallel parking on the south side of Riverside Drive will provide 21 parking spaces and shared parking at the Okotoks United Church will provide 70 parking spaces, giving a total of 175 parking spaces.

The Direct Control land use district for this site specifies that parking requirements are at the discretion of the Development Authority. Administration has calculated the minimum number of parking spaces for all the proposed uses on the site, based on similar uses in other land use districts:

Use	Parking Ratio	Number of Spaces
Library	1 space per 37m <sup>2</sup> floor area	$2122.76 / 37 = 57.37$
Community Futures	1 space per 37m <sup>2</sup> floor area	$508.03 / 37 = 13.73$
Christ the Redeemer School Board offices	1 space per 37m <sup>2</sup> floor area	$802.14 / 37 = 21.73$
St. Luke's School	8 spaces per classroom	5 classes = 40
Bow Valley College	1 space per 37m <sup>2</sup> floor area	$467.27 / 37 = 12.63$
Cameron Crossing School	8 spaces per classroom	2 classes = 16
Retail	1 space per 37m <sup>2</sup> floor area	$349.73 / 37 = 9.45$
TOTAL		170.91 (171) required

When the Municipal Centre was approved in 2006, 47 off-site parking spaces for municipal employees were provided in the library parking lot. With the development of Phase 1 of the Arts and Learning Campus, municipal employee parking will be relocated to the Creamery parking lot located approximately 100 metres to the west. Because the distance between the Municipal Centre and the parking area exceeded the Land Use Bylaw maximum allowed distance (122 metres) between an off-site parking area and a principal building, a variance to the Land Use Bylaw was granted with the 2006 development permit approval. The distance between the Municipal Centre and the library parking lot is approximately 145 metres. Relocating employee parking to the new parking lot would increase this distance to approximately 260 metres.

A Transportation Impact Assessment (TIA) has been prepared for this project and was submitted with the Development Permit application. The TIA includes a shared parking analysis that forecasts a peak (2:00 p.m.) shared parking demand of 155 parking spaces for all Phase 1 uses and a 2:00 p.m. peak demand of 36 parking spaces for municipal employees, yielding a total demand of 191 parking spaces.

The TIA also indicates a peak 2:00 p.m. parking demand at the Okotoks United Church of 21 parking spaces, meaning at 2:00 p.m. there would be 49 parking spaces available for shared parking at the Okotoks United Church. With a peak demand of 191 parking spaces and a total of 154 parking spaces available in the new parking lot, on Riverside Drive and in the shared United Church Parking lot, there would be a deficit of 37 parking spaces at this peak demand time.

Although the TIA demand projections indicate a parking deficit during times of peak demand, the guiding principles and objectives of this project must be taken into consideration. The unique river valley setting and campus environment facilitate transportation and parking solutions not solely dependent on the provision of additional parking. With a wide variety of uses and anticipated users, the campus will receive a variety of visitors to and from the site utilizing various modes of transportation. The proposal aligns with the Town's Active Transportation Strategy and Downtown Urban Design Master Plan by supporting multiple modes of transportation and by not necessarily providing more parking, but by managing parking through strategies such as shared parking arrangements and adding/reconfiguring on-street parking.

The proposal is also in alignment with the Integrated Transportation section of the Draft Municipal Development Plan, policy 3.3 calls for a reduction in parking standards as one way to reduce car dependency. Specific policy encourages the adjustment of parking requirements for individual developments to reflect site limitations.

#### New Parking Lot (35 Riverside Drive West) and Okotoks United Church Parking Lot

As noted, this application includes the redevelopment of the former Creamery site to accommodate 84 parking spaces. Proposed improvements to the parking area include: new surfacing, new pedestrian walkway, poured in place concrete curbing, four new landscaped islands, and lighting.

#### Waste and Recycling

Waste, recycling, and organics will be collected within the existing and proposed library buildings in two-wheeled bins and stored outside in waste enclosures located on the west side of the new library building and on the west side of the existing library. On pick-up days the bins will be removed from the enclosures and wheeled to a designated curbside location in front of the new library building. The enclosures will be constructed with cast in place concrete, details regarding the enclosure doors have not been provided with this application, however the conditions of approval include a prior-to-release condition requiring this information. The sides of the enclosures have been identified as potential locations for community art projects.

### Sustainability Components

The new library building is targeting LEED Gold Certification. Sustainability components include wiring the building to accommodate a future photovoltaic solar energy system, the provision of an electric vehicle charging station along Riverside Drive, and other structural and heating, ventilation, and air conditioning elements.

### Downtown Urban Design Master Plan

The subject site is located within the plan study area, specifically within the area identified as Big Move #8 – Riverfront and Public Market. Guidelines for this area include:

- Protection of the Sheep River ecosystem, native and natural vegetation, and historically significant sites;
- Maintaining the integrity of natural watercourses, springs, etc.;
- Access to and connectivity between each plaza, park, and open space;
- Interpretive elements to educate and inform the public about Okotoks' heritage; and
- Addition of streetscape elements on Riverside Drive such as street swales, curb extensions or "bulb-outs", increase water infiltration within and around parking areas.

### **Strategic Plan Goals**

<input type="checkbox"/>	Manage Community Growth	<input type="checkbox"/>	Provide Strong Governance
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Provide Quality Community Infrastructure	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Healthy and Safe Community
<input type="checkbox"/>	Enhance Organizational Excellence	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Foster Economic Vitality
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Promote Environmental Excellence

### **Public Participation Strategy**

The following information sessions were held to present the project to the community:

- April 12 and 13, 2019 – Information session at the Okotoks & District Chamber of Commerce Trade and Lifestyle Show.
- October 3, 2019 – Information session at the Okotoks Recreation Centre.
- February 27, 2020 – Information session at the Public Library. The purpose of this information session was to present the Development Permit application to the public and gather input. Site plans, floorplans, building elevations, and renderings of the new library building and public plazas were on display. Representatives from the Town as well as members of the architectural design and construction team were available to answer questions. Approximately 40 individuals visited the information session and eight comment sheets were submitted. Comments touched on building architecture, building programming, parking, and traffic.

Information regarding these sessions was advertised on the Town website, social media feeds, the Eagle 100.9 FM radio station, and in the Western Wheel newspaper. A Public Hearing was held on March 9, 2020 for Bylaw 13-20. Bylaw 13-20 redesignated lots 7, 15, and 23 Riverside Drive West from Public Service District and Restricted Development District to Direct Control District to accommodate the Arts and Learning Campus.



## **Alternatives for Consideration**

n/a

### **CAO Comments**

The only question before Council in considering approval of the Development Permit, with or without conditions, is whether the land in question is suitable for its intended purposes and whether the Development Permit is consistent with the uses assigned to the site under Bylaw 13-20, which redesignated this area from Public Service District and Restricted Development District to Direct Control District. Consideration of the budget or matters such as the function of the Arts and Learning Campus or the partnering arrangements is not before Council as those decisions were previously made by Council and are not pertinent to the question of whether the use is appropriate under the Bylaw.

The main question in relation to whether the land is suitable is the proximity to the floodway. Below is the analysis in relation to those questions:

- All provincial and local requirements are to build above the 1:100 flood elevation;
- Town of Okotoks current requirement is 500mm above the 1:100 flood level;
- The Arts and Learning Campus team was in communication with Alberta Environment during the validation phase to ensure we were as up to date as possible with the forthcoming mapping. The new flood mapping from the Province was shared with the Town in January however has not yet been publicly released by the Province;
- The Arts and Learning Campus was set at 600mm above the previous 1:100. (New 1:100 is about 15-20mm higher - so we ended up at ~585mm above new 1:100);
- New mapping provided a 1:200 elevation;
- By going with 600mm instead of 500mm requirement, the Arts and Learning Campus balanced provisioning, as best as possible, for 1:200 as well as maintaining a reasonable street presence;
- Top of main slab elevation is approximately 9 to 10 inches above the 1:200 elevation provided in the new flood mapping;
- The Arts and Learning Campus is designed with flood-proofed concrete to the underside of windows, adding an additional level of flood mitigation. Only doorways would require sandbagging or other protection should flood levels exceed the 1:200; and
- The Arts and Learning Campus has placed all major building systems (electrical, HVAC) on the second floor, allowing for even more mitigation to flood risk.

### **Attachment(s)**

1. Development Permit 104-20 Plan Set
2. Submissions from public members received prior to noon on Wednesday, April 22, 2020

Prepared by:  
Craig Davies  
Development Planner  
2020-04-22